

DECLUTTER YOUR LIFE

In my experience, there's nothing more invigorating at any time of year than to shake things up a bit and do some *Decluttering*. It feels great, it will fill you with a renewed sense of energy and it will help you to move forward in your life. It does wonders for confidence, too.

It's no coincidence that the word 'clutter' derives from the French word 'clotter' which means 'coagulate'. Having too much clutter does tend to make you feel stuck; it can stop you from moving ahead; it can keep thoughts and ideas from flowing freely and it can definitely keep you stuck in the past.

Most people think of personal possessions when they think of clutter: wardrobes bulging with clothes you no longer wear, the spare room crammed full of all the things you don't use but don't know what to do with, that drawer in the kitchen – ditto.

But mental clutter can feel overwhelming as well: unfinished projects, a crammed schedule, no time for ourselves, too many demands on our time, a bad diet, relationships that no longer serve us, needy, negative people who drain our energy.

In order to thoroughly Declutter Your Life, and to make space for those things that are really important to you, you need to pay attention to both of these areas. So if you're ready to get started, here are a few tips:

CLEARING YOUR PHYSICAL CLUTTER

- There's no right or wrong way to declutter – different approaches suit different people. You may prefer to clear your clutter in short bursts – or to devote a whole day or weekend and just do a complete blitz. The important thing is TO GET STARTED.
- You don't have to do this alone. Ask a friend to come and help you – make sure you choose someone who you know is good at making decisions! How about having a Decluttering Party? Invite some friends, get in some wine and pizza and have a great time. Who knows, your friends might even take away some of your clutter with them.

- Use the CLUTTER TEST: This comes from the excellent book ‘Clear your Clutter with Feng Shui’ by Karen Kingston who says: If you are unsure about an item, ask yourself these three simple questions: Does it lift my energy when I think about it or look at it? Do I absolutely love it? Is it genuinely useful? If you can’t answer ‘yes’ to any of these questions, get rid of it.
- If you just can’t bring yourself to get rid of certain items, put them into a bin bag and tie it up. Write the date on the outside and put it away out of sight (in the loft or garage). If you haven’t needed any of the contents for six months, then throw the bag away – *without looking inside*.

CLEARING YOUR MENTAL CLUTTER

- Make a list of everything that’s annoying you and/or draining your energy. It doesn’t matter how long the list is, just keep writing. It could be as small a thing as a hem that needs sewing on a favourite piece of clothing – to a relationship that’s no longer working for you.
- Beginning with the easiest things, start working your way through the list, crossing items off as you deal with them. You’ll start to gather momentum and it will feel wonderful to cross things off and keep track of your progress.
- Learn to say ‘NO’ more often. For women especially, ‘no’ is one of the hardest words to say. We don’t want to let people down, we don’t want to make waves and we want to feel needed. Only say ‘yes’ to those things that you can WHOLEHEARTEDLY say yes to.

Whatever dreams and aspirations you may have – however big or small – ‘decluttering your life’ is a great way to make the space in your life for them to happen.