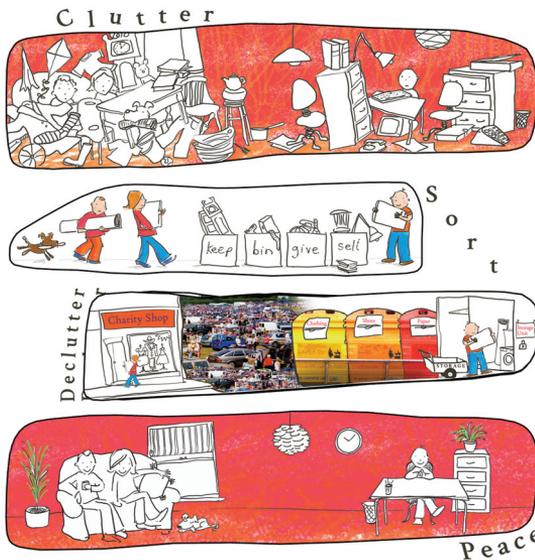


Time to Declutter



DECLUTTER YOUR LIFE!

Spring is traditionally a time of cleaning, sorting and preparation for what's to come. Have you noticed how the spring light seems to show up all the cobwebs and flaws around you?

It was national Decluttering week on 7 March but now is an excellent time to get started.

Whether you just want to clear space to free up your energy – or you have a specific reason – like moving home or downsizing, decluttering can benefit you and others you know. What's more charity shops are crying out for donations right now, and recycling is a priority, so it's a win-win scenario.

The benefits of decluttering include:-

- Having a peaceful home environment to live in
- Less stress and time looking for things
- Supporting charities
- Recycling to help the environment

Do these questions ring bells for you?.....

You need to clear out accumulated stuff in the whole house, one room or just a cupboard and yet, each time you are determined to sort it out, something gets in the way? Maybe you tell yourself that you don't have the time? Or you worry that as soon as you throw something away, you will need it? Or it feels like losing precious memories?

Perhaps you just don't know where to start? Or the job seems overwhelming, and you can't face doing it alone? So you don't. And the more you feel bad about yourself, or the more someone else gives you a hard time about it, the less likely you are to change anything.

An exercise to try

In your mind's eye take yourself to a place in your house or workplace that is rather cluttered – how does it feel in your body? Is there some tension, constriction, or confusion? Notice what it is like making decisions in this space? Can you rest easily?

Now imagine yourself in a place you know that is clean, spacious and gives you a sense of serenity. Notice how your body feels in this space. What would it be like to come up with ideas in this space, to make decisions or rest?

Most people feel more at ease, energised and creative – and find more clarity for making decisions (as well as actually being able to find things!)- in a clear, spacious environment.

Some tips for decluttering

- Start small – don't think about doing the whole house, start with one thing – a drawer or pile of magazines. You'll feel encouraged to do more once you make a start!
- Divide your sorting into categories - have bags or boxes labelled: e.g. 'charity shop', 'tip', 'return to owner', 'get mended', 'find place to keep'
- Have a special box for things you want to keep for sentimental reasons
- Put things you are not ready to part with in a box labelled with the contents, store them and if you haven't needed them after a year, get rid of them
- If something is broken, either fix it or throw it out

Whereas many TV programmes and books on decluttering use humiliation or bullying to motivate people, empathy is a powerful, supportive approach to create change that leaves you feeling good.

Gina Lawrie has launched a new Empathic Decluttering service in the area, tailored to individual needs and is supporting the campaign by Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice, caring for people affected by terminal illnesses across West Surrey and NE Hampshire, to help stock up their shops since donations of clothing, bric a brac and furniture have decreased.

Based in Farnham, Gina is a member of the Association of Professional Declutterers and Organisers and has many years experience as a coach, consultant and trainer in personal and organisation development. Visit her website at www.ginalawrie.co.uk. Call to chat about how she can support your decluttering efforts: 01252 728242. Discounts available for Round&About readers.