

Decluttering as a Spiritual Practice

The amount of stress, busyness and lack of balance that many people experience these days is cause for concern. Decluttering is about taking charge of our lives again and simplifying. As Thoreau is quoted: *“Our life is frittered away by detail....simplify, simplify”*

Decluttering and our relationship to the earth

If you could live more lightly upon the earth and experience more meaning and quality of life, you'd want that, wouldn't you? Many of us are striving to do this by recycling, buying fair trade, avoiding chemicals, attempting to simplify and 'green' our lives.

Choosing to reduce our impact on the earth has many benefits, not just for the planet but for us too. It encourages us to reconnect with nature, the seasons, the beauty of our surroundings and our roots in the ground. Living in harmony with our environment increases feelings of wellbeing and connection.

Decluttering at home

A cluttered environment detracts from inner peace of mind. We can feel weighed down or trapped and this impacts our physical and spiritual wellbeing. I have enjoyed Duane Elgin's book, *Voluntary Simplicity*. He writes: *“From a spiritual perspective, simplicity removes the obscuring clutter and discloses the spirit that infuses all things”*.

In the past this book would have been added to one of the many bookshelves in nearly every room of my home. I used to collect books, both old and new. When I moved house I suddenly felt there was something oppressive about them as well as being dark and dusty. As I moved toward simplifying some other aspects of life, I just didn't want them all anymore - they represented so many words! So, now when I have a new book like this one that I want to keep for a while, an old one has to go! As a result my house feels more spacious, fresh with an energy expectant for new things to happen.

Decluttering our inner world

To experience fully the present moment for even minutes of our day is often hard. It seems to me that many of us have sacrificed our values around family, community and connection in accepting busyness, stress and constant availability into our lives.

Simple changes can make a big difference. I have recently adjusted my email so that it doesn't tell me every time I receive a new email because it distracts me. Now I focus better on my work, leaving me more time to do other things I enjoy doing - such as spending time with friends.

Decluttering as my own spiritual practice

One particular practice, that has brought an experience of simplicity to my thoughts and communication with others is Nonviolent Communication (NVC). NVC supports us to live our values. It is a simple and yet profound process, helping us to cut through the irrelevances, decluttering the words to get to the point and create meaningful, clear and compassionate communication.

It is a great basis for my work helping others discover what they really want and identifying the blocks. Most of us long to live in a home that brings calm, nourishment and ease - and yet so often we don't manage to create this for ourselves. I have found that attending to the internal clutter as well as the external clutter brings meaningful, lasting results.

I love the aspect of my work that is supporting people to declutter, whether from the inside - out or the outside - in. Helping others to create space to allow the emergence of something new inspires me to continue this practice myself.

“..choose to live simply so that others may simply live” Gandhi

Gina lives in Surrey with her dog. She is a self-employed trainer, coach and consultant working with individuals and organisations She is one of the leading trainers in Nonviolent Communication (NVC), developed by Marshall Rosenberg, – a simple yet profound process of communicating from the heart. What she loves about NVC is the combining of a spiritual consciousness and a practical 'how to' approach. Gina is a member of the Association of Professional Declutterers and Organisers and brings a unique empathic approach to decluttering. Gina will be holding a workshop on Decluttering as a Spiritual Practice at Bosham House on 1 June. She is also available for individual decluttering support and she leads trainings in Nonviolent Communication. You can contact Gina via her website:www.ginalawrie.co.uk or write c/o Bosham House.