

Decluttering as a Spiritual Practice

by Gina Lawrie

Gina will be holding a workshop on Decluttering as a Spiritual Practice at Bosham House on 1 June. 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) – a simple yet profound process of communicating from the heart. Gina is a member of the Association of Professional Declutterers and Organisers and brings a unique empathic approach to decluttering. 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.

‘...choose to live simply so that others may simply live.’

Gandhī

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. The American author, poet and philosopher, Henry David Thoreau, knew all about simplicity, ‘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 pesticides, attempting to simplify and ‘green’ our lives.

Choosing to reduce our impact on the earth has many benefits. 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 in community.

Decluttering at home

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.’

A cluttered environment detracts from inner peace of mind. We can feel weighed down or trapped



Simplicity removes obscuring clutter and discloses the spirit that infuses all things.

and this impacts our physical and spiritual wellbeing.

I used to collect books, both old and new and had shelves in most rooms of the house. 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 I have one room with bookshelves and if I want a new book, an old one has to go!

Decluttering our inner world

To experience the present moment without thinking about past or future 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. If I focus better on my work, I have more time to enjoy meeting people in person.

Meditation and many other conscious practices help us to be present in the moment, to focus and connect with our essential being.

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, developed by Marshall Rosenberg, helping us to cut through the irrelevancies, decluttering the words to get to the point and create meaningful, clear and compassionate communication.

Decluttering as my own spiritual practice

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.

In helping others to declutter, I notice that I can become attached to getting them to do this or that. Part of my practice is to let go of any attachment to a particular outcome in order to be fully present and connect to their needs. At the same time I am holding a clear intention to make a difference and often agree targets with my clients. It is a case of both/and rather than either/or. Operating from this paradigm of partnership and acceptance is a key part of my spiritual growth. ☒