

Clean out your life

It's spring – the perfect time to get rid of clutter and emotional baggage

WRITTEN BY KATE EMMERSON

As a life coach who specialises in helping people sort out their clutter, I work with an exciting definition you can use when evaluating your entire life and deciding what can be eliminated: “anything that no longer serves you.” You can apply this to all categories of clutter and every single “thing” showing up in your life.

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THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CLUTTER

When you hold onto “anything that no longer serves you,” it has a very direct impact at a few levels simultaneously. While you may also need to contemplate what you're preventing yourself from achieving in your life by holding onto different forms of clutter, here are some common negative impacts:

You waste time: Looking for misplaced things, shuffling piles of paper, running late, hurting about emotional issues, worrying about unfinished business, being absent from work, doing everything slowly with no enthusiasm,

lying in bed longer than necessary every morning, mucking about on emails due to a poor system of handling incoming messages, etc.

You don't manage your money: When you own too much stuff, there's a direct cost in having to keep it clean (either you doing it or paying staff to do it for you), the costly insurance of all your goods, storing them (either the size of your actual home, the whole garage filled with stuff or – in extreme cases – off-site storage for additional junk) and finally moving it all with you when you relocate your office or home. Clutter bugs commonly buy triplicates of food, hygiene or clothing items by simply not knowing where the ones they have are, or whether they even possess the item at all – yet *another* black top, more sneakers, an oversized chutney bottle to join the four at home or the 10th can of deodorant. It's easier to buy more than to look for the existing ones hidden under piles of mess.

Think about the cost of poor financial habits – interest accrued by paying

bills late, fines or additional penalties from late tax submissions, etc. You'll also find hidden money tied up in neglected belongings sitting around your home – excessive clothes, books, CDs, exercise equipment, extra furniture and ornaments, etc.

You don't have energy: Living with any form of clutter wastes your precious energy on people. It's also about holding onto baggage, not feeling well and therefore experiencing no vital zest for life, hiding behind your clutter and therefore hiding from life, burying emotional pain and getting stuck way back in the past. I've never come across people with clutter who don't also exhibit massive issues with stress – there's simply no lightness of being about them.

You're uncreative: Too much clutter means you can't think clearly, have no inspiration and feel so overwhelmed that it's impossible to formulate new ideas or come up with creative solutions to problems. There's a definite trend towards procrastination and when





everything's behind schedule, that kind of pressure zaps creativity.

Your reputation suffers: People with clutter tend to feel totally disorganised and unprofessional and constantly berate themselves. This leads to being late for meetings, late with deadlines for projects, forgetting facts or never appearing in charge, as well as being flustered and hugely stressed. The sad truth is that people judge us, whether rightly or wrongly, on what they see and experience. If your clutter's impacting on your professional life, your reputation could be seriously at stake. Imagine a prospective new boss or that exciting new client having a peek into all aspects of your life – would they be dying to hire you or would you be dying inside, feeling embarrassed?

3 CATEGORIES OF CLUTTER

1. Physical clutter

This clutter steals your space. It comprises everything that you can see, touch and not hide from – the messy stuff that clogs up all the physical space around you. It's a combination of two things: too much stuff in your life and not being properly organised in how you store it for retrieval. It doesn't matter how much stuff you own, but it's essential to be aware of what you have, respect it and know where it "lives".

Get started today: Tackle your bedside table – this task is small enough to complete in one sitting and makes you feel instantly lighter when waking up. Keep only things that you use when lying in bed (manicure set, hand cream, vitamins, medication) and be mindful of how many books you keep there.

2. Energetic clutter (emotional and mental)

This is clutter that steals your life force and clarity. It comprises everything

that sits heavily in your heart, makes you sad, negatively occupies your mind and makes you worry incessantly – bad habits, a negative attitude, self-limiting beliefs, obligations, unfinished business and people past their sell-by date who drain your resources.

Get started today: Write an honest list of all the things playing on your mind and emotions. Once they're written down, three things happen: 1. You can no longer hide from them. 2. They seem less overwhelming. 3. You take back some of your power by acknowledging them at last. Decide which three to tackle this week – courageous conversations and big decisions often need professional help, so be prepared to ask for it.

3. Physiological clutter

This clutter steals your zest for life and va-va-voom. Your body has internal cleansing systems that are designed to get rid of toxins, cellulite, food waste, pain and illness. They sweep your body clean (blood, lymph vessels, system, kidneys, liver, skin, bowels, etc). If these systems aren't working properly, the space in your body is clogged up, which zaps the spring in your step.

Get started today: Drink hot water with lemon first thing in the morning to cleanse your lymphatic system and bowels. **D**

FOOLPROOF TIP

Apply this to *all* the clutter in your life to nudge the letting-go process along.

Ask yourself:

- Do I love it?
- Is it useful?
- Does it add value to my life?

– For further information, contact Kate Emmerson at: www.life-coaching.co.za.