



## **Help – I'm Overwhelmed by the Clutter!**

This is the most frequent cry for help that I receive when approached by clients. Once our home, or working environment, have reached a stage where the clutter is taking over, that is where we experience overwhelm.

"Where do I start" is the next question. It's often difficult at that stage to even contemplate tackling the clutter because it then becomes a question of where to put it all.

When it's the home which is cluttered, and it has spilt over into every room, it is important to think in terms of 'one area at a time' rather than taking in the whole. Breaking it down to one area is less daunting, and more efficient. This may also mean taking just one portion of a room rather than the whole room. Some parts of the house will be more time consuming than others because they are busier, for example, the kitchen. So taking a portion of the kitchen may mean beginning with the pantry.

Create first a plan on which area and which room you're going to begin decluttering, then decide which area goes next, and so on until you have a list of every room in your home [or it may be just specific areas of the home] and the order in which you're going to tackle them.

As you work through each area, you'll begin to notice that the process is starting to make sense and your mind will start working out new systems for creating order. Organising an area becomes a logical process. If we take the kitchen pantry as an example, if you stand back and first assess what items you use most frequently – those will be the ones you want closer to hand. Create an order to the items and put likeminded items together e.g. the cereals may be alongside the breakfast spreads, baking items beside the biscuits, herbs and spices next to the oils and vinegars.

The home office is also an area which can quickly become inefficient and frustrating. Again, using the principles above, you need to have at hand the stationery items and files you need to access most often. Use containers for your stationery items such as pens, stapler, paper clips etc so they're not flowing all over the desk. Paper stationery such as copy paper, envelopes, clear files, and such like can be stored together on a shelf, or in a drawer. Files also need to be well organised so you can put your hand on a file immediately. The ideal is to create an uncluttered office space where you can work efficiently and effectively.

Decluttering and organising your home and working environments is truly beneficial and a great de-stressor.

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