

30 De-Clutter to De-Light Challenge ~ The Details

In your quest to delightfully de-clutter, sometimes a good interrogation is in order. That way, you can determine whether the item truly belongs in your space, or needs to be escorted off the premises never to be seen again! Imagine how much energy will be available when you release what you no longer require? Lose the baggage of your past on a physical, mental and emotional level and unveil new possibilities and limitless living. Ready for a 30 day transformation to get you more organized, efficient, productive and into the flow?!

To that end, here are 20+ questions to ask of your stuff/ treasures/clutter/chaos:

*If you get tripped up, here is a trick to remember and a good strategy: Take a picture of it and then let it go.

- 1. What (or who) the heck are you?** If you have to ask, you probably already know the answer. The item under investigation should already have its rump kicked half way to the curb. This may seem like a ridiculous question, but most of us have thingamajigs and whozits and whatzits galore lurking under our beds and busting out of junk drawers.
- 2. How did you arrive here?** Did you intentionally invite the item into your life (by buying it)? Or did the trickster creep in by some other way (think gift, freebie, heirloom). If it didn't mindfully become your possession...should it be?
- 3. What's your function (conjunction junction...☺)?** If the answer is "I'm not sure" or "not much," give it a swift kick in the pants and declare: "freeloaders be gone!" On the other hand, items that are multi-taskers and perform several functions (ones you will actually use) get awarded bonus points for versatility and ease.
- 4. When were you last used?** Acceptable answers: a few hours ago, yesterday, last week. Unacceptable answers: some time in 1981. When I was wearing platform shoes, bellbottom pants and clingy, shiny materials headed to the disco. No freaking clue. One year rule.
- 5. When will I use you again?** Good answer: now or very near future. Bad (albeit amusing) answer: perhaps in some as-yet-undetermined situation in the unforeseeable future when unicorns fly and pigs have wings.
- 6. Would I miss you (or even notice) if you were gone?** If you anticipate many sleepless nights, tears shed or years in therapy to get over an item, you may consider keeping it. Otherwise, give it the boot.
- 7. Do I have something just like you (a twinsie or distant relative) that is similar?** Duplicates, or things that do the same job? Ain't nobody got time for that. Especially your space. I mean how many spoons or spatulas does one need? Less than you think. So settle down, Rachael Ray.
- 8. If I toss you, could I re-acquire you if I'm desperate?** Desperation is not a good look on anyone. If some crazy, unexpected circumstance arises then consider if it can be picked up easily and inexpensively if absolutely necessary. If you're really on the fence, chuck it then rest easy there is always an option. Don't get your panties in a knot...especially those holey ones.
- 9. Can you be a better contribution to someone else?** Drop the hoarder gig and give the item to someone else it may help. What is one person's trash is another's treasure. No, it can't be your trash and your treasure. Sorry, I'm not sorry.
- 10. Are you more trouble than you're worth?** Does just owning you give me gray hair? If something takes up too much of your time, money, or energy (think maintenance, repairs, and insurance), then ditch it.
- 11. Do you belong to my fantasy self or former self?** Sometimes, the only exercise an item gets is in your daydreams and in the land of make believe (of being a socialite, world traveler, circus act, etc.). Release it, and make space for new, exciting (and real life) adventures.
- 12. Are you valuable?** Could you benefit more from a nice chunk of change? Consider selling it on eBay, Craigslist, or in a consignment shop. You may like the cash more than a dust-gathering object. Can't buy much with dust these days.

13. Would I rather have the space? With every item you own, you give away a little bit of your space. Would opening up new space invite new opportunities and possibilities into your life? Don't give away your precious real estate cheaply or easily.

14. Can you be returned? If a spontaneous shopping spree or late night internet buying marathon left you with some questionable purchases, see if you can take them back. Lots of stores have generous return policies on unused, unworn, or unopened merchandise. Just don't use the refund on more junk.

15. Am I using you in place of a memory? Memories don't need to take the form of physical objects to make them live on. Things can be broken, lost or thrown away but our memories will live on in our hearts and minds forever.

16. Can you be digitized? Turning your music, movies, books, photos, and documents into their digital version can free up tons of space. Is there an electronically savvy teen in your house or your neighborhood you could outsource this to? Ahhh- more ease!

17. Can you be miniaturized? Can you keep part of something or make it smaller? Can the same memory, feeling or purpose be achieved with a smaller version (think a single square from a blanket, or one plate from a set of china)?

18. Did I forget I owned you? Dispose the already dismissed items regret free. Chances are if you forgot it once, it will be a distant memory the second it's gone.

19. Are you mine? This is the worst kind of clutter. It is not even yours! Return it. Now.

20. Are you smile inducing? An item may fail all your other tests (practicality, efficiency, etc.), but if its presence brings you true joy (your child's first drawing, your grandmother's locket), it gets a pass. If it doesn't bring a smile to your face, find something that does.

21. Broken beyond repair? It's broken, it's busted, it's a goner. Get it gone.

22. Guilt? Don't put pressure on yourself by feeling responsible for things or guilty if you donate Great Uncle Frank's antique shoe horn. Let it go....

23. Just in case? Think about it. Have any of those events come up recently or do you predict they will in the next six months? It's like carrying around an umbrella waiting for it to rain. Buh bye!

Plan of Action - 3 simple steps

Step 1 - Prepare

Get boxes, bags or designate an area for the following:

- Garbage
- Recycle or Shred
- Sell
- Donate
- Other (i.e. bring to cobbler or send away for digitizing)

Step 2 - Decide

- Use the questions above to get clear about what stays and goes
- Invite a feisty, honest, fun friend to assist!

Step 3 - Dispose

- Let it go!
- Breathe!
- You did GREAT!