

Getting Rid

I love a good clear out. There is something very satisfying about recycling and de-cluttering, but there are some possessions that are difficult to get rid of. Take clothes for instance. I often take a bag or two to the charity shop, but time after time I fail to include those special outfits that I know I will never fit into again (but then, you never know). And those high heels that kill, but they go with those special outfits that I know I will never fit into (but you never know)! Then there is the underwear that got washed with a yellow duster and are now a bile yellow. Spark joy? They do not, but they are too new to throw away. And the jacket, bought in the sale, yet still too expensive to give away, and still too red.

What to do with grandma's old blanket box and that 1930's hall stand? I watch Money for Nothing where tip finds are turned into steam punk lamps and scatter cushions, and Jay Blades paints chairs black apart from one neon pink leg. I will do something with them some day.

Another category of clutter I never get round to getting rid of is the 'out of sight, out of mind' stuff. The unused pasta maker on top of the fridge, the box of cassette tapes under the bed, the unmatched plates in the sideboard, and whatever is in the wardrobe in my son's midden of a bedroom.

And what do you do with things that have a face? I have boxes of photographs, many of them duplicates from the days when you sent your films off to be printed. We always had extra sets done, especially of the children to send to grandparents. Now they are all back with us. It doesn't seem right to throw them away or destroy them. Perhaps there is something in the belief that the camera captures the soul. I also have a doll that was given to me by my grandma on my first birthday. Her plastic face is now a sallow yellow. She has a droopy eye and lives unclothed and unloved in the bottom of my wardrobe. She is too broken and ugly to be given away or put on display, but it feels wrong to throw her in the rubbish. I have thought of burying her, but that seems weird. Equally problematic is a clay bust of myself from my university days when I posed for a friend's art project. I wasn't expecting her to give it to me at the end. It spent many years on a window ledge behind a curtain in my parents' house. Now it's in my loft doing the opposite of the painting of Dorian Gray. Who would want it? No one. But it's me and I can't throw it away or destroy it. It could be useful if I ever needed constructive surgery. Maybe I could turn it into a water feature.