



One of the most frequent questions we get asked is:

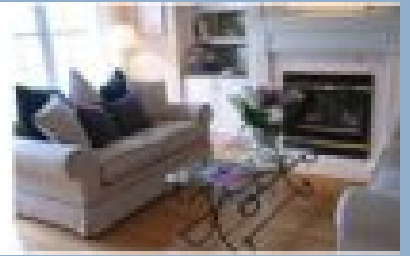
Where do I begin?

We are pleased to share Chapter 2 of our book, ***Beyond Tidy: Declutter Your Mind and Discover the Magic of Organized Living***, which covers this very topic.

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If it were easy, we'd all be super organized, and probably at our goal weight, too!

Actually. In the beginning, getting organized is a lot like trying to lose weight. Many of our clients come to us wanting a "magic pill," a quick way to turn everything around. But just like with weight loss, there is no magic pill. To be successful at either, you have to focus, commit to changing certain behaviors, and develop good and consistent habits.

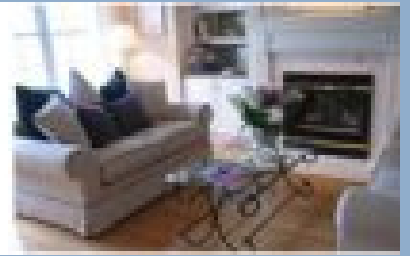


The thought of all of this can be exhausting in and of itself, especially for those who start out in a severe state of disorganization. It all just seems insurmountable and the number one question is often, "Where do I even begin?"

Most of the time, the answer is to hone in on what it is that causes you the most stress, and then start there.

Stress manifests itself in many ways. You can feel it physically in your body--rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, feelings of anxiety. You can experience negative emotions such as shame and embarrassment. Stress may cause you to snap at others in anger or frustration--or to shut down completely and retreat into a state of complete *inaction*.

There is an established relationship between disorganization and stress levels. The more things seem out of control, the higher your stress level and the lower your productivity will be (which leads to more stress). Do you see how quickly the negative spiral starts?

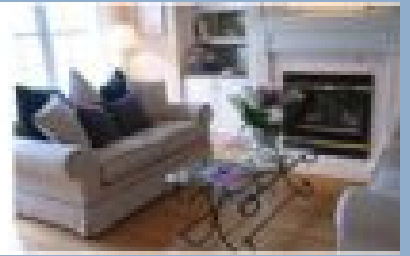


*When you are ready for real change,
ask yourself these two questions:*

1. What is causing me the most stress and affecting my daily life *now*?
2. Which area, if improved, would have the biggest and most immediate impact on my day-to-day life?

That's where you start. The clutter in the spare bedroom might really irk you, but is it wreaking havoc on daily productivity? Or is it the lack of a proper system for handling incoming bills, school paperwork, and/or financial records? Or the fact that every cabinet in your kitchen is jammed so full that getting anything out of them puts you at risk of injury by avalanche?

Sometimes our clients come to us wanting to work on one area, but once they start focusing on how their different areas of disorganization make them *feel*, they decide to switch their order of priority.



In addition to relieving stress, it's also best to focus on improving the area that will have the most impact on your daily life.

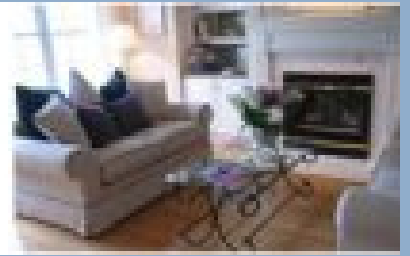
Every family is different. For one, it might be the kitchen--the hub of the home--the place where everything is handled, from food prep to homework to bills/paperwork. Having a good flow is key, especially when multiple people are using the space! For another family, it might be getting the kids' bedrooms in order to foster independence and responsibility, as well as a good environment for healthy sleep habits.

Are there exceptions to these rules?
Of course!

Sometimes many areas need to be worked on, but a deadline necessitates working on one area before the others. A few examples of this are:



- You unexpectedly need to host out-of-town guests, but your spare bedroom has become your dumping ground for everything you don't know what to do with. At the moment, you can't even walk in there. Even though other rooms or categories might need attention, this room becomes the priority because there is a deadline attached to it--your guests are arriving in a few days!
- You are involved in a lawsuit or court case and need to gather specific paperwork. We have had several clients who needed our support in divorce and childcare proceedings. Having solid, irrefutable evidence in writing helped them immensely. As in the first example, there are deadlines related to such matters. Plus, there are financial and emotional gains/losses contingent upon the outcome. So this would take priority over other areas at this time.
- You wish to use your attic to store things you still want but aren't using regularly. Awesome, they don't need to be in your main space! But, the attic is filled to the brim with things you haven't seen or looked at in ten



years. In fact, you really have no idea what's up there. It's a great space that could hold a *lot*, but it can't fit a single other thing. In this case, we would suggest getting this areas in order first and then having it ready to house things that are cluttering up the rest of your home.

If you are still unsure of where to begin, here's another strategy you can try.

We recommend that you do a physical walk-through of your home, room by room, to help prioritize organizing projects. Jot down notes regarding each room and what specifically needs to be organized (a.k.a. a "Take Action" list). You can use a notebook or the notes app on your phone. Either way, writing things down is an effective way to declutter your mind and stay focused. It brings a bit of order to chaos, both mentally and physically, so you can hone in more accurately on where to begin.

As you enter each room to make your "Take Action" list, ask yourself these three questions:



1. What feelings do I carry deep inside when I walk in here?

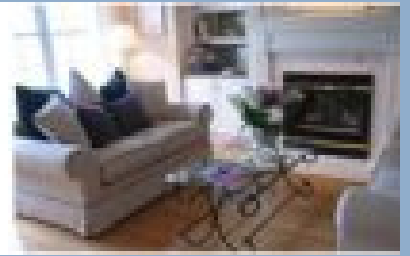
If you feel anxious, overwhelmed, angry, or just plain unhappy when you open the door, then this may be one of your contenders. Try to be as specific as possible. Is it the whole room that makes you feel this way, or one particular area?

2. Do I have a specific budget? Will this organizing project require only my time/labor, or will it be more extensive, requiring new furniture or construction?

Being realistic about the financial component may bump certain projects further down on the priority list.

3. What is my timeframe? Do I have a limited amount of time to get the project done?

Time constraints might impact the priority of certain projects. Estimate how much time you need versus how much time you can devote to tackling this space.



Once you have the answers to these three questions for each room/space/project on your list, then prioritize accordingly.

And if you are still not sure after that, it may be in your best interest to schedule a consultation with a professional organizer. Even if you wish to do the organizing yourself, having an expert evaluate your situation may save you a lot of time and money in the long run.

There may not be a magic pill, but a focused and committed "slow and steady" approach will win you the race. Sometimes figuring out the best place to start is half the battle!

When you couple a starting point with a positive growth mindset, you come out of the gate with your eye on the win! As you gradually regain control, it will feel fabulous, exciting, energizing, and empowering. And that's the best kind of magic!

Organize Me!

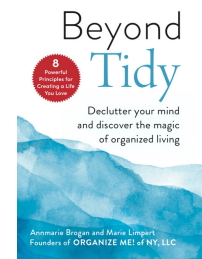
of NY, LLC



Hope this has given you ideas for determining the best place to start for YOU. We are committed to empowering you through our simple but powerful organizing principles coupled with the science of positive psychology.

Welcome to our community of like-minded individuals looking to be active creators of a home and life they love.

For more information about *Beyond Tidy: Declutter Your Mind and Discover the Magic of Organized Living*, click **HERE**.



We invite you to explore our website at **www.organizemeNY.com** and enjoy our videos, case studies, before-and-after albums and more. Please also follow us on Facebook and Instagram @organizemeNY and @beyondtidybook.

Happy Organizing!
Annmarie and Marie

