



Laurel House Comfort Care Home | 224 Fair Street, Newark, NY 14513 | (315) 573-7028

April 2023



Coffee and Conversation

Coffee is the comfort. Most of us have a unique bond with this warm beverage. We drink it first thing in the morning, we drink it as a dessert, we have coffee as a treat, but most of all, we drink it when we need the comfort. I always offer someone a cup of coffee when they are in the vigil sitting stage with their loved one...and for the comfort that coffee provides. Share a cup of coffee with someone that needs comfort, and share this newsletter. Hopefully it brings comfort to those that need it most.

~Laci Graham, LPN
Executive Director



Sharing a Moment....

'I feel my mother in every petal and leaf': how gardening helped me through grief

Lulah Ellender in her garden in Lewes, East Sussex, 9 Apr 2022

Six years after the death of her mother, Lulah Ellender celebrates their shared love of gardening and the ever-changing place that most gives her hope.

Excerpts from her article...

Last autumn my sister rang me in tears. Her partner had inadvertently dug up a patch of primroses in their garden. Why this reaction to an innocent gardening mistake? Because these primroses came from our late mother's garden. My sister, brother and I had carefully transplanted a few of her beloved yellow *Primula vulgaris* to each of our



gardens, hoping to keep something of her alive; they were her favorite flower. Every time I see them begin to flower in the shady patch opposite my kitchen window, I remember her joy at their springtime blooms.

My mother died from cancer nearly six years ago. While the initial shock and sharpness of the loss has ebbed, I am still learning to live with the gap she has left in the world. We were close and, among other things, shared a love of gardening. When she came to stay, she would bring muddy carrier bags full of slug-nibbled lettuce, handfuls of chard or surprisingly small leeks. We would set about pruning or weeding together, talking mostly, but also happily working in silence.

When we were clearing out my mother's things, I found her garden diary, written from 2004-2016. It is a small notebook, bound in blue cloth, with handmade paper inset with pressed flowers inside. The entries recorded what was in flower and the jobs she had been doing: "Irises have been stunning. New space under lilac planted up & annuals sown."

It plugs me straight back into a moment in her garden – I can suddenly see her dividing irises, planting lavender and harvesting peppers and zucchinis. I conjure the salad she is making from her lettuces, complete with the odd overlooked stray snail. I smell the Paul's Himalayan Musk rose she picks for the kitchen table. I paint her back into that patch of land with imaginary brushstrokes.

Her notes offer comparisons and prompts – for this month, a reminder to mow the grass. She always recorded the first mowing of the year, as this excerpt from March 2014 shows:

"I mowed the grass, pruned the roses and manured them. Daffodils, primroses, hellebores all looking beautiful. Spring has sprung."

She also recorded things that hadn't gone well. I have learned now to remember what every experienced gardener knows: there is always next year.

When she was alive, gardening became a way we could merge our lives, crossing between time and place with harvests, seeds and stories of triumphs and failures. She offered me advice on pruning, and I gave her jars of cosmos and dahlias, thrilled to show her how I was learning to grow in this garden of ours.

After my mother's death, poleaxed by grief, I initially gave up on the garden. But when spring arrived, I was drawn back outside by an inexplicable sense of wanting to make it look beautiful and abundant for her. I sense her presence more strongly in my garden than anywhere else. It feels as if she is part of every leaf, petal and crumbling fistful of soil.

"My garden became a place where I could plant hope, feel defiance instead of the helplessness of loss, and connect with the history of this small plot of land and the people who tended it before me."

As I deadhead a flower, I feel my fingers using the same pinch-twist-snap motion that I saw her fingers make so many times. Summer blooms have become bouquets for her grave. In contrast to the stagnation of grief, our gardens are constantly evolving. They contain multitudes and reach beyond their defined boundaries. Even when we are long gone, parts of us remain.



Timely Tips

Clean Your Space, Boost Your Mood: 10 Stress-Free Ways to Declutter



You gain much more than a tidier space when you declutter your home. Discover the mental health benefits of cleaning house, then read on for 10 tips from experts to help you get — and stay — organized.

*By Karla Walsh
Last Updated: October 26, 2022*

An excerpt from this article...

10 Tips to Declutter Your Home, According to Organizing Experts

Use these pro tips to master even the toughest mess.

1. Weed Out the Easy Items

Identify the conspicuous things that need to leave the space and get rid of them first. “The things that you need to think about can wait until after the obvious stuff is gone,” Tokos says, so eliminate any trash or recycling ASAP. Start in spaces that have low emotional significance, such as office supplies, toiletries, or expired medications, before diving into harder categories that might be more emotionally charged, like photos, memorabilia, your kid’s art and schoolwork, or clothes that no longer fit.

2. Then Make a Plan

Based on her experience with clients and conversations with loved ones, Godding believes that most people who struggle with decluttering projects try to take on far too much before getting clear on their priorities, goals, or resources that might be needed to get it done. This can rapidly become overwhelming or lead to easy distractions since the project lacks boundaries and time management becomes a burden.

Write down why you want to get organized and how you want to feel as a result — for example, “I want to declutter so my brain is free to focus on what’s really important:

time with my family”. Then jot down which areas you want to tidy up, in order of importance.

3. Chip Away at It

As you create this area-focused list, remember to think small, Godding suggests. Break the project into smaller pieces and focus on just one section at a time.

“I love ‘organizing sprints’ where you set a timer and get as much done as possible during that brief time window,” Godding says.

Try to focus on one drawer or one cupboard at a time, Tokos adds, which seems less overwhelming than organizing the “whole kitchen.”

4. Get Your Mind Right

As you embark on the decluttering mission, keep in mind that your thoughts lead to your moods and your behaviors, Vermani tells DailyOM. “Recognize cognitive distortions and negative thoughts that you hold on to that hindered you from seeing cleaning as a positive thing and a priority in your life. If you harbor a sense of dread around cleaning and other mundane household tasks, you will tend to avoid it,” she says. Try to associate this process with how you’ll feel as a result, such as satisfied or in control. Or imagine yourself enjoying the space in its tidy and organized form.

5. Designate a Discard or Donate Area

Create a space for items to leave your home. This can be a “donate” basket, the trunk of your car, or a corner in a less frequently used room. It’s temporary, and can be emptied each week, Tokos says. “With a single space designated, everyone in your household can help with the process. You can also set goals of adding five items a day to the pile, so after 30 days you would have about 150 items identified to leave your [home],” Tokos adds.

6. Aim for “One in, One Out”

As long as things are entering the house, things need to be leaving the house, otherwise rooms will start overfilling again.

“The key is to be super intentional about what comes into your spaces,” Tokos says. Ask the whole family to contribute to that “donate” basket or area; this makes it easy to continuously get unwanted things out or to get your home increasingly clean.

7. Build in Incentives

Admittedly, household tasks can get boring and repetitive, especially if you’re decluttering multiple areas or an entire home. Try “temptation bundling,” or pairing a “want to do” like listening to a podcast, audiobook, or music with a “need to do” (ahem, organizing). Or give yourself a fun reason to clear up your space by inviting guests to your home for a dinner party with enough time in between the invitation and the event to get your space into shape, Vermani says. A reward never hurts either. Plant a “carrot” to help you get to milestones along the way. For example, book a massage for completing the kitchen or visit your favorite bakery to savor a pastry after conquering the closet.

8. Get a Buddy

Asking for help with decluttering is no different from working with a trainer to assist you with reaching your fitness goals; it’s a very normal and popular option, Godding says.

“Sometimes, just simply having someone in the room with you can dramatically change the decluttering process for the better. Even if that person is not involved in your process, their presence can anchor you and keep you on task, and infuse positive energy and fun into what might otherwise feel like a chore.”

9. Set a Schedule for the Future

After you complete each area on your to-clean list, create a plan of attack for keeping your space in tip-top shape. Godding advises clients to mark dates on their calendars

for routine or seasonal decluttering sessions in advance, such as the first Sunday of every month. “That way you will get into a regular rhythm with decluttering so items don’t build up over time. This strategy allows you to manage your responsibilities rather than procrastinate and feel overwhelmed,” Vermani explains.

10. If You Slip Up, Don’t Sweat it

Have compassion for yourself along the way. A full life comes with good days and challenging days. “I often say that an impeccable home reflects an unlived life! If your clutter is the result of having fun and living life fully, imperfection is okay,” says Vermani. “You can always correct, clean up, declutter, and get your life on track later on.”

If the pressure of being “perfect” today feels formidable or anxiety-provoking, “listen to your body and have compassion for yourself on days you’re tired and unable to manage your ‘messy’ self,”

she says. You can always try again another time.

The Bottom Line

A cluttered space can make us feel disorganized, chaotic, and out of control. On the flip side, a clean and organized environment removes distractions and helps us focus on what truly matters.

“Decluttering is essentially taking charge of the energy in our space,” Vermani concludes. “Our space is more than our material items, paperwork, and messes; it also includes people. It’s important for us to understand the importance of providing ourselves with what is in our highest and best interest in all areas of life.”

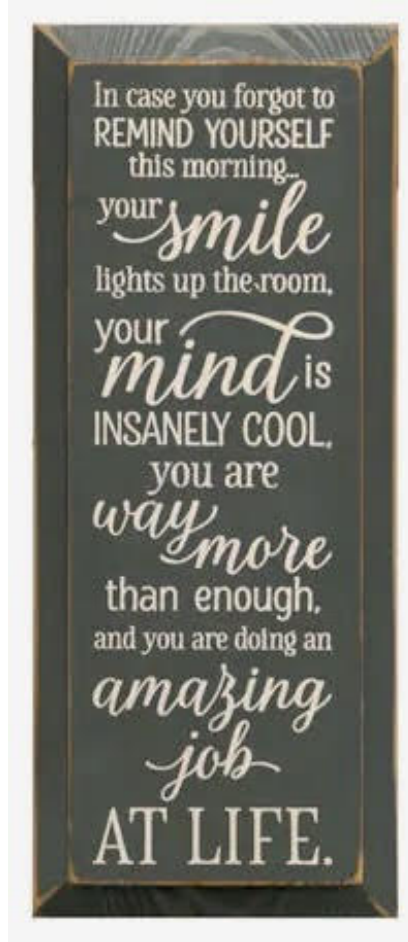
So start with the above organizing tips to declutter. And if you find it challenging to get or stay organized, don’t be afraid to call in reinforcements in the form of a friend, organizing expert, or mental health professional.

For the whole article click this link:

<https://www.dailyom.com/journal/clean-your-space-boost-your-mood-10-stress-free-ways-to-declutter/>

Karla Walsh

Karla Walsh is a Des Moines, Iowa-based freelance writer, editor, freelance writing coach and level one sommelier who balances her love of food and drink with her passion for fitness (or tries to, at least!)



The Life-Challenging Anguish of Tidying Up

After a loved one's death, how do you part with the possessions?

Excerpts from an article in Health...

By Jill Smolowe
August 9, 2016

Health

After the loss of a special someone, the painful task of sifting through and parting with that someone's special somethings lies in wait. Which clothes to keep? Which work files to discard? What to do with the no longer needed wallet, passport, bedside alarm clock? And *when* do you begin to tackle the possessions after a loved one's death? Where is Miss Manners when you really need her?

The buoyant advice [Marie Kondo](#) offers in her bestselling book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* (hold on to only those items that provide "joy" and, with a parting "thank you," get rid of the rest), is a tough sell for the bereaved. For a while, every item left behind by the departed stirs a raw mix of bittersweet memory and anguished longing. Nothing feels dispensable.

Perhaps for a time you feel reassured when you enter his closet, the presence of his shirts offering a sense of security that — somehow — he is still there. Or when you open a bureau drawer and come upon the sweater you gave her for her birthday, you feel a small lift as you remember the night she first wore it. Inevitably, though, there comes a time when those items, once so dear, begin to bear an onerous weight.

The Decision Is Yours

Another widow, now eight months distant from her husband's death, told me that these days she finds herself deliberating over not only her husband's effects, but over the clothing and jewelry he gave her, uncertain if she will ever again be able to put them on without feeling pain. That, too, is an anguish I didn't confront. (Eight months on, I found that wearing a piece of jewelry gifted to me by Joe provided pleasure. Seven years later, it still does.)

Recently, this widow tackled her first "[decluttering](#)" task, clearing out the cabinets of the bathroom she shared with her husband. She found it easy to let go of his medical supplies, not so easy to part with his toiletries. As for the sheets that had been on the bed the night he died, she is undecided whether to keep them or give them away. She continues to mull over what to do with the clothes in their shared closet.

"I think one day," she said, "I'll have a burst of determination and clean it all out."

"You'll know when you're ready," I responded.

"Until then, if you don't feel inclined to remove the items, don't."

As with grief, so with the task of deciding when to part with a loved one's possessions: The timetable needs to suit only one person. You. The choices you make about how that space might better serve your needs now that he or she is gone are just that — yours.

Being left behind isn't easy. You do what you have to do. There is no right; there is no wrong. There is only what feels least unsettling for you.

For the complete article: <https://www.nextavenue.org/possessions-after-loved-ones-death/>





If you know someone who has lost a loved-one, and you're afraid to mention them because you think you might make them sad by reminding them that they died... you're not reminding them. They didn't forget they died. What you're reminding them of is that you remembered that they lived, and that is a great gift!

— Elizabeth Edwards

MyPositiveOutlooks.com

GOOD NEWS STORIES

Watch Heartwarming Reaction When Ukrainian Students Get Shocking News, They Won Full College Scholarship in U.S

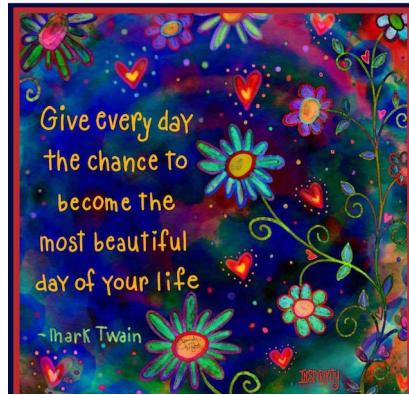


We bring you the uplifting moments when five students in war-torn Ukraine received the life-changing news that they will receive an all-expenses paid college education to study at a college in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, thanks to the incredible generosity of philanthropist Sam Rose.

The retired lawyer and real-estate developer [provided \\$2 million for scholarships to Dickinson College](#) that will pay all costs for these students, giving them a chance for a future they may not have dreamed possible.

The five students were overwhelmed with emotion upon hearing the news from Dickinson College president, John Jones.

To watch the live zoom between John Jones and these students click on this link: <https://youtu.be/dSzOdNm8Jzs>



My Mother's Lemony Chicken with Broccoli

TOTAL TIME: Prep: 15 min. Cook: 20 min. YIELD: 4 servings.

My mom used to make super succulent chicken with broccoli for our family in Montana. The few lucky guests invited for supper could not stop raving. —Jessy Drummond, Springfield, Tennessee

Ingredients

1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch strips

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon pepper

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

1/4 teaspoon paprika

1 large egg

3 tablespoons lemon juice, divided

1/4 cup butter, cubed

1 cup chicken broth

1/2 teaspoon grated lemon zest

4 cups fresh broccoli florets

Lemon wedges

Hot cooked rice, optional

Directions

- Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper. In a shallow bowl, mix flour, garlic powder and paprika. In another shallow bowl, whisk egg and 1 tablespoon lemon juice. Dip chicken in egg mixture, then in flour mixture; shake off excess.
- In a large skillet, heat butter over medium heat. Add chicken; cook, stirring occasionally, for 8-12 minutes or until no longer pink. Remove and keep warm. Add broth, lemon zest and remaining lemon juice to skillet; bring to a boil. Stir in broccoli. Reduce heat; simmer, covered, 8-10 minutes or until broccoli is tender. Serve with chicken, lemon wedges and, if desired, rice.



On The Lighter Side...

Egg-Cellent Easter Puns to Make You Hoppier Than Ever

**What did the
Easter egg ask for at
the hair salon?**

A new dye-job

GH



**Why don't rabbits
get hot in
the summer?**

**They have
hare conditioning.**

GH

Easter Egg Puns

You're a good egg.
Hope you have an
egg-stra special Easter.

What an egg-citing day.

Are you an Easter eggs-
pert?

You might not carrot all,
but you're irresistible!

This Easter Sunday,
I might whisk it!

**Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Arthur.
Arthur who?
Arthur any more Easter
eggs to decorate?**

GH

Chick Puns

The plot chickens...

...Just chicken in
on you today!

Chick me out!



Blessing

Live your truth.
Express your love.
Share your enthusiasm.
Take action towards your dreams.
Walk your talk.
Dance and sing to your music.
Embrace your blessings.
Make today worth remembering.

- Dr. Steve Maraboli

www.stevemaraboli.com

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