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Clutter 2: Books Magazines and Newspapers

By Brooke Loening

Why do people hang on to stuff?

In order to make a change, as I always say, we need to understand the subconscious reasons that keep us stuck. If those thoughts can be brought to a conscious level, then we will be in a position to make a different choice in the future. In this article we will look at some of the reasons that people can't get rid of old books, newspapers and magazines. A reminder from my previous article- the payoff for decluttering your house and office is huge. *All extraneous clutter takes up space in your life energetically- physically and emotionally.* The benefits of decluttering are that you will have extra time and energy to direct toward something that you enjoy, and there may be unknown benefits, as you will see below. My advice on clutter- give it to someone who will appreciate it or throw it out!

When people hang on to stuff they don't use or don't need it is almost always their subconscious beliefs and thoughts that are holding them back. People have different attachments to different kinds of clutter, so it will be useful to look at some of these cases individually.

Old books, magazines, and newspapers: I have a client who has been overloaded with this kind of clutter for years, especially in her office and dining room. "I can't even walk a straight line in there anymore," she told me. She didn't like the feeling of all this stuff but could not throw it out. She said it felt "heavy." I asked her what her beliefs were that kept her hanging on to all of it.

She came up with three:

"Every magazine and book I have is there because I might need to reference something or reread an article."

"I don't want to take the chance of throwing it out and then finding that I need it a week later."

"I don't want to buy any of those books again."

I asked her what the worst-case scenario was if she were to get rid of all of it. She said the worst thing that could happen was that she might need to reference one or two articles over the next several years and would never be able to find them.

The Truth

We discussed what the truth of the matter really was. The truth will always be something that we know is much closer to reality than our subconscious beliefs, which tend to be unfounded thoughts and fears. She concluded that she likely would not need to reference anything because she had not needed anything over the last two years. And if she did she

could easily find plenty of information on the Internet much more quickly than hunting through stacks of magazines. Feeling a little more empowered about it, she told me that if she really needed a book that was given away, she could get it from the library, find it on eBay, or from an Internet rare book web site. The cost would be minimal compared to the emotional drain she was experiencing now with all the clutter. She also told me that many magazines have been storing their content on their sites for years now.

In spite of these realizations, she was quite anxious about throwing anything away. We agreed that she would start slowly with just a stack of about 10 magazines. This made taking the next step easier and in fact she was eager to take on another stack. To her delight, she became less fearful and more aggressive about what she was getting rid of. After about 2 months she estimated that she had completed 85% of the job. She told me that she felt absolutely ecstatic every time she looked at her beautiful wood dining table, which had been covered up for years. She even shared a revelation- she had been using the mess as an excuse not to entertain, something she hadn't done since her divorce. Now she was ready to have friends over- and did.

An affirmation is: "I give away unused book and magazines, and I can always track down information when I need it; that way my life is lighter and someone else can enjoy those things I no longer need."

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