



It's an interesting fact that in the wild animals once trained by the mother, keep their habit tidy and clean.

They do not create clutter.

They collect what they need and use.

They may store food, but they eat what they need.

They are industrious and work as a team.



Only humans ruin their habitat.

The difference between a human parent and the animal parent, the parent in the wild, perseveres.

They use tough love and succeed in rearing disciplined, healthy offspring.



Human children collect what they want, but mostly the wants are discarded.

They store and waste food.

Unless trained to do so, rarely work as a team.



## THE 8 LEVELS OF AWARENESS FOR SUCCESSFUL SPACE CLEANING:

1. ENVIRONMENT
2. SITUATION
3. BEHAVIOUR
4. ACTIONS
5. BELIEFS
6. VALUES
7. HEALTH
8. WELLBEING

No matter what a house  
means to us,  
there's  
something nostalgic about  
the  
Place we call Home.



These eight levels are vital for a chaotic free, healthy, happy family, and a productive working environment. Each level is essential to each other! One without the other doesn't work! As we work through each level, we learn how each one interacts. Producing harmony in the home creates a healthy mind, body and soul.

These levels are self-explanatory. As you go through each step, everything falls into place, and in a sequence of an understanding. How do you know when something needs to change, and indeed would you know how to make those changes if you knew? Most people assume they need counselling or medication, rather than something simple like order and responsibility that will change your life for the better.



## WHEN THE HOME LIFE CAN'T BREATHE

When the home feels chaotic and dull, and life doesn't seem to flow anymore, then you have problems in the situation! Where obstacles are frequent, and nothing progresses either at work or home. Then you have issues in the environment. When appliances keep breaking down, and you drop things, the family is tetchy, tired, overworked, and the children are anxious. When they refuse to go to bed and play up, these are signs in the environment, which causes a situation and behavioural problem!

A chance to get back on track with new or different goals and dreams. Let go of some old ways and create new paths.

Where either parent feels undervalued, and life is sluggish, then this is time to look at the home. If laughter, joy and spontaneity have gone. And no-one is enjoying life anymore, then it's time to look at the environment. Because eventually, this will affect behaviour.

Our behaviour affects how we react and the action we take, as we may overreact in a cluttered environment because of frustrations and irritations. A streamlined environment makes for a happier home and is fundamental to learning, concentration, focusing and wellbeing. A cluttered environment changes our beliefs and values and will affect our health and wellbeing either positively or negatively. The situation is not only essential to health and well being. But also for everyone in the family and life that extends beyond our four walls.



## THE RIPPLE EFFECT

What's around you have a ripple effect? When clients were not moving forward in therapy. My first question was: 'Tell me what's going on in your environment'. The client would finally admit their home was chaotic. That meant we had to go right back to basics.

Unless the environment is chaos free, the chances of feeling good about yourself are poor. And the chances of working well is even lower. The client had choices to sort this out or not, but I'd add that the chances of improving would be slim, and time consuming in chaos.

### Heavens 2 Laws

1. Order
2. Responsibility

These two are vital for  
SPACE CLEANING.

It didn't take people long to realise how important the environment was once they saw the 8-levels of awareness.

**Copy-paste these and have them up somewhere to remind you.**

Because I'd done diplomas in Feng-Shui and Interior design then applied them in my home and workplace, I didn't need much convincing. The results were transforming. But I had no idea these two would give me insights into the psychological work I did later. Sometimes at the time we have no idea why we do the things. Or why those opportunities come up. Only later in life, does everything becomes transparent.



## A RELAXING WAY TO SPRING CLEAN

In this overly intellectual world, practical action often works best. I found space clearing was the most relaxing way of doing things because a bit a day keeps the stress at bay as opposed to weekly, monthly or when you're at a screaming point.

1. SPACE CLEANING
2. SPACE CLEARING
3. FENG-SHUI
4. INTERIOR DESIGN
5. SPRING CLEANING
6. DE-CLUTTERING

When Space Cleaning,  
Don't worry about what to wear your  
smile goes with any of  
Your clothes.



**SPACE CLEARING** incorporated everything I'd learnt as a child and young woman. But with less attention to the speed which spring-cleaning of the past had to be. Spring cleaning usually had only a few days to clear and clean because the house had to get back to normal. Those who could afford to hire help as my grandmother could the spring cleaning was quicker. But it was still hectic.

I wanted to enjoy homemaking as a heartfelt process done daily, as opposed to frantic work. I've done many years of spring-cleaning with my grandmother and aunts, plus a lot of de-cluttering with other members of the family. I prefer the middle path. Space clearing fits the bill as it's gentle and loving, steady as you go, creating peace and well-being in the home.



## BRINGING PEACE INTO YOUR HOME

**SPACE CLEANING** grew from Feng-shui in the late 80s and early 90s. And it was adapted from the ancient art and science of Feng Shui. The idea is to create a flow of good energy and gratitude throughout the house. And if de-cluttering was to be part of this method, then this also had to happen.

Life isn't measured by the  
number of breaths you  
take,  
But by the number of  
moments that take your  
breath away.



**FENG-SHUI** was very popular in the late 90s with businesses around the world. Like Interior Design, Feng-Shui is expensive to apply as the consultants can charge up to £1.000. The principle of this approach is to attract positive energy towards you, and around you. Wealth was the most important in Chinese businesses, with happiness and wellbeing in the home.

**Colours and placement matter in Feng-Shui,  
Why? Because it's classified as a science and art form.**

**INTERIOR DESIGN** is a personal thing. When I did my diploma in the 80s, most books, and magazine ideas were way out of most people's budget. Interior design is about style and incorporates space, colour, and proportion. In a way, this is a formula for decorating where a technique fits your personality. You can begin to learn the basics from books and one-day courses. There is no need to invest in expensive classes or interior designers. Once the house is clutter-free you can see what's needed.



## SPRING CLEANING

I loved spring-cleaning as a child and never more so when I helped my aunts and my grandmother on their farms. They allowed us to clean in any sequence we wanted. Consequently cleaning became a happy experience! They did the windows, we kids had rags on our feet, and like imaginary ice skaters, we polished the wooden floors!

Spring Cleaning was a traditional method, where everything went out of the house. The walls were lime washed. The floors and windows cleaned. Carpets beaten outside, mattresses hung out of the window.

The magical thing about a chaos free home, is that it feels  
Good to leave, and it feels even  
Better to come back.



Wooden floors polished, flag floors scrubbed. Curtains washed, furniture scrubbed, polished. Since modern technology, this once a year activity is hardly done. Nevertheless, this approach is powerful and done after de-cluttering.

**DE-CLUTTERING** is usual when life becomes too much. Or when someone is ill. We've had to do in the past for my mother when she became frail. When younger, we have endless energy and can't even imagine not being able to de-clutter! However, age has a way of slowing you down. And de-cluttering seems overwhelming. As was for my mother, so she would sit and direct me as to what could go and what stayed, making endless cups of tea and food. I think mum secretly enjoyed watching me as we chatted.



## WHEN LESS IS BEST...

Think about these questions seriously.

1. Would you be happier with less stuff?
2. Would you consider a smaller home?
3. Would you consider smaller work premises?
4. Why would you?
5. List the reasons.

Expansion is the norm in all areas of life, but ask yourself this” "Is everything you have necessary?"

- Have you accumulated too much stuff?
- Do you need all these things in your life?
- You may think you want them,
- But the big question is, do you need them?
- Only you will know if this is reasonable.

I'd like you to consider these reasons why you'll be happier in less with less. When everyone thought bigger is better has become the norm, we have programmes like Amazing Spaces with George Clarke where the footprint is smaller than we want, but probably actually need. We have to very aware of media hype that tries to sell us STUFF.



## A LIFE TO SUIT YOU

Even if you have the best interior designer in the world...if the place becomes cluttered, then you will have even more chaos. I love our touring caravan, and while people say to me: 'How can you live in such a small space?' I smile because this is a fantastic exercise in less is best! And we can live with fewer things.

Society keeps urging us to go larger. No one offers us the reasons why we may be happier in a smaller house with less. Many years ago a client came to me because her sons insisted she saw a psychotherapist. They phoned me to make an appointment; I refused. But I said if she books her appointment, then yes of course. When she came, she didn't look insane.

There's simplicity in  
having less around  
you.

She looked terrific. What had she done that warranted such alarm from her sons? She wanted to sell her large house (I knew of the one, and it was huge) and live in a caravan. Well, that seemed reasonable to me. I thought there are some magnificent mobile homes.

But no it was a small 12ft touring van. I chuckled to myself, but as she explained. She'd offered the house to her sons. But they didn't want the rambling house as it was too big. Neither did they want the antique furniture as it wouldn't fit in their homes. But she wasn't to sell any of it. Well, she did, and I got a furious call from one of the sons to say they had hoped I would have done something. I said I doubt any psychiatrist would section her.



## THE RIGHT BALANCE IN LIFE

For years I met her friend. And she and her husband were content to live in a farmers field for 3-months of the year, while they travelled the world. I was staggered at their zest for life. 'Time enough to have a house when we're old, she said.' They were in their mid-70s then. That was in 1999. The last time I heard of them in 2005, they had extended the living quarters by buying another caravan and attaching it to the other. I presume as a bedroom. I often think of her.

We have to figure out the right balance of having enough, saving enough for old age and emergencies and spending to keep the economy growing.

I also went through a massive de-cluttering stage, and I did this for many reasons. However, the main reason was: I never wanted my sons to have the burden we had when a family member died. Clearing a home can take weeks of hard work.

We all differ in personalities and how we view our prized possessions, but we still need to incorporate some order, responsibility and discipline. My husband was a hoarder, I am a sentimentalist, but I will throw things out. My husband found it hard to do that, hence 50-years of bolts and screws rusting in the garage.

- Easier to look after
- More time with family
- Less housework
- Feeling calmer
- Loving your Home more
- Sense of pride
- Less decorating
- Less debt
- Less worries
- Family Time,
- Fun



## SO WHAT PERSONALITY ARE YOU?

1. Minimalist
2. Sentimentalist
3. Bored lazy or indifferent
4. Hoarder
5. Collector

Most relationships fail  
Because one person did too  
much, and the other didn't do  
enough.

Sylvia Lerigo

**THE MINIMALIST** - Less is better for the minimalist. Order and simplicity is their mantra. Minimalists can quite comfortably live in a small place as long as it's streamlined. Part of me would like to be more minimalist. But I'm a bit of Laura Ashley, beach hut, modernist, and traditionalist all rolled into one, so I need order with this eclectic style!

**THE SENTIMENTALIST** - I'm on the lower end of this spectrum because I can't stand clutter! I'm not anxious about clearing. Rarely do I find myself concerned with unexpected visitors, as our house is clean and tidy. If you feel uncomfortable about unexpected visitors then maybe you need to de-clutter! I'd love a room in each style! I like modern, traditional, minimalist and chintzy, but this would still have to be streamlined look. I like vibrant colours, yet drawn to whites and creams. I love roaring fires and cosy panelled rooms, dark and traditional or light and airy. Some antiques I like, others not! The truth is I appreciate all styles as long as there's no clutter and the form reflects the person's personality!



## FALSE EVIDENCE APPEARING REAL

**THE BORED, LAZY OR INDIFFERENT** - Generally the motto is: 'Tomorrow will do!' This person makes excuses for their untidiness, smirks or laughs at others who are tidy. Mottos hang around their place saying: “a clean house is a boring person,” when deep down they know this is false evidence appearing real. Many in this bracket use, (not all I may add) use this excuse for procrastination, lack of discipline and laziness.

The best gift a parent  
can give a family  
Is time, order,  
Routine, attention, love,  
commitment and fun.  
You can't do any of this  
in chaos.

Sylvia Lerigo

They haven't yet figured out that little and often are better than chaos! Maybe they were never taught order and responsibility when young, or are rebelling! But this environment can be a borderline hoarder.

These people have some of the sentimental and the hoarding instinct!

**THE HOARDER:** Hoarders have an emotional and mental illness and often severe. We've all watched TV programmes about hoarders, and

usually, we're puzzled at their behaviour. My mother was a hoarder, not as bad as my brother-in-law. We had 480 black sacks of rubbish when he was hospitalised and flagged up by Social Services as a danger to himself. And that was without the old carpets, décor and electrical appliances, broken in the outhouses. Hoarders need specialist help because the clutter has become an attachment to memories.



## HOARDING IS AN ILLNESS

Hoarding is a serious condition and needs Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). And other dynamic methods like Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP).

The time taken can be months of rehabilitation as was with my brother-in-law. While we all have this level of attachment to things, most of us don't hoard to the point that life becomes dangerous. It took us three weeks of clearing every day from 8 am to 8 pm. Only the thought of him going in a nursing home made him more agreeable to changes.

What is the definition of hoarding? When you walk into a room and say:  
I HAVEN'T ENOUGH STUFF!

Even when the hoarder's health is in jeopardy, hoarders will stubbornly refuse help. They usually have to go to a nursing home or hospital before anyone can clear the house. Hoarding is a tremendous burden on others.

**THE COLLECTOR:** Most collectors collate their collection and like hoarders, and guilty of having too much. But most are in a neat formation on shelves on show. I rarely buy on a whim now. I ask my self this:

'Is this a preference or a need?'  
This gives me time to assess what I need?

Sylvia Lerigo

While many would consider me boring, I believe this is respectful.



## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- Have you formed unrealistic attachments to things?
- Would you know if you had?
- Do you have particular things you use and would be upset if these were damaged or stolen?
- Are you frightened to give stuff away to charity in case you regret it?
- Do you keep things just because of the way they make you feel?
- Are you sentimental and keep chipped things?
- Do keep things because a friend gave you this to you?
- Do you keep to give to a family member one day,
- Or, to leave in your will?
- Would losing your collection make you feel anxious or sad?
- Do you have to move things to sit down?
- Do you bring in the post and drop it anywhere you can find?
- Do you have last week's newspapers lying around?
- Or a stack of papers on your kitchen counter?
- Are your clothes in heaps on the floor?
- Do you always mislay things?
- Do you frequently incur late fees from library or movie rentals?
- Can you lay your hands on invoices and bills?
- Do you keep spares because the original might break?
- Are you a compulsive buyer?
- Do you go to car boot sales?
- Do you have more than one type of collection?
- Do you search for items to add to your existing extensive collection?



- Are you always on the lookout for the next thing, bargain, that valuable something that someone has missed?
- Do you keep stuff to you sell on eBay, but never do?
- Have you got as much if not more than you had five years ago?
- Are photo albums, a vast array of books, CDs, videos tidy piled up?
- When you run out of space, do you buy another storage unit?
- Has someone in your family told you ENOUGH!
- Does the family get frustrated with you?
- Do you have items stored in a rented unit?
- Have you considered upgrading to a bigger house because you've run out of space?
- Do you want to keep growing your collections?
- But don't know where to put them all?
- Are your things in every room and every space in the house?
- Can you climb the stairs without falling over something?
- Have you bought in a sale once too often, or purchased on a whim?
- How many mistakes have you made in the last year, but couldn't be bothered to take them back?
- Do you always buy one, get one free, or buy in bulk!
- Have you got clothes with tags still on?
- Are you sentimental about things?

Maybe this is the time for you to recognise when too much, is too much? Without exploring more deeply why you do things, the cycle will continue. That's why right now I'm not asking you to start clearing, because you need to emotionally address why you won't or can't remove things?



## FREE TECHNIQUES

Download the free technique called the Sieves and the Protection on the FREE TECHNIQUES page. To keep my momentum up clearing, I implement these Reiki and Seichem principles daily, and I've become so skilled at doing this, I've become unconsciously competent. These principles have become second nature.

### JUST FOR TODAY:

1. DO NOT WORRY
2. DO NOT ANGER
3. BE GRATEFUL
4. WORK HONESTLY
5. BE LOYAL
6. BE RESPECTFUL
7. HAVE FAITH
8. LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY

Take your time to  
fully understand yourself,  
means  
you'll never jump  
on the clutter treadmill  
again...

Space CLEANING is about integrity, respect and balance in the home, and the workplace. It's a combination of traditional spring-cleaning, which if applied today, especially with fitted carpets and soft furnishing that often cause allergies, life would be healthier. De-cluttering would never be necessary if just a bit of clearing and tidying is done every day, with everyone in the household trained from young to be respectful of their environment. You would have what I call environmental bliss!



## A TRUE STORY

(Names have been changed)

Tom was depressed, clingy and weepy wandering around the house like a lost child. Freda, his wife, couldn't even go to the toilet. Doctor Hall visited him while I was there. He was the same doctor who came 12-years earlier when my sister died suddenly. I liked his no-nonsense attitude, and I knew he would do something.

**STOP, & STEP BACK**  
Look at your home through  
the eyes of a stranger.  
What do you see?

Doctor Hall looked at the floor in the hall, admiring the parquet flooring, and said to Tom: 'I want you to polish this every day from 10 am to 11 am, for a full hour and again in the afternoon. Every day I will come and see what you've done.'

He left, I smiled, even then I knew a thing about psychology. Not wanting to disappoint the doctor, Tom started that day. Over the weeks, he improved. When they sold the house, the floor was what clinched the deal. So if you do feel low, sad, depressed or even a tad lazy, physical work is the best cure.

But before we start, I'd like to explain a bit about those techniques I recommend from my website. Two methods used from 1995 stand out and ones I believe may help you! These are easy to listen to. Subtle and work indirectly and directly at clearing negativity. They defuse objections, excuses and stubbornness. They go through the back door via a story and metaphors, eradicating the nonsense in your life, without anguish and tears.



## STEPPING BACK

The Sieves and Protection can be downloaded from the FREE Technique page. Listen to these two techniques for three days before you start any work. But in the meantime, you can do this useful exercise I call stepping back and evaluating. You need to do this before you step up.

## STEP UP AND EVALUATE

Imagine you are an Estate agent and stand outside the front and look at the house critically. Remember, this is the first impression people see. Does it look clean and welcoming? I've driven up to a house and driven away again based on what the house looks like.

A bad attitude is  
like a flat tyre,  
if you don't change it,  
you'll go nowhere...

Go into the hall, is it shabby, untidy, cluttered? Have you got coats and other clutter here? Make notes of areas that are scruffy, untidy and cluttered? Now walk from room to room. Go upstairs, walk through the bedrooms. Do you like this room? Open a wardrobe door, drawers. Do you need these clothes, shoes, bags, shoes?

Go into bathrooms/shower-rooms. What do you see? Come downstairs. Reflect, can you honestly say that you need everything you've accumulated? Be honest. Now go around the garden, into shed, outhouses and garage, ask the same questions. Sometimes you don't see the truth because sentimentality is running your life.



## BEGIN WITH AN END IN MIND

Don't start clearing at this stage; use this time to look, decide and plan. Make notes of each room. Have you got too much in these areas? More than 10 of YES, and you're in trouble. You need to clear big time, and the way to do this is systematical—one step at a time.

Lazy is such an ugly word.  
I prefer to call it selective participation.  
[coolfunnyquotes.com](http://coolfunnyquotes.com)

We all have some of these things in the garage, loft, spare room, cupboards, wardrobe or sheds - time to be tough.

- Electrical appliances you've never used?
- More than twelve place settings in china?
- Baking dishes you never use.
- Saucepans, frying pans,
- Bakeware,
- Glassware?
- Too many utensils, Cutlery?
- More than three brushes/brooms
- More than ten towels?
- More than three bedding sets,
- More than two vacuums.

### IN THE LOFT?

- Toys from the kids
- Old suitcases
- TVs/videos
- Sewing machines,
- Pictures. Paintings
- Fabric, curtains
- Pillows. Quilts
- Carpet oddments
- Furniture
- Tatty decorations

I knew someone who her grandmothers' furniture for her second home. One she never did get, because time ran out.



## FOOD STORAGE

- Have you got more than two of tinned food?
- More than two of spices and dry foods?
- Is the freezer chock-a-block?
- Is there waste from your fridge each week?
- Too much died food?

## HOBBIES

- Too many books you haven't read?
- Too many CDs with cellophane on?
- Courses you were going to do, but never did.
- Bikes/exercise equipment you've not used?
- Stuff from more than six hobbies?

## OFFICE

- More than two computers/laptops?
- Old mobile phones you've kept.
- Printers, copiers, landline phones?
- Office furniture and chairs
- Motivational books/CDs/DVDs

Who knew that the hardest part of being an adult is  
figuring out what to cook for  
Dinner every night for the rest of your life!



## GARAGE

- Six or more of the same spanners?
- Six or more hammers?
- Six or more screwdrivers?
- Two or more drills?
- Camping, tents, stoves, awnings, gazebos?

## GARDEN

- Have you got more than two spades, rakes, etc?
- More than two wheelbarrows?
- More than two hedge cutters/shears?
- More than one lawnmower?
- Old string, twine; bits of plastic?
- Old gardening gloves/aprons?
- Wellingtons and plastic shoes?
- Plant pots and hand tools?
- Compost, sand, garden canes, boxes?
- Bits of wood you wanted to keep?

My husband had 12 spades and shovels. I was seriously puzzled. As I said: 'You're not a flipping octopus you can't use them all at once.' I wasn't so polite as to say flipping, but the first letter and connotation were the same. He laughed. But I noticed he brought them out of the skip. I finally persuaded him to give them away to someone starting a gardening business.



## PERSONAL THINGS:

- More than three hairbrushes?
- More than three of the same cosmetic products?
- More than three perfume/aftershaves?
- More than three combs/brushes?
- More than two hairdryers?
- More than three nail clippers?
- Clothes with tags still on.
- More than ten pairs of shoes?
- More than six handbags
- More than two of shampoo/conditioner.
- More than a dozen sets of underwear
- More than a dozen pairs of socks?
- More than three winter or summer coats?
- Clothes in the loft and suitcases

Teach children to do simple tasks from a young age; this is future dependent on their success as an adult. You won't be admired for your parenting skills if you don't teach them early. But before you decide on clearing, you can start in more straightforward ways, which educates the family and yourself. All these tasks on the next page take one to two minutes to do. I know because I've timed them.

Going in a teen's room is like going to Ikea. You pop in to take a look and come out with 4 bowls, 6 mugs. A set of plates, and some cutlery.



## **SIMPLE STRATEGIES TO TEACH CHILDREN**

- Take the lid off, put back on.
- Take clean clothes off, hang up clothes straight away
- Take dirty clothes off, put in the laundry basket!
- Take off shoes, put away.
- Take something out, put back.
- Finished a magazine/paper, throw away.
- Open a wardrobe door then close it behind you.
- Dirty dishes go in the dishwasher or do the washing up!

### **Clean and tidy as you go:**

- The sinks/bath/shower
- Hang up wet towels.
- Roll up the garden hose?
- Put the garden tools away.
- Make your bed before you leave the bedroom
- Take out toys, put toys back.
- Plump up cushions before bed.
- Tidy reading material daily.
- Empty the bins daily,
- Wipe down surfaces after you finished working
- Wash off dirty fingermarks straight away.

**FOCUS ON THE SMALL AREAS AND  
BIGGER AREAS TEND TO FALL INTO PLACE!**



## HOW LONG TO SPACE CLEAN?

Many people ask me how long Space Cleaning will take. But this depends on many factors. Those small tasks on page 23 take from one to two minutes to do. But it all depends on:

- How organised you are.
- How much clutter you have,
- How much others will help you.
- How strong and healthy you are,
- How old you are, but more importantly,
- How determined, motivated and willing you are?

After doing your appraisal on each room, you're naturally going to want to start straight away. But I'd still urge you to go slowly continuing this critical prep stage. Start by refusing all extravagant or useless gifts! I started this in 2010 and said: 'No more Birthday or Christmas gifts anymore. I have all I need.' Giving for the sake of giving, to people who have everything has become vulgar and why I stopped.

Instead, I enjoy the act of giving unconditionally to the less fortunate. Then divide between the wealthy and the poor is too big. Instead, I give money to a local charity, or like my friend, you could support an orphan and provide for them as my friend has done for thirty-odd years.

Stop destroying  
The Earth,  
It's where I keep all  
my stuff.



## GUIDELINES ON SPACE CLEANING

Talk, discuss, decide and work together—no blaming, shouting, demanding or nagging. Allow everyone to choose where and how each one wants to help you? However, the persons own room is mandatory and their responsibility to clean, as yours is yours! There can be no procrastination or excuses.

If there are three adults in the house, then three adults have to do the heavy, physical work of clearing and humping bags and boxes away. No matter what age, children over three years old can help you. Give them small tasks to do. Teenagers? Offer them the proceeds of any car boot sale you do as long as they do this. I did this with my teenage sons. They loved the experience.

- Bring everyone together for a meeting.
- Discuss what needs doing.
- Make a date to start clearing.
- Adults decide on the date.
- Every adult who shares the house must help.

Does anyone else  
have  
Plastic bags full of  
plastic bags or is it  
just me?

If you live alone, you have no one to blame but yourself. But you could hire help if you can afford to do so. Or ask your friends to help you.

## STEPPING UP!

- Make lists on what's needed doing.
- Order a skip...go for big rather than small!
- No bribes for teenage help.



## THE LIST TECHNIQUE

I'm a big advocate of lists.

Fold an A4 piece of paper into eight squares.

Each square is one day, with the eighth is an extra day.

In each of these squares list the jobs you want to do.

The size of the area dictates the size of the list.

Five jobs are usual for the best results.

Non-completed jobs go into the eighth box for the following week.

This method is excellent when doing a degree and all work-related projects.

Having a skip gives you a ruthless time frame to get cracking, as most skips can only be a week.

No bribes. You can have a reward system. But there must NOT be any payments given to children for help. All adults (this includes teenagers) should help regardless. If your teen expects you to treat them as an adult, then he or she must take responsibility. Small children love to help, so give them a chance to help you.

While praise and recognition is validation, other incentives help to keep everyone going. YOU COULD, split all the proceeds from the saleable items equally. Have days out, or a weekend away. Some people have earned £1,000 in the past. Too many people in one room can get too much so spread the working areas. In brackets are the mandatory requirements; however, those that share work act as a team. When individual rooms completed, help others. Because this is not only a team-building exercise, but also this is about being a loving, generous family as well.



## MAKE YOUR DATE TO START SO EVERYONE CAN SEE

- Order a large skip
- Collect these things together.
- You may need a dozen rolls of black sacks,
- A dozen cardboard boxes.
- Masks and gloves
- Food for sandwiches and drinks
- Allow people to have their music on, but,
- No Mobiles allowed. Switch Off.

You may dismiss face masks but don't, the dust can be quite bad in places, even in tidy homes. Homes that are cluttered, face-masks are necessary.

- Recycling (this is usually damaged stuff),
- Charity shops (clean and wearable)
- Offer to family
- To sell (good to excellent condition)

Only ever give and sell things you would buy yourself: any worn, dirty, stained, torn (unless fashionable jeans) and old chuck.

- A house that is a little untidy/cluttered, in a weekend.
- A house that hasn't had a clear out for a year, then maybe a month.
- Cluttered for five years or more...this may take two months.
- Clutter of more than five years...this may take three to six months.



## PLAN OF ACTION

- **EACH PERSON'S BEDROOM** (occupier)
- **HALL:** (under the stairs as well) parents!
- **LANDING:** airing cupboard (parents)
- **BATHROOM & CLOAKROOM** (Whoever)
- **GUEST ROOM** (Allocate someone for this)
- **KITCHEN** (Shared)
- **UTILITY ROOM** (shared)
- **LOUNGE** (Shared)
- **DINING ROOM** (Shared)
- **OFFICE** (occupier)

Sometimes  
I wish I was an  
octopus,  
so I could do  
all the rooms  
at once...



If the office is out of bounds for everyone other than the main occupier, then, this person does this room, but do not lock your self away. Switch off the computer. Emails are a distraction. Get on with clearing this room, starting with all the drawers, cupboards, books, paperwork; old course work, and don't forget the computer desktop.

- **LOFT/ATTIC** (joint effort if there is room)
- **SHED** (adults)
- **GARAGE** (adults)
- **GARDEN** (Family)
- **OTHERS**

Maybe if we  
tell people the  
brain is an app,  
they'll start  
Using it!



## OUTSIDE HELP

If you can afford to employ a cleaning team (usually two women) for a weekend, then do this, it's money well spent. Also, book a professional carpet cleaner. But do this well in advance. Employing a company to Spring Clean your house from top to bottom; might be advantageous if you:

### Want to redecorate the house after the Space Clean.

I know from experience you will look at the place with a far more critical eye and see how dirty things have got, this may be the best time to check out which rooms need complete redecorating or to just emulsion everywhere and feature walls, a lick and a promise.

Carpets cleaned professionally might be something you may want to consider along with the upholstery and curtains? Prepare meals in advance. Make sure you have a supply of food in for sandwiches and drinks.

Night before:

Sort out old clothes, cleaning things, masks and gloves, go to bed early, put the alarm on. And avoid alcohol the night before.

### A LICK AND A PROMISE.

For our 50th wedding anniversary; we did what my grandmother called a 'lick and a promise' Where we did a feature wall in striking budget wallpaper, and the rest of the walls emulsion The following year we decorated each room properly





## **FIRST DAY**

I'm going to assume this is a Saturday. Rise early and have a good family breakfast together. Aim to start work at around 9 am. Separate bags and boxes into four sections, hand these out to the helpers. Allocate someone to make the 11 am drinks and someone to prepare the sandwiches for lunch. Open all windows. Get rid of that staleness.

## **FIRST AREA**

Entrance hall: First impressions are here. While parents/adults are doing this, the teenagers and younger children can do their bedrooms. Empty under the stairs and other cupboards and clear out. Be utterly ruthless! Throw out big time. Not seen or used in a year has to go! Be systematic.

## **STOP FOR FAMILY LUNCH**

Take this time to chat and encourage each other. Tick things off the lists. Compare and decide what's going into the skip and chuck in straight away before you have lunch. Spend no more than an hour with lunch.

## **AFTERNOON**

Clean the cleared area thoroughly, do windows and mirrors, the cupboard fronts and inside, vacuum or wash the floors. You may have to help each other as people vary in their speed. I've mentioned before, sharing and teamwork are essential.



## TEA BREAK

Cake and tea at 4 pm, chat and enjoy the time together. After tea photo, things to sell and everyone throw all rubbish in the skip. Parents: make an evening meal. Don't be tempted to carry on, this is your choice if you only have teenagers in the house, but please stick to bedtime routine for children. If you relax and watch a film and go to bed early, you'll feel much happier and ready for the next day.

## DAY TWO

I cannot say this enough! Be ruthless, chuck out and chuck out again until the room looks empty.

By now, you should be well into the swing of things. You'll be more enthusiastic and enjoying the togetherness. Don't forget to clean as you go along. Photo sharing can be done in the evening as can CDs and DVDs can be! Children can clear utility, or bathrooms, or continue clearing their rooms if they haven't finished.

But keep to the day one plan.

## DAY THREE

Delegate one person to take stuff to charity, the recycling and sorts the stuff for selling. Do all the photos for selling. By this time most people decide not to take as much to charity as they first thought, if this is you, then skip the lot now, because you're unlikely to do so otherwise. And this is not what you want. Follow through the same system with the rest of the house.



## GARDEN

The garden may take you three or four weekends to do. To keep the cost of skips down, we offered bricks, building blocks, slabs, paving, and garden pots to neighbours and friends. What they didn't want, we put out for free. We never saw anyone call, but all went. The rest went into the skip.

If gardening is a chore in the future, have a handyman/gardener, if only for the odd day as the money well spent. However, if this isn't possible, work out a shared plan of action for the future. Life will flow better when you feel happy in the environment, and the reasons are simple:

- The environment creates a situation
- A situation affects behaviour
- Behaviour affects capabilities
- Capabilities affect beliefs and values
- Beliefs and values affect health & wellbeing.

## BE SMART

- Break the clutter habit for good
- Don't hoard, sell or give away,
- Try and work smarter, not harder,
- Once cleared, keep going over old ground.
- Be ruthless now, and the future,
- No Luck on selling? Give to charity?
- Don't stop the momentum; keep going.

It's really complicated  
to make something  
simple, but very simple  
To make something  
complicated.



I know the voices  
in my head aren't real...  
But sometimes their  
ideas are just  
absolutely awesome!



## YOUR CHILDHOOD MAY HAVE INFLUENCED YOU

In the past, I was the sentimentalist. And the multiplier, which was all down to my childhood. A lack of fundamental things, so I tended to multiply underwear and socks as an adult and then when I became a mother. These basics were lacking in my childhood. A dozen pants and socks were the norms for me. I liked to see a draw full of these things. When I was clearing my books to sell and give to students, I found I'd duplicated these as well.

The year I was cured of multiplying was in 1996, and I bought one pack of three underpants for my husband in M&S, when usually I'd have picked up four packets of three sets. Everything had to be a dozen. My cure was after I self-analysed my behaviour and thinking by using my techniques. And asking myself this question: Is this a preference or a need?

Try not to become a person of success but a person of value.

### Sometimes less said is best.

My husband denied he was a hoarder. Many do. He believed his garage was tidy, and yet if he were to ask any of his friends, they would say the opposite. One friend springs to mind.

He gazed around the mess in 2014, as he helped my husband bring yet more stuff in and said. 'My garage is a disgrace as well...I think when I've helped you bring this cupboard in (10-drawer metal unit to contain the ever-growing spanners), I'll go back and clear the lot out of my garage.' He paused.



## HUMOUR HELPS

'After all, if my wife kept our house as bad as my garage, I'd complain, I'd probably want a divorce.' I smiled and chuckled a lot that day. I didn't have to say a darn thing. Sometimes less said is best. A few weeks later, when I suggested a clear out, Gordon was agreeable.

He put a weekend aside, as I did, however almost six weeks later we were still clearing, and he still has masses of de-cluttering to do. I have to say my husband was shockingly behaved and his actions were that of a two-year-old having his broken toys thrown in the dustbin.

I saw a side of him I'd never seen before in 53 years. If you go back to the six levels, you'll notice that behaviour is level three. Actions are level four. If I did a Freudian analysis on my husband, this would be down to his teddy being washed without his permission when he was a child.

On a practical level, this was no more than stubbornness and his need for control of *his* domain. However, as I pointed out when I need to go into the garage, (which on occasions I did), I couldn't avoid the junk, or the cables all over the floor, because he never cleared away after each job. But relationships are about humour and compromises with a dose of rightness.

Peace of mind comes from within.  
You can't change the world but you can change your thoughts.  
And you can change a Part of the environment by starting in your OWN PLACE  
Cause a Ripple Effect



## KNOW YOURSELF

I'm a realist, and while we shared the house, and we'd been married over 53 years at the time, I had my sanctuary in the garden nestled under a huge tree where I can sew and be creative. My office (in the house) was, up until 2015, my therapy clinic. Now completely changed and streamlined for my work today. Work that is very different from when I worked face to face.

### Now I'm face to face with my Mac!

But, I can put my hand to anything, which always surprises my husband. That's because I tidy up as I go along, which means I feel calm and relaxed whenever I enter my office or my hut, but I also get so much more done.

Your future is created by  
what you do today not  
tomorrow.



As a volunteer, I was trained never to judge, even when the house was dreadful, and I'd been in some pretty awful places. I went into environments; others refused point-blank to enter. For years I helped people with this mental illness. Between smelling like a hamster, catching fleas and head lice or some lunatic cat attacking people (never me) to address the emotional needs of hoarders.

I've been lucky to escape illnesses diseases. We've had many houses clearances and when under a tight schedule, this is extremely stressful and can take you ages to recover and while I suggest you use the techniques to prepare you.



## ORDER AND RESPONSIBILITY

Unless your environment has order and someone take responsibility, becomes the leader, the stress will be intolerable. If we lived as a child in clutter, we either don't mind it, or we seriously do. My childhood home was cluttered; consequently, I loath untidiness, not that I'm house proud, but even I occasionally need to sort things out.

You'll know if clutter is ruining your life by the way you feel when you walk into the house, your office, your car or the garden.

- If you sigh and exhale a lot
- Feel dread at walking into the house
- You become irritated or bad-tempered
- Feel abused, a slave, put on?
- Doing everything yourself
- Are tired all the time
- Are you thinking of walking out?
- A divorce?

Start as you mean to go on. Don't run away; life has a way of following you. Be brave; look at the environment, and insist on changes. Walk outside and in the house with everyone who lives there. Her critical, talk and share, listen to ideas. There is always a beginning a middle and an end in sight.

### THE FEEL-GOOD FACTOR

We rarely succeed unless  
We first feel grateful for what  
we have.

So, enjoy doing the little  
things first and  
Experience a deeper  
satisfaction.

Remember; The more things  
we have, the more we  
become slaves.

That's called the feel-good  
factor  
Sylvia Lerigo