

# Free Decluttering Guide

Special thanks to my guest *Clutter Clearing Coach* Gaby Abdelgadir who inspired this guide.

Decluttering can be a difficult but rewarding skill to attain. I say *skill* because decluttering is never a one-and-done kind of thing. It's not like going on a crash diet to lose a bunch of weight, only to gain it right back again.

One of the things I discussed with Gaby is that decluttering is primarily a spiritual exercise. If you start with *things* without recognizing the spiritual component, you'll really miss the point of it all. However, you don't need to be a spiritual guru to enjoy the benefits of decluttering. In fact you might find, through the discipline of decluttering, that you actually grow spiritually.

## Where to Start

A couple years ago I did something almost by accident that a lot of people set out to do intentionally but are often not very successful at...I lost weight, and it wasn't because I was sick.

In fact, I wasn't even focused on losing weight. I lost weight because I learned that I was consuming ingredients that were not serving me, helping me or even necessary. I decided to eliminate the consumption of those ingredients, and as a result I lost weight.

The instruction I got was to not even change my diet or exercise routine at first. The first thing I was to do was simply *observe* what it was I was putting into my body - just be *aware* of it. As I became aware of what I was putting into my body I started making adjustments. When I realized what I was eating, I decided I didn't want it and I stopped consuming it.

Similarly, when it comes to decluttering, the first thing to do is just to become AWARE of the energy that surrounds you. It starts with *being present*. Before making any physical or external changes, you may want to simply just take an inventory of your feelings - or the energy you feel - towards the things and people in your life.

The key is to not get overwhelmed. If you think you have to do too much, you probably won't even start. Think of this as a marathon and not a sprint.

According to Gaby, there are four places to focus on decluttering:

- Home
- Time
- Mind
- Relationships

With each of these areas, begin with gratitude. Be thankful you have a home, however cluttered it may be. If you are a homeowner vs a renter, be grateful. However big or small your home is, be grateful. Be grateful that you have the same amount of time as the most successful and productive people in the world. Be grateful for the people in your lives - whatever role they may

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have played. Whether a bully or a beauty, you have learned valuable lessons from them. You may end up regretting any actions you take that don't come from gratitude.

Accept responsibility. The home, schedule, relationships and the clutter you have is your responsibility. You chose to bring these things into your life.

## Home

Gaby suggests there are three main areas of your home you want to begin with: Your entryway, kitchen and master bedroom. Pick one area and then, one by one, simply be present in that area of your home and just be open to what you see.

Also, very important, bring a notebook with you.

You may want to begin with a prayer or intention focused on gratitude. Ask to be open to whatever it is that God, your subconscious mind, etc. wants to show you.

As you stand there, take a good look at the objects in your surroundings, how they are laid out and simply write down if there is anything that stands out to you as having a negative or less-than-supportive energy to it - anything you're less than happy about. Don't pass any judgement or ignore it. You don't have to get rid of or change anything at this point. Just be aware of the energy.

You may also want to note what *kind* of energy, if you can name it, you associate with your items or surroundings.

## Time

Similarly as with your home, grab your notebook and keep an open mind. Take a look at your schedule and just *notice* how you spend your time. Don't judge it or change it just yet. Just take a look and see how you spend your time. If you don't have a schedule that you can look back on, take out a piece of paper and jot down to the best of your recollection how you spend your time on a regular basis.

## Mind

For the mind, jot down in your notebook what kinds of media you consume and how often or how much you consume. Again, no judgment, just write it all down.

## Relationships

The first thing to do would be to make a list of the people in your life that you feel the most emotional reaction towards. It might be someone in your past or someone you currently have dealings with.

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Ofentimes this might be someone who has hurt you or someone you have a hard time forgiving. At this point we're not jumping into forgiveness, crossing people off your shopping list or blocking people's calls. We just want to be aware of the people in our lives and what kind of energy we have towards them.

After making a list of the people that produce the strongest emotional reaction, then list the people that you live with, your neighbors, co-workers, friends and anyone else you can think of that you come in contact with on a fairly regular basis.

Also, if there is someone that comes to mind that is deceased, go ahead and write their names down as well. It could be that you will need to do some decluttering work with the energy you hold towards them.

Keep in mind that there is a difference between someone who does not support you and someone who does not support *your greatest good*. There is a difference. For example, if you have a bad habit such as a gambling or drinking problem, people who have your greatest good in mind are not going to support that behavior. Just because they don't support a behavior or a certain opinion you hold doesn't mean they don't support you. Ask for wisdom to have discernment to see who is really dragging you down and who just needs understanding.

Now, at this point, once you've created all these lists, you may be feeling totally overwhelmed - and you haven't even begun decluttering yet! That's okay. It's perfectly normal. You may want to take a break to take care of yourself and come back to this when you've recuperated.

Congratulate yourself for taking the first steps towards decluttering! Celebrate every victory!

## When to Start

The time to start is immediately. However, the important thing to remember is that decluttering is a discipline or a habit that you need to develop. It will happen gradually, slowly over time. You will need to be patient with yourself and don't expect miraculous results at first.

Often people will start decluttering during the holidays or times off. They will get big grandiose ideas of decluttering everything in their lives, and then, just like someone who signs up for a gym membership in the beginning of January and gives up two weeks later, they give up right away or get distracted with other things.

I would recommend you schedule a regular time in your week for decluttering. It doesn't have to be a lot of time. Start with 30 minutes every Saturday morning or whatever feels comfortable to you.

## What's Next?

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Once you have your lists made up and your clutter clearing time scheduled the next thing to do would be to take your first scheduled decluttering time to review your list and prioritize the items in each of your four categories - starting with the most urgent.

Once your list is prioritized you'll want to get together with a trusted individual and review your list. This person could be a partner, spouse, friend, mentor, coach, etc. Talk about the items on your list and why you feel the way you do about your home, your time, your mental stimulation and your relationships. Tell them you'd like to begin making changes and ask their opinion on what you're thinking of doing.

They may be able to provide valuable feedback that you hadn't thought of. They may be able to help you reframe some of your perspectives so they have more positive energy.

Once you have a plan and some support for what to do with your clutter, it's time to take action. It's probably best to begin with an item rather than a relationship. Identify one thing you want to remove from your life and bless it. Then, release it. You may need to either throw it away or take it somewhere to donate it. Don't "put it aside" to donate later. Do it now. Make it an event. Then...celebrate! Celebrate every victory!

### Remember...

What does clutter tell us?

- We're human
- We've got opportunity for growth

You are in control, not the media, not your items and not your relationships.

People, things and media come into our lives because we allow them to come into our lives. The reason we need to declutter is because we haven't yet perfected the skills of creating boundaries and letting go of things when we no longer need them.

With every step, pray for wisdom, especially when it comes to relationships. Items don't have feelings, but people do. You don't want to burn bridges. Release people in the most loving and graceful way possible.

With time, you will have more and more of what you want in your life and less and less of what you don't. In fact, you might surprise yourself and find just how fun this can be!