

August, 2008

When thinking about a name for this newsletter, I realized that an organized life starts with a day, today. So, think of the Organized Life as a path, not a destination.

Start on that path Today! I am not promising that every day will be perfectly organized, because it won't be. It is great, though, at the end of the day, to know you made positive steps towards a less stressful, more joyful, more productive Organized Life.

What does your Organized Day look like?

- You wake up at the right time of day, leaving you refreshed but also with time to spare to get things done.
- You and your family eat delicious and healthy foods for breakfast, because that is what is stocked in your cabinets and you have time in the morning to prepare the meal.
- You and your family leave your home with all the items you need for your days, with a positive and calm attitude because the expectations of self and each family member are well defined and clearly communicated to all.
- You improve the world around you today with your efforts and your positive attitude.
- You work through your office or home day in an effective way (best use of time and resources), not just efficient (least use of time and resources) and get the things that have to get done completed. You can do this because you
 - Have clear priorities as to what is most important today, this week and this month,
 - Are flexible enough to consider external changes from others,
 - Identify interruptions and keep them at a minimum, then
 - Retain focus on the high priority tasks to today.
- You have time for self, health and wellness or recreation – perhaps a walk after dinner; family – that evening walk involves a spouse, pet or child;
- You take time to jot down a few thoughts for tomorrow, and
- You go to bed in a timely manner knowing that the things that need to be done are done.

An Organized Life starts with your choices today. I have faith in each of you, and in mankind in general, to make choices to change for the better. I am suggesting that you can work in small bits of your perfect day, your organized life in to your every day. If the mental image of your perfect day shows you

- 10 pounds lighter? take a step and take a walk, or go to the grocery for healthier snacks;
- On time for events? buy a watch or a reliable calendar, and leave 5 minutes earlier today for work;
- Sipping tropical drinks on a beach in Bimini-can I go, too? work some island music onto your I-Pod or a 10 minute stop on a sunny park bench with eyes closed, imagining that beach!

Your Organized Day can be today, with a few changes in your regular routine. Even if the change is just your attitude. I have been spending a lot of time talking about attitude with my kids, about how as they get older, their personality and life will be influenced by how they choose to deal with adversity. So, Decide that the organizing you do today is worth it for the benefits tomorrow, and change will come easier!

Here are 10 things you can do right now, today to live an organized life. Pick one a week for the next 10 weeks, and you'll be more organized by Autumn! Getting organized does not have to be overwhelming or painful! And consistent effort will produce noticeable results.

Cancel Unsolicited Mail and Catalogs. Call the 800-numbers on the catalogs and remove yourself from the mailing lists; then shred the covers and recycle the rest. Better yet, contact: Mail Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 643, Carmel, NY 10512, to remove your name from mailing lists, and visit www.catalogchoice.org, <http://proquo.com/> www.dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglistdave and www.greendimes.com to stop the arrival of unwanted catalogs.

Process In-coming Mail and Paper. Stand over a recycling bin, and purge every piece of mail that you don't need. Then sort what's left into "next action" piles: *to read, to file, to pay, to call*. Assign dates on your calendar to follow through with these actions. Do this daily for one week, and you will eventually get into the habit of doing it every day.

Don't Buy Anything New. Use up what you have before you buy a replacement product. This will help you clear clutter and save money.

Discard and Donate. Discard broken and nonfunctioning items. Donate unwanted items that are still usable. Do this periodically, and make this type of de-cluttering a regular event. If you want to donate but don't know who to call, check out my Recycling Guide at www.PeaceOfMindPO.com.

Reduce, Re-use, Recycle. Consume less, re-use when you can, and pass on items that are weighing you down that others might enjoy.

Imagine a Perfect Day. Leave and arrive on time, prioritize your in-box, tackle the most urgent stuff first, and dedicate yourself to the task at hand.

Focus on Today. Painting your living room or finding a new job are long-term projects; jot them down in a notebook designated for long-term goals, and focus on what you can change today.

Set Boundaries. Use a timer and work on a project for a specific period of time, without interruption. Designate a certain time period during which you will not answer calls or e-mails.

Say No. Look in the mirror, and practice saying *no* politely but firmly. Do this until you are comfortable saying no in a variety of situations. Someone may be needed to perform a task, but that someone doesn't always have to be you.

Decide What You Don't Want to Do. Designate days that you will not perform certain tasks (e.g., chore-free Saturdays, laundry-free Mondays, cooking-free Thursdays). Knowing that all the items on the list don't have to be completed today can make you feel more positive towards those things that do!

If my organized life shows me with an empty email in-box, then today, I'll spend an hour cleaning out junk mail;
re-setting my spam filters;
setting a self imposed deadline to delete all emails more than, say, 6 months old;
creating a junk-mail address on a free site like Gmail, for those instances when companies require an email to complete your order, but you don't want to use your regular email; and
Creating well-named file folders for correspondence I want to keep and retrieve.
Not overwhelming, very manageable, and tomorrow's in-box will be organized!

Happy Organizing, and enjoy your path toward that Organized Life!