

January, 2010 Get Organized (GO) Month

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Did you know? January is Get Organized Month. Another opportunity to improve your life through organization.

I have this mental image of Jaime Sommers, the \$6M Woman, and I mean the one from the '70s, which means I am probably dating myself. The "Better than (s)he was before. Better, stronger, faster" part is what appeals to me. The idea that we can change ourselves for the better.

My better-stronger-faster self will only show up if I continue to cultivate healthy habits. Guess that means I am Normal, as "Getting Organized" (done) and "losing weight / getting healthy" are nationally in the top 3 New Year's Resolutions every year.

So, I challenge you to imagine and start cultivating your new better-stronger-faster self, too. Organize your life. Out with the old, in with the new. New habits, new attitudes.

If you learned nothing from 2009, learn this – life is not about the stuff. Some times some of us have lots of stuff, and sometimes we have less. Bu as soon as we learn that Life is Not About the Stuff, how much we have of it becomes less important. Life is about relationships, and the good we can do for others. So let go of some stuff, both literally and figuratively, and embrace your self, your better-stronger-faster self, and the people in your life.

Rebuild you, Better than you were before. Better, stronger, faster!

Week 1: De-Decorate from Christmas:

1. Get Rid of the stuff you did not use this year, because you probably won't use it again next year, either.
2. Return your returns
3. Bag up your donations and deliver them.
4. Establish a "Last In – First Out" box in your decoration storage. Ours has our nativity set and advent calendars, extra light sets to be donated to church next year, etc. Leave a little room in that bin, for the stray decorations you are sure to find in your home over the next few weeks.
5. Set up a Christmas file to stash ideas throughout the year.
6. What can you learn from this year? Do yourself a favor and leave yourself a note in the Christmas file for next year. E.g., bigger turkey for dinner, bake fewer cookies, more teacher gift certificates, gift ideas that did and did not work. You'll thank yourself later!
7. Bask in the glow of the holidays past for a moment, and move on.

Week 2: "Clean Off Your Desk Day" is January 11th so we'll call it Clean Off Your Desk Week

1. Purge and shred all the receipts (except for major purchases) in your home dated before January 1, 2009.
2. Set up a new receipt keeping system for 2010: 12 envelopes, one for each month, in an easy-to-access location. Keep all receipts there, and purge last year's monthly receipts at the beginning of each month (Example, purge January 2009 to prepare for January, 2010).
3. Cancel all the catalogs that come unbidden to your home, either by calling the contact number visiting www.catalogchoice.org and opting out
4. FYI, some Office Max stores now offer shredding services, in house, charged by the pound. This solves the problem of knowing you need to shred but not having the time to catch up on the backlog.
5. Desk Space is Work Space. So clear off all the things that do not pertain to work or that do not put you in a work frame of mind!
6. Set up boundaries. My personal papers and work papers do not live on the desk at the same time. This helps me focus on the task at hand, and decreases the risk of mis-filing an item.

7. Speaking of filing... Learn to love it. And if you can't love it, at least learn to respect it. Filing ensures you can find an item when you need it. There is value in putting things away, and doing so opens up work space on that desk.

Week 3 Clear the Decks (each of these gets 2 days!)

1. Visualize yourself on this day in one year. Hoping you are better-stronger-faster — How do you look and feel? Now, go through your kitchen and donate or purge all the unhealthy holiday food and anything else that won't help you reach that ideal you.
2. Visualize that Better You again, and do the same thing in your bathroom. Old makeup, expired medicines or products need to go, as do most items more than one year old. Your health is important, stay current on your health and beauty items.
3. Notice a trend? Visualize The \$6M You, and look critically at the clothes in your closet. What can go? What should stay? Anything you don't want to keep that still has tags on it? Take it back, and make some \$\$!

Week 4 Better than Before. Better, stronger, faster.

1. Here's the thing. I don't know what your "Better than Before" looks like. Only you do. So for this week, you have to figure out your own details. Some general tips, though...
2. Always have a "Someday" list. The list of things you could do if the sky was the limit, no limits, not editing. Now plan to take just one step towards one of these items this year.
3. Do What you Love, dedicate some resources to it and do it well, and you will already be Better.
4. Not every problem needs to be solved today. Don't change everything at once.
5. I have realized that my decreasing anxiety as time passes (no, really!) comes not from having nothing to worry about, but from
 - a. Knowing that there are often many ways to solve a problem; that
 - b. I can solve the problems because I am Better than Before; and that
 - c. I don't have to solve every problem alone.

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