

***Downsizing & Clearing the Clutter ~ the Path to Healthy Living Spaces
or
How to Eat a Chocolate Elephant***

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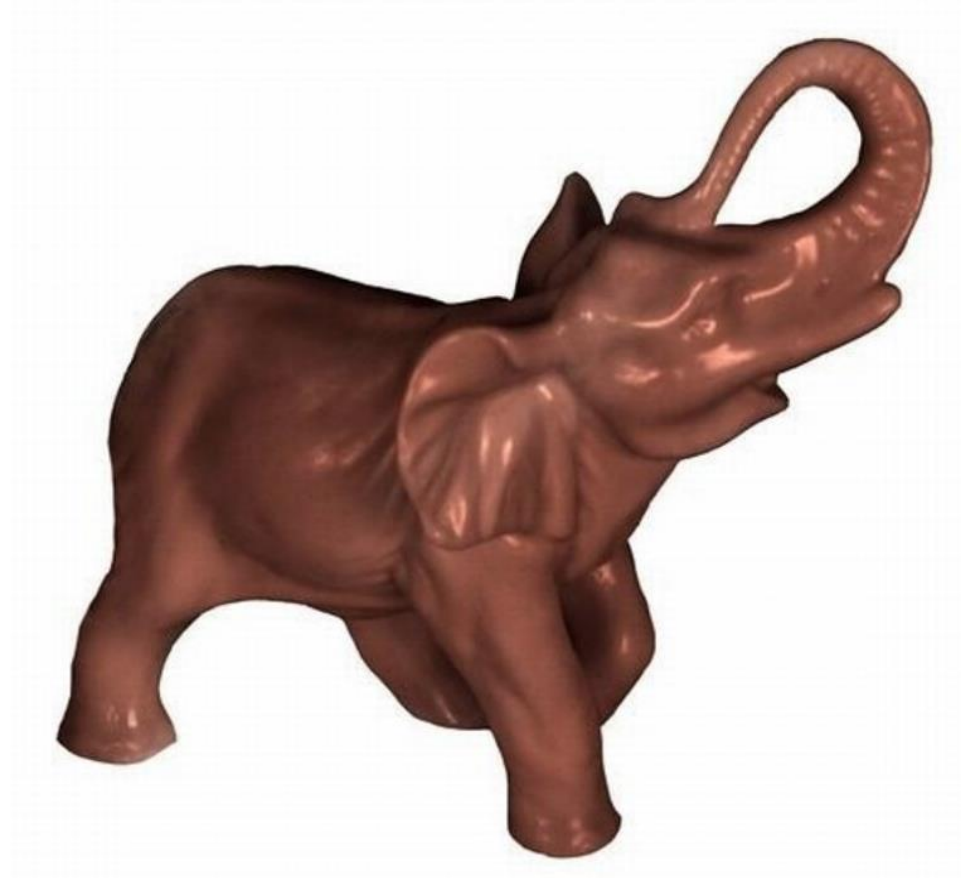
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Think of Clearing the Clutter like eating a *Chocolate Elephant...take it One Bite at a time!!*



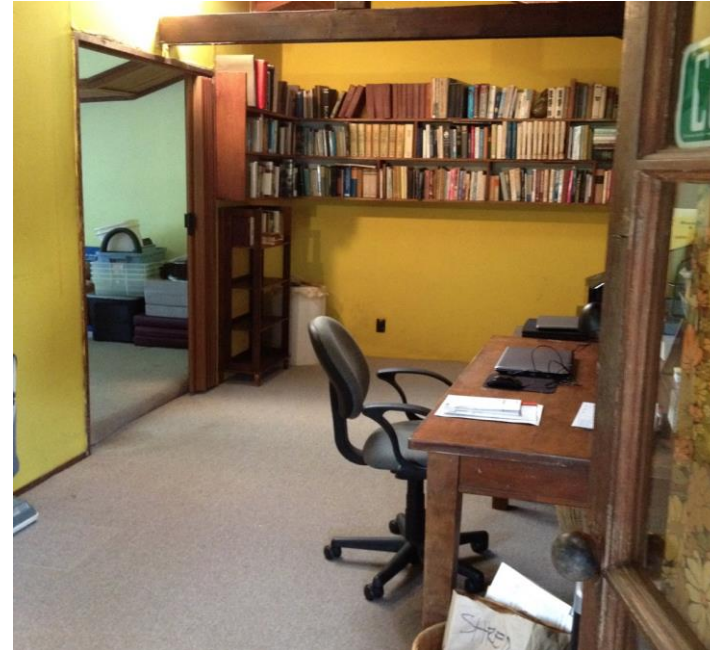
Go ahead : Let's take the First Bite!!

Some things to think about before you start eating that Chocolate Elephant:

Clearing out Clutter can be as simple as just putting things away.

- You (or the Cleaning Lady) might dust around the clutter if there's too much to deal with ~ it's only natural to become paralyzed at the thought of where to start. *By making some simple changes in your environment & cleaning up the clutter, you'll have a feeling of calm & be able to function more effectively, and have a healthier environment!*
- Where there is dust, there are mites & spiders happy to make your home, their home. Where do allergies come from? Usually from dusty Stuff!! *Getting the clutter organized or removed, goes a long way enabling you (or the Cleaning Lady) to clean everything, at least once a month, which minimizes the dust mites & gets those cute little spiders outdoors where they belong!*

Why live like this when you can live like this?



Clearing the Clutter & transforming Chaos into Simplicity all starts with a Mind Set, a Willing Spirit & a "Can Do" Resolve to do finish what you started.

Key thoughts before you get started:

- ***LESS IS MORE***
- What we call **Spring Cleaning (code for Clearing out the Clutter)** is a symbolic & cathartic activity for the Soul as well as the physical being
- ***"A place for Everything & Everything in its Place"***: Make it a habit to Put things Away where they belong after you've used or worn it
- ***Create 'special displays or vignettes'*** to show off things you Love. *Editing your stuff & Moving OUT the things that no longer 'serve you', creates an opportunity to "Go Shopping" for more things to Love & define your New Look!!*
- ***The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up***, Marie Kondo's Best Selling book about Clearing out & dealing with Clutter, explains how to make life Simpler. *Simplicity creates a feeling of Freedom & inspires you to enjoy the 'Zen' of a peaceful, uncluttered home.*
- If you just can't part with something, **consider Re-Purposing** it. *Paint that table or flower pot & maybe relocate it!*
- If that 'Precious Something' needs to stay in the Family, consider ***Gifting it (or Re-Gifting) & be sure to pass along the stories*** & history to make it a Meaning-full Gift.
- Consider ***Consigning or holding an "Estate Sale"*** if you think selling your stuff would be successful financially
- ***Donating*** your stuff to Charities helps people & animals in need, the Environment & your Soul, too!

How to Start eating that Chocolate Elephant & Organizing your Home:

Form Follows Function ~ Consider the Bare Essentials of each Room & work on one Room at a time

Stand in the door way of the 1st Room & Ask yourself:

- What is the **Basic function** or activity of This Room?
- How do **I** function in This Room?
- What items do you **need** to support you *Emotionally* as well as *Physically & Functionally*?
- What **Bare Essentials** or items do I need to be happy in This Room?
- What **CAN** I 'Live Without'??
- What **CAN'T** I 'Live Without' ~ favorite chair or artwork or antique?
- What can I '**sell or donate**' and still be functional & happy in this room? (ie: mismatched linens, duplicate or worn out kitchenware, or too many of one thing like towels, glass ware, plates, clothes, shoes, costume jewelry)?
- Pretend you are **creating your 'Honeymoon Cottage'** & just starting out on a new adventure with your Chocolate Elephant...make every item in the Cottage count for something.

Leaving a Legacy

- **Reality is, one day, you will be moving** into a 1 bedroom apartment from your 3 bedroom home.
- Begin to Plan that 'DownSize' while you can ~ What would you take & Why? What would you leave behind & Why?
- Remember you're only here for a while, and 'precious or not' you can't take anything with you to Heaven, so get rid of that which doesn't serve you anymore & keep what makes you happy ~ And enjoy it, for now.
- Learn how to '*say good-bye*' & Let Go of THINGS...that's all 'they are ~ just Things'.
- Thank your Things for their time & joy in your life ~ Bless them & let them go on their way, just like old friends who are moving away...you'll miss their physical presence, but they can live on in your heart & memories.
- Give things to your Family, distant cousins or young great-grandchildren...Let your Legacy live on through your Gifts of Love ~ they will remember your generosity long after you are an Angel.

Go from Chaos to Simplicity & start eating that *Chocolate Elephant* by DOING the following:

Approach your Organizing as if you were walking into your favorite Vacation rental (or a Honeymoon Cottage), with that wonderful bath & efficient kitchen, and just enough of everything to make you feel comfortable, supported & peaceful ~ make that '*Look & Feeling of grace & simplicity*' your goal.

Some thoughts on How to plan & visualize the "End Game" so you can eat the Elephant one Bite at a Time:

- **Stage your Home:** What would a Stager do with your 'Stuff & Furniture'? Keep, Toss, Re-Purpose?
- **Look in Design or Furniture magazines** for Room Styles & ideas on color, furnishings & how to assemble it a Look
- **Pick a Look you Love & Copy it.** Re-Organize your furnishings, clothes, etc. to *match* those 'nice' pictures
- Live with a Color scheme & sense of Décor that compliments your soul & your Self Image! *Live with Pink if you love it!!*
- **Remember**, you can always **Buy what you Want ~ you don't have to 'Keep what you Have'**
- **Assemble 'Andy Warhol' type display** of items: Organize by Colors, Sizes, Type or Use (Pantry, Closet)
- **Group items:** "Like with Like" for interest & ease of access: *Books on similar subjects, Collections, Closets*
- **Create "Vignettes":** Assemble collections & furnishings into interesting '*stand alone*' statements in a room

Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

Visualizing & creating the clutter-free environment

Staging: relocating the Furniture & accessories to enjoy the View



Downsizing: relocating selected favorite furniture to a smaller home



Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

Living Room/Area:

Function: A place to relax & live or just Be, to watch TV, or socialize with family & friends

What are the Bare Essentials in a Room for Living?

- **Seating** to accommodate 4 - 6
- **Tables** for putting things related to socializing, reading or prolonged conversation
- Comfortable **lighting**, dimmable & varied types to allow different activities
- A place for Audio-Visual equipment to **support entertainment & socializing** activities.
- **Storage/Place(s) to Display** Books, Memorabilia, Photos, Accessory items to make it 'Home'
- **Window covering** to control light & privacy
- **Flooring & wall colors** that can support & compliment a healthy life style for you & your family
- **Plants & Flowers**
- **Artwork**

TIPS:

- Consider modular or Sectional seating, with & without arms, to allow for a variety of seating arrangements
- Place a table or long counter that doubles as a 'work or study area' ~ Double Duty is a Key to success
- Place extra dining chairs at the end of a bookcase or put it in the bedroom as place to put on your shoes
- Place Ottomans or 'Poofs' under a console table for additional casual seating when needed
- Consider installing a 'in-wall fake/electric fireplace' for year-round/evening ambience
- Place Audio Visual Equipment where it is best seen from many angles should you decide to 'rearrange' or add new furniture ~ don't be afraid to call the Cable Guy to relocate the outlets.

Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

A downsized living room Before & After the 1st Bite or clearing the Clutter to love where you live



Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

A Vacation Rental Room for Living ~ Before & After the 1st Bite or replacing old stuff with new stuff to create the Look & Feel you want



Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

If your Bedroom looks like this, it's time for a Bite of the Chocolate Elephant!!



How do you take the 1st Bite???

- Start by removing the clothes from the bed. Fold or hang up the clothes in the closet.
- Make the Bed!! Change the sheets if they have been slept in for a week; fluff & arrange the Pillows neatly
- Clear the clutter from the dresser & put it where it belongs ~ in a file, a drawer or the trash. Vacuum under the bed.
- Quit 'working from Bed' ~ make this your Sleeping Sanctuary instead of the Home Office
- Be an Example for your children on how to 'Pick-Up YOUR Room' - Quit being a Kid & teach your children how to live like an Adult, so they will have Chaos free homes & won't have to eat Chocolate Elephants when they grow up

Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

Bedroom:

Function: A place for the Bed and creation of a 'sanctuary' for sleeping, peaceful relaxation & love.

What are the Bare Essentials in a Room for the Bed?

- **A Comfortable bed** (large enough to stretch out like a StarFish) & room for 2 Adults (& maybe a cat)
- **Bedside table(s)** for books, lighting, water, place to store minimum writing materials
- **Linens & Bed Pillows:** Maximum 2 sets of Excellent Bedsheets of the same or coordinated solid colors. Wash often. Pillows to support the neck & head, and body while sleeping
- **Bedcovers:** 1 Excellent quality Blanket, 1 Excellent quality Quilt (&/or Duvet Cover), 1 Excellent Bedspread (if desired) . Just enough stylish Decorative Pillows to make the bed look Inviting & relaxing – please don't clutter the bed with Pillows.
- **Lighting** for reading & room ambience
- **Plants** for Oxygen & ambience
- Pleasant **Artwork**
- **Closet:** Hang & store clothes, shoes, underware, accessories, etc., for the wardrobe.
- **Storage:** Designate a place to store minimal extra linens, bedcovers, pillows & other sleep support items

TIPS:

- Don't buy extra linens – use what you have & wash weekly or Bi-Weekly.
- Buy new when you want/need a change in the 'Feeling' or 'Look' or for a 'Special Season'.
- Don't put a TV or other bright light source in the Bedroom – it will disturb your circadian rhythm

Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

A Bedroom Before & After the 1st Bite: No Clutter, papers moved to the Office, clothes put away, bed made, pillows fluffed & organized, chair from dining room to put on shoes, drapes open for light & air, flower arrangement



Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

A bedroom Before & After the 1st Bite: Clothes put away, pillows organized, artwork, full length mirror



Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

Clothes Closet:

Function: A place to Hang & Store clothes, shoes & wardrobe accessories

What are the Bare Essentials of a Closet for Clothes?

- Clothes Poles & Double Pole accessory as necessary to extend the hanging capacity
- Hangers of the same color, size & point the hangers in the same direction for visual simplicity
- Shelves for Folded clothes, sweaters, shoes, hats & purses – try to avoid drawers
- Good lighting.
- Mirror - full length preferred
- Flooring & wall colors that can support & compliment a healthy life style for you & your family

Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

Closet Organizing Examples from Ikea you can copy



Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

Closet Organizing

- Organize hanging clothes by **Type**: pants, shirts, jackets, skirts, dresses. *Double pole shirts, skirts & jackets*
- Organize by **color** (dark to light) & style category, then by length – of leg, of sleeve. *Create 'Ready To Go' outfits*
- Organize **folded clothes** on shelves for easy viewing & access. *Separate by color & type*
- Organize sports t-shirts & **athletic wear** separately from clothes worn for work or casual wear. *2-4 changes that mix & match*
- Organize **Formal wear** in a separate closet or other easily accessible container. *1-2 outfits are Enough!*
- Organize **belts, purses**, on hangers, shelves or clear drawers for easy use/access. *Be sure they 'go with everything'*
- Organize **Underwear & Lingerie** in pull-out trays or Drawers with dividers. *Separate by type & color*
- Organize **socks & hosiery** in pull-out trays or Drawers with specialty dividers. *Separate by color*

TIPS:

- **2 different solid color pants + 4 different solid or patterned shirts = 8 different outfits!**
- Buy a few clothes & shoes of Excellent quality & **Timeless style**, suitable for any occasion, to be 'dressed up or down'.
- Be **Selective & Current** with your accessories, jackets & shoes – Mix & Match to your hearts content.
- Prepare & **assemble 'Outfits'** for special occasions, so you don't have to Think or Worry about 'What to Wear' when you need a nice outfit. Be sure they are clean & pressed after each wearing.
- Practice dressing like you are on month vacation in a nice place & have 1 Business dinner, but can only 'take what you can carry in a medium suitcase'. *Consider a simple wardrobe of Black or Gray & splashes of color in accessories & jackets*

Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

Closet Organizing Examples from Pottery Barn you can copy



Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

Jewelry Organizing ideas

Plastic Eggcrate (Costco) in a MacBook box
for earrings & charms



MacBook boxes – Separate Gold & Silver
bracelets & necklaces Layer #1



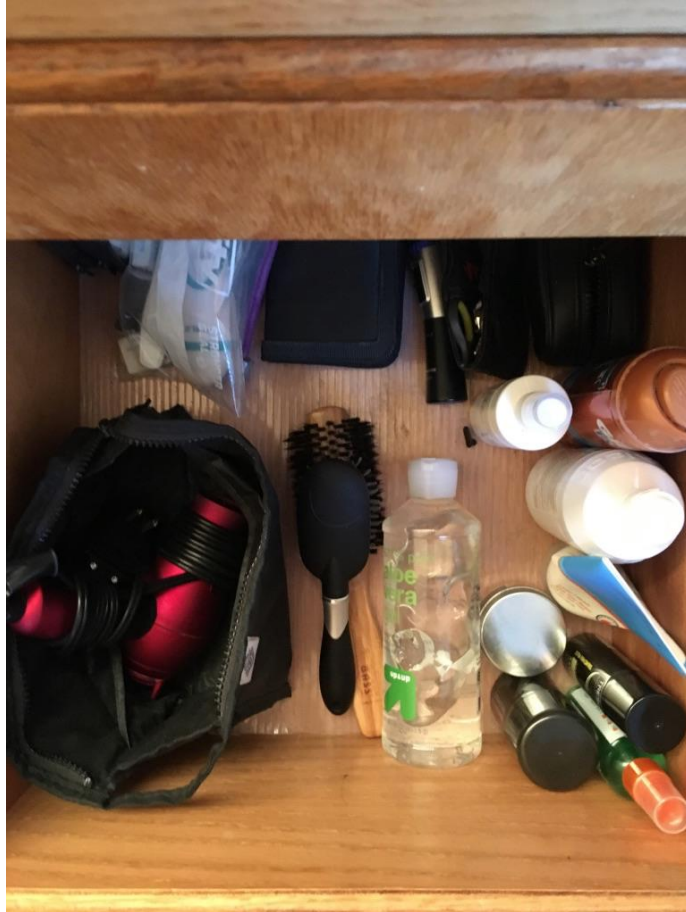
Box w/existing separations,
under Bracelet boxes Layer #2



Eating the Chocolate Elephant Room by Room

Other Organizing ideas for the Bathroom

Hair Products



Misc. Every Day Grooming



Vitamins



***From Clutter to Clean & Chaos to Simplicity
or
How to Eat a Chocolate Elephant***

Summary:

- Eating that ***Chocolate Elephant*** might not so bad after-all, if you imagine the 'End Game', 'Keep it Simple' & approach your Chocolate Elephant with confidence!
- Start, ***One Bite at a Time***, with the Goal of Re-Thinking & Re-Organizing your home to create a Clutter & Chaos free environment & Lifestyle, you will reap huge rewards emotionally & spiritually.
- ***If you can visualize (or copy it) , you can re-create it! Use those resources: magazines, open houses, hotels***
- Learn how to ***keep what you love & buy only what you need*** ~ be happy with the things that surround you, 24/7.
- ***Work Room by Room***, allow 3 hours Maximum per session, ***put things away*** where they belong, group 'Like with Like' and be sure everything has a reason to be in every inch of your Space.
- By re-Organizing & re-Creating your environment, you're not only making your Home cleaner, simpler & more interesting, you're ***creating a new Lifestyle of achievement & success*** that could possibly last rest of your Life.
- ***Have fun eating that Chocolate Elephant***, congratulations on taking the First Bite & please call me if you need help!!

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Suggested Resources from Carmel Organizer

Organizing Resources:

www.CarmelOrganizer.com

www.Changingplaces.com

Organizer Books:

- *The Magic Art of Tidying Up* by Marie Kondo,
- *31 Days to a Clutter Free Life* by Ruth Soukup;
- *Organizing for the Creative Person* by Dorothy Lehmkuhl & Dolores Cotter Lamping, CSW;
- *Taming the Paper Tiger* by Barbara Hemphill

Organizing Supplies & Inspirations

- Bed Bath & Beyond
- Pottery Barn
- Crate & Barrel
- Restoration Hardware
- California Closets
- EasyClosets.com
- Amazon.com
- Google – Any topic you want :)

Some Resources

Estate Sales

TLC Liquidation – www.TLCliquidation.com - Christine Factor

Carmel Estate Sales – www.carmelestatesales.com - Melissa Burdick

Consignment stores

Consignment by the Sea – www.consignmentbythesea.com - Jan Caron

Spirals Benefit Shop – www.Spiralshop.org - Pam Itani

Perch Décor - www.perch-decor.com - Freya Read

Robert Slawinski Auctioneers – www.slawinski.com

Donation & Charity Organizations

Habitat for Humanity – www.habitatmontereybay.com

SPCA Benefit Shop - www.spcamc.org/services/benefit-shop

Yellow Brick Road – www.yellowbrickroadbenefitshop.org

Joining Hands - www.joininghandsbenefitshops.org

Goodwill – www.ccgoodwill.org

St. Vincent de Paul - <http://www.svdpusa.org>

Salvation Army - www.satruck.org/Schedule/Pickup and www.give.salvationarmyusa.org

Sun Street Centers – www.sunsetcenters.org

Second Chance Thrift Store - www.secondchancepg.com

The Giving Tree Benefit Shop - <http://www.ccmp.org/GivingtreeBenefitShop>

Shelter Outreach/Comunity Homeless Solutions - www.communityhomelessolutions.org/wish-list

Gathering for Women Monterey - <http://www.gatheringforwomen.org/ways-to-give>

Harrison Memorial Library - www.hm-lib.org - Book donations

Hope you enjoyed learning how to take the first bites of your *Chocolate Elephant*?



The first bite is great but it's the Last Bite that counts!!

Thank you for coming today & enjoy the Chocolate!!

Please feel free to call or email either of us if you have questions, need resources or just want some more ideas on Downsizing, Clearing the Clutter, or eating that Chocolate Elephant ~

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