

Disorganization and Clutter

PRACTICAL HELP FOR THE "LESS THAN
PERFECT" MOM

by Amy Maryon

Clutter is having too many of things that bring chaos into your life. If you find yourself constantly picking up, your counter tops constantly filled with "stuff" and never being able to find things that you need---then this course is for you. Having less in your life will help you feel better and will make your life much easier.

If your home is filled with too much stuff, than the blessings that *could* come into your home, can't. Clutter takes over physically, emotionally, and psychologically. It will rob you of your peace and contentment in life.

In half of a year you should have your entire home decluttered. That is much farther than you would have been ahead if you had not bought this book. This course is designed for you to complete a task each week. **ONE TASK** per week. That way it won't overwhelm you by taking on too much, we can **ALL** take 1-2 hours out of our life each week to make it simpler. Take the time you would normal sit and read, watch TV, or surf the internet. This **WILL** be something that **WILL** benefit you for your future. It will make your husband happier, your children will appreciate it, and **YOU** will love the ability to breathe because there is no chaos.

To prepare for this year of less

You will need one area in your home---like in a basement, a garage, or a box in your laundry room—somewhere that you can keep the items that you are going to give away. This room is to be “out of sight, out of mind” As you go through each room in your home you will be putting these items into a box and if you don't end up using them when the time comes to get rid of them -out they go!!!

Keep a trash bag with you as you go about cleaning each week for the throw away items. Don't think twice—pitch it. The more you think about an item the more you will hold onto it for unnecessary reasons.

Begin your purging with prayer asking the Lord which items you need to keep and which items He wants you to get rid of. When going through your items look at the item, and ask yourself if it is something you use all the time or if you can let go of it. Take the first response in your brain—don't second guess yourself just go with it. Put it in your give away box and if you think about it as the month goes on and you realize that you need it—you can get it out. If you don't think about it—it means it is time to go.

Print this packet off and put it into a 3 ring folder. As you complete each week, cross of the completed box and move on to the end. It will be a freeing feeling having your completed boxes checked off knowing that your home is being organized and purged.

Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful. - William Morris

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Week 1

Kitchen

Cupboards

This week you will be going through all of your cupboards. Yes it will be a BIG job—not every week will be this hard—but we are going to start big.

Work in a clockwise pattern starting at the top all around the kitchen and then begin on the bottom.

Take out everything from each cupboard.

Wipe down the inside of the cupboards

When putting the items back in the cupboards decide if you REALLY need this item.

How many appliances does one really need. If one of your appliances will do the work of 2 then get rid of the other item.

How many serving bowls do you REALLY need? If they are nicked or cracked and you hold onto them only to buy more—pitch them. I realized that the only time I needed extra serving bowls was for Thanksgiving and Christmas---I can purchase lasagna pans at the dollar store and use those and then make clean up easy by pitching them when I am done. Cost me \$3 for 6 of them and I do it two times per year.

That \$6 is much better than having a bunch of extra bowls that I do not use any other time of year.

Plates, bowls, cups, and mugs. Decide how many you need for each family member and then get rid of the rest. This will help you to do the dishes at each meal AND put them away for the next use. Having too many in rotation takes up more space and gives you more clutter.

I used to hold onto extra plates because I thought that I might use them when we had guests over for a meal. I have since realized that the ability to use paper plates when guests are over makes the time of fellowship longer because you do not have to spend your time in the kitchen washing extra plates. For me spending that little bit of extra money on disposables is worth the benefit of fellowshiping instead of washing.

Same goes for cookie sheets and baking pans. Your oven can only fit so many into it. Keep a few and then get rid of the rest.

Pots and frying pans. Decide which your family uses the most. I realized that we no longer needed the single frying pan for the couple times a year that we used it. It takes a few extra seconds to wash the bigger pan that we use. Your stove top only holds a few pots—get rid of rest. Keep the stainless steel pots, get rid of any Teflon pans. They are toxic to your health.

Anything that you THINK you might use once in a while or "one day" put it in the pile to get rid of. If you aren't reminded of it, then give it away.

Plastic cupboard—if you have one of these---CLEAN IT OUT!!! You can only use so many containers, you really do not need ALL of them. I decided to keep the larger ones for our family because we need bigger storage and I keep a few smaller ones. They are the same size and from the \$1 store and that is it. I freeze most of the things that people would normally can so I keep the 16 ounce plastic containers and those can add up. I decided that as my freezer emptied and my plastic cupboard grew with more items I would transfer those to the storage area of our home. I know that I will need those and now that we have moved I don't have the ability to purchase those again. They are put into a cooler that we use only on occasion.

If you store your cleaning supplies---go through those as well. Think about switching over to natural cleaners. It is better for your health, the environment, and they cost way less to make them. If you go to my blog plainandnotsplain.com I have a 21 days to an all natural home series and I give you recipes that our family uses for all natural cleaners. I have been using them for years and they work great. If you are the type of person to have 4-5 bottles of the same cleaner under your sink, combine them all into ONE container. Make a note to NOT buy any more until you use up your stores. Most people think they only have a little bit in each container so they buy more each

time without using up that little bit. WHEN you run out of it or are at the bottom of the LAST container make a list that you keep on your refrigerator of items you need. That way when you go to the store you won't buy just because you think you need something, you will actually know if you are out.

Cleaning rags—keep only a few handy. Take the rest to your husband for his garage work. I put them into a box and sealed it shut. I cut out a hole large enough for a hand to reach in and that keeps his rags “clean” in the garage. Otherwise they get thrown around and then he keeps asking me for more.

If you have any brushes or smaller cleaning tools, attach a nail on the inside of your cupboard walls to hang them up. Keeps them out of the way.

Designate a cupboard for baking supplies. I like to keep my mixer, measuring cups, spatula, cookie scooper, parchment paper, and measuring spoons all in one area. It helps keep me from running around my kitchen when I am baking.

Go through your cookbooks and decide which ones you really don't use. I know that they ALL look good, but either go through and rip out the recipes that you want to try and put them into a folder that you will PROMISE yourself that you will go through a few times per week trying one of the recipes. If you don't end up trying them—throw the folder away. Even some of your cookbooks, put the ones you don't use into your giveaway box. If you decide within the month

that you really do need them—they are still there but if after that month you don't you probably won't mind giving them away.

Food cupboards

Organize your food cupboards, getting rid of things you don't use and finding things you thought you lost. I like to use old coffee plastic containers and square ice cream buckets to store all of my extra dry foods in. I label them and they stack uniformly in my cupboards.

Organize them according to types of foods---noodles, rice in one area. Canned items in another. Flours, sugars, oils in another area. Get rid of spices that you will never use. Put mismatched foods that need to be eaten up like small bag of cranberries, small bag of pretzels, small amount leftover of cereal all up front so that you can get those out of your cupboard.

Now take all of those items that you got rid of and put them into a large box. Leave the box in a different part of your home—out of sight-out of mind—mentality. If you don't think twice about these items in the next month, then you are going to give them away. If you have someone that you know could use them do that, otherwise donate to a shelter, thrift store, etc.

The items that are broken, or worn throw away. Don't give your trash to someone else. Tie up your trash bag and take

it immediately outside. Don't give another thought to it.
THROW IT AWAY!

Good job—your cupboards should be cleaned by now. Take the rest of this week to enjoy your spacious cabinets. If you find that they are *STILL* stuffed---go through them again. Remember think about each item only for a few seconds. Don't let your mind think of the "might use one day" mentality. You really will probably never use it.

Don't be afraid of your new "empty" cupboards—eventually you will have a freeing sense and it will be good to look at organized emptier cupboards.

Mark off the box for completed cupboards—**YEAH!!!**

Week 2

Kitchen Drawers

This week should be much easier compared to last week as you might not have as many drawers in your kitchen as you do cabinets.

Take each drawer in your kitchen one at a time to start organizing.

Empty the contents of each drawer on your counter tops. Wipe the inside of the drawers out. Use the same method as your cabinet method by thinking about each item and deciding quickly whether it is a needed item or a "one day" item.

Silverware drawer

I like to use dividers that I bought at the Dollar store for this drawer. I keep as many spoons as the container will fit. I have learned over the years that we use spoons and forks a lot in our household. Having a full container works well for us. If I get low, they cost only a little for a group of them from the store.

We don't use butter knives that much except to butter bread and make peanut butter sandwiches. I used to keep a butter knife for each person—you know in case we ever had to set the table fancy—I no longer do that. I keep a few and that is it. I like the spreader type knives instead so we use those regularly.

Knives, we never have a meal where we have to cut our meat at the table. I keep a large butcher knife, a bread knife, and 2 smaller paring knives. I like them and I use them all the time. I don't keep knives that we use only on occasion. If they get dull get them sharpened. I have never needed an entire set of knives these 4 work fine for what our needs are.

Kitchen gadgets

I keep kitchen shears in my drawer as we use these all the time. I keep a vegetable peeler, no pizza cutter—my large butcher knife does the job well, a brush—to wipe on butter or BBQ sauce, a thermometer, a few serving spatulas, a few larger serving spoons and a can opener.

I keep my larger items on the counter top and will talk of those next week.

Tin foil, plastic bag drawer.

I purchased a large roll of tin foil from Sams Club and it should last me for all of eternity. It was way less in money than the largest package at the local store and it helps cut down on having to buy it each month. I don't do plastic wrap because I never need to cover anything. I keep plastic containers for that purpose. I do have plastic bags that we use. I try and rewash the freezer type bags and then put them back in the drawer. I use sandwich bags for my husband and sons lunches that I purchase each month.

Towel and washcloth drawer

I wash dishes at every meal, I used to use towels to set my dishes on, then I got a dish rack—but that takes up space. I recently got an XL microfiber dish drying mat from Wal-Mart. It has to be the bigger one, I had the smaller one and it did not work well at all. This XL one I can leave out all day after doing dishes 3 times per day and it still absorbs the water. It looks clean and does not take up much room. I recommend buying 2-3 of these to use instead of dish towels to minimize the drying area.

Get rid of towels and dish rags that are ragged looking. Put them in the box for your husband's rag pile. You only need a few washcloths and dishtowels if you do laundry on a regular basis. I like to use microfiber ones. They help in scrubbing and they absorb more water. I buy a different color set for dishes and one for rags to help keep them separate.

If you have junk drawers—dump them out. You will need to decide on a place for everything. We keep our rechargeable batteries in our drawer. I got rid of batteries that I only used maybe once a year and kept the ones we use regularly like AA's. Keep all your office supplies in your office area—don't let paper clips, rubber bands, tape, misc pieces fill up this drawer. Put them in a separate place.

If your office is a mess as well—don't worry we will get to it. Take the items that do not belong in this area and put them in a small container in the room they belong in. Yes it will appear to be more clutter in other rooms but you will get to it—just keep pressing on.

Don't keep tools in here, keep them in the garage. Find a place for everything. Don't make it the junk drawer, make it the _____(you fill in the blank) ours in the rechargeable battery, extra phone cord drawer. That is it. Don't let things that belong somewhere else be in here.

Take all paperwork out of here and keep it in your office area. I have a small cabinet that I use for my office area in my kitchen. But that is all that is in it. It holds my bills, my school items, and my laptop is nearby. This is safe for me in our family. I keep 1-2 pens that I use and that is all. The rest of the pens are kept in the supplies area. If I get some bills or paperwork during the week in the mail I set it in my cupboard. Every Tuesday is office day for me and I take that day to pay all our bills, go through my cupboard where I have set the paperwork and then decide if I am to keep it, file it away, or something else with it. Don't let paper work over come you because it can. I have a filing cabinet in our office area that holds check stubs, bills, important paperwork, etc.

Don't let spare change accumulate either. Keep a jar that you can throw your change into and when it is full you can put it in coin packets and exchange for dollar bills.

Continue on with all your drawers. If they look a little empty when you are finished---then GREAT!!

Remember put your items that you are going to get rid of, in your box that is stored out of sight—out of mind.

Trash the items that are worthless.

Mark off the box for completed drawers---YEAH!!!!

Week 3

Kitchen counter tops

This is an area where most of people's items accumulate.

If you have never had clean and spacious counter tops, that you don't know how liberating that can feel. When you first walk into a kitchen the first thing you notice is how cluttered most peoples' kitchens are. It can be an eye sore for most and for some it can just mean chaos.

If we want to simplify our lifestyles then we need to put away those items that take up space on our counter tops.

It should be easy to wipe off the counters without having to wipe off all the items that are sitting on it.

Don't store appliances on countertops put them away.

Unless you use them everyday pretty regular . I keep my water kettle on my countertop because I use it every day all day. That is the only appliance I keep out. It only takes a few seconds to pull out the toaster, the food processor, or the blender if we need it.

I keep a large decorative chicken plant pot that stores all of my long handled tools in. I keep large spoons, ladles, tongs, and large knives in here. It helps prevent them from getting stuck in the drawers when pulling them out. Plus every meal that we prepare uses one of these items. I used to have an old bean pot that worked just as well, but I liked the

chicken and I found it on clearance at the tractor supply store.

Nothing else is store on my counter tops. I don't have knickknacks. That takes up space and is more cleaning. My cutting boards, are standing up underneath the sink. Hot pads are hung on a nail next to the stove. Soap dispenser is sitting on sink ledge, along with dish cloth hung in between sink. The items that accumulate on my window sill—I find a place for them. Nothing should be stored on counters. Put away the salt and pepper shakers. Napkins---are a waste, buy some inexpensive cloth ones and wash them.

Now looking around your kitchen ---it should look better than it did on the first week you started this.

If you are finding that you are returning to your "cluttered" ways, stop yourself when tempted to just set down an item. Take the few extra seconds to put it where it properly belongs.

Don't let your counter become a "catch-all" put the paperwork where it goes. File it, give it to your children, put it with school work—just don't put it on the counter tops.

Keep checking your cabinets' and drawers, if you see something out of place—fix it!! If you find that it is creating a mess constantly then you probably need to do something about it. If you have dishes constantly piled over

in your sink—then you probably have TOO MANY!!! If you wash at each meal, then you don't need the extras. Put them in the giveaway box. If your towel/washcloth drawer is overflowing---get rid of some. Turn them into rags. If your gadget drawer is constantly getting items stuck when opening---find a container to stand some up in. Get rid of those tools that "supposedly" make life easier. Usually the basics will do the job just fine. If your plastic cupboard is over taking you still---get rid of it. If you think that you need ALL of those plastic containers then you are probably making too much food each week. Simplify and cut back on some.

Congratulations week 3 is done check off the counter tops.

Week 4

Polishing up your kitchen

You should be able to walk around your kitchen and enjoy how less cluttered it is. This week, we are going to take the time to polish the room off.

Wipe down ceilings. Use an old rag and clean out the corners—where spiders have made a cobweb nest.

Take down the light fixtures and wash the insides out.

If you have cabinet tops, get up there and wipe out all the dust and dirt that has accumulated. Take out any items that have gotten thrown up and put them where they go.

Get a bucket full of water and natural cleaning solution and wipe down your walls. Begin at the top and wipe down the walls. Scrub off any caked on foods. If you are having trouble, use a magic eraser that should get it down. Scrub off any crayon or pencil marks and if you have any holes or areas that need to be touched up with paint---do that this week.

Thoroughly clean any windows. Wipe out the corners, get all the grime off when you open them. Any window treatments take them down and wash them. Hang them back up when wet to prevent wrinkles.

Wipe off all cabinet and drawer faces. These get pretty grimy. Pay attention to the knobs and areas that are touched to be opened.

Do your large appliances next. Wipe off your dishwasher, refrigerator face, stove-oven, and microwave. Get down on your hands and knees and pay attention to the areas that you don't normally look at. You will be surprised how dirty this area can get. Pay careful attention to the handles on these items—very dirty.

If your oven has a self cleaning option---use that and clean it. If not get a can of commercial oven cleaner and do this overnight.

Open up your refrigerator and wipe out the inside. Start at the top and take out all food items and wipe the shelves. Return the items back—throw out old items, put condiments on the doors and organize the refrigerator. Have lots of leftovers?? Use those up in a buffet style dinner tonight. Any produce—cut it up to use it. You are going to be more likely to use something if it is prepared.

Do the same for your freezer—move items to the front that get lost and use them up in your meals. Gather up your fragments!!

Lastly do your floors. Sweep them by paying attention to the corners and then get on your hands and knees and give it a good wash. Scrub off the marks and scuffs and wipe it thoroughly.

If you like rugs in your kitchen consider not having them at all. I know sounds foreign, but if you have many children most of the time it is more of a chore to have to work around them.

Mark off week 4 polishing it all up.

All right you have been doing this for a month—even though the rest of your home is in chaos—it is okay—we are going to get there. You now have a kitchen that is clean and organized. The important thing to remember is that you cannot turn to your old ways in here. Don't just set things in here because you can, **KEEP IT CLEAN**. If you find that you are letting things over take you and it is appearing messy—fix it immediately. The kitchen is just the beginning. Over the next half a year---you are creating a new you!! A new way of homemaking. One that is going to set you free of this cluttered lifestyle. You won't be embarrassed when people stop over, you will be able to find things more easily, and your family will appreciate you being able to run your household effectively. Keep at it!!!

Week 5

Dining room

Depending upon this area in your home, it will vary which items you have to clean in here. Let's start with the table.

If you are a cluttered person---which you probably are if you bought this book---then your table top is filled with clutter. Start by taking the piles of things and putting them where they go. If it is an office item, go put it in the office---remember we will get there eventually. If it is extra unfolded clothing---get it to the laundry room. Put books on the bookshelves, toys in the bedrooms and clear it off.

Give your tabletop a good cleaning. Wipe off the surface and the sides of the table. Wipe down the legs of the table as those usually go unnoticed. Wipe each chair or bench of your table off.

Don't keep items on your table for decoration especially if you have problems with clutter. Yes placemats look nice but it is something that is taking up space in your life. It is one more thing to clean. Keep it simple and put something in the center of your table but that is all. You want a clean line look in your dining room. It is supposed to be a relaxing place to enjoy a meal with your family. Keep it simple.

If you have any other items in here---clean them off or clean them out. If you have a server buffet---see what is in it. Do you really need all these items? Consider getting rid of this

extra piece of furniture—especially if you have it and it just takes up space. I used to have hutch in our dining room. It looked nice but it really just was a place to store items that I rarely used. I had to constantly dust it and pick it up because it was tempting to put things on it because it was out of the way. Finally I got rid of it and I don't miss it at all. I like that our dining room holds just our table and that is all.

Check off week 5 items in dining room

Week 6

Polishing up your dining room

Begin with your ceilings. Wipe all corners to free them from cobwebs and dust.

Wipe your light fixtures and fan blades. Take out any glass light fixtures and wash them to remove flies and dust.

Then start on your walls and wipe them from the top down.

Take note of any walls that need a touch up of paint and do that as well.

Any windows clean them thoroughly. Open them and wipe the insides out.

Any window treatments, wash them and hang them up wet to dry. If you have blinds wipe them off individually---yes that takes time but do this once per year and it is better than NOT doing it at all. I like to take them off and put them in the bath tub and wipe them off in there. You can hose them off too.

Mark off week 6—polishing up your dining room.

Okay now you have 2 rooms in your home that are clean and organized how do you feel?? Are you staying motivated?? Remember these 2 rooms are a HUGE catch all. Don't let them be. Keep at it and keep motivating yourself to keep them clutter free.

Now that you have your box that is hidden out of sight-out of mind---if you haven't gotten any items out of it then GREAT!!! This week get rid of it. Take it to someone else that can disburse the items to others or drop it off at a donation center. Don't think twice about it. Don't think--- oh that was a lot of money, I can't part with it!!! NO get rid of it. If you haven't touched those items in 2 months times more than likely you never will. This is to be a freeing experience—something to keep you motivated.

Week 7

Living room

This is a room in your home that everyone comes to relax in. It should be a comfortable peaceful place. Start with the largest item in here---your couch.

Take off all the cushions and vacuum out the crevices. Oh yes, food accumulates quickly in here. Keep a small container to put all the small toys that have gotten lost in the couch. You will put this away later. Put the cushions back on and vacuum it thoroughly.

Do this for the chairs in this room as well.

Move all the big furniture away from its "normal" place and vacuum or sweep under it. Put them back into place.

Coffee tables---are a magnet for accumulation as well. Go through those magazines and decide if you really need them. If they are recipe ones, go through them and rip out the ones you want to try and put them in that folder---in your kitchen. If they just look pretty put them on a bookshelf. But if they ALL look pretty—I honestly don't know how much pretty one can look at over and over again. Pitch them. If you haven't gotten to them—make a mental note to read through them each night instead of watching TV or other unimportant tasks. If you probably will never read through them stop the subscription and get rid of them. I is just a consumer waste.

Wipe off remote controls and put them away.

Entertainment centers---time to go through. Go through all your movies and decide whether you should keep or get rid of them. Yes all movies are cute and good—but honestly are you REALLY going to watch them more than once?? Keep your favorites and get rid of those movies you just bought because they were \$5. Someone else will appreciate them. If you just hold on to them but watch broadcast television or Netflix most of the time---you probably won't ever return to them. Same as holiday movies go---if you have your family's favorites but hold onto them because they are holiday movies---get rid of them. Each year they put out new ones and more than likely you won't watch the old ones you will find new favorites. Keep family favorite but pitch ones that are just not watched.

Knick knacks-----Get rid of these. Keep a few items for decorations but if you are finding yourself constantly cleaning and dusting these---its creating more work in your life. Time to get rid of. But if you have been collecting them for your entire life---then what??? What are they for?? What purpose do they serve in your life?? Do you do it because you have always done it? Maybe it is a collection—something you can sell to some other person who wants clutter---get rid of it. Free your life from things that create more work so that you can enjoy the important things in life.

Throw away burned candles that you won't burn again. Keep focused and burn the candle completely down until finished and don't buy any more until that one is burned.

Bookshelves.

Go through your book collection. Decide what ones you REALLY need to keep and which ones are just taking up space. If you find that you are holding onto it just because it is a good book and "one day" you might use it—you probably won't. If you are a frequent library user, see if your library carries the books you have and get rid of your copy. Don't feel guilty for having a collection of books. Some of you are homeschooling parents and need a large amount of books that is fine to do IF you are using them or saving them for the next child. If the books are over taking your bookshelf and you won't need them until a later child, years later, store them in a plastic bin in the basement or in a closet for when the time comes.

Decide if the wall hangings that you have are necessary for your walls. Are they old, ruined or just too much? Then it will be time to reduce the amount of things on your walls.

If you have any closets in here you can skip them as we will be doing them when we do hallways. If there are any built in storage spaces clean those out along with the living room.

Put all your extra stuff in another box in the "out of sight, out of mind" place.

Take that small container of items that you found in the couch and put them where they go. DO NOT set it on your kitchen counter, sort and put it away.

Mark off week 7 living room

Week 8

Polish up the living room

Start today by cleaning the ceilings for cobwebs.

Wash and clean any light fixtures and/or fan blades.

Wipe the walls starting from the top down. Wipe any floor boards. Vacuum out any vents.

Fireplaces clean and wipe off.

Take note of any walls that need touch up paint and do that this week as well.

Wipe off all furniture with a wood cleaner. Clean the inside as well, if you didn't do this already when organizing.

Do a good floor washing or vacuuming. If you have the ability rent a carpet cleaner and do your couches, chairs, and carpets. For the small amount of money that it costs, you will have clean items.

All right you have been moving right along with cleaning and organizing and making your life clutter free.

Mark off polishing living room week 8.

You should now have an area in your kitchen, dining room, and living room that is clean. These are probably your highest traffic areas as far as clutter. Try and work really hard and telling people to NOT put their items where they decide to leave them. Put them in their places.

Find a place for everything and everything in it's place.

Train your children and YOURSELF to put items where they belong. Get out of the habit of just setting items down. Put them where they go. It will go a long way in saving your sanity.

Week 9

Hallways and closets

Depending upon the layout of your home you might not have much hallway space to clean.

Go through all the hallways in your home and see if there is any unnecessary items in it. Do you have a table that sits in a hallway that just collects everyone's catch alls??? You might need to consider getting rid of this. Maybe it is one right in your entrance that you use for keys and things and that is fine just be sure to designate this area solely for this purpose.

I am including closets in this as well. This includes like entrance way closets not bedroom closets.

Start with one closet and empty it completely out. Dust out the cobwebs, vacuum the corners, and wipe the shelves.

Looking at your items that you have to return back into here decide whether it is a necessary item. If it holds coats--- how many do you need per family member? What about gloves, hats, scarves, etc? Go through and make sure you have the matches for each pair and keep 1-2 sets per person. I like to simplify by buying all black stretchy gloves for the older ones and mittens in the same color for the little ones. We keep ours in a box on the shelf in the closet.

If your area that you live in has a winter and a summer consider storing your items in a container in your storage area for the out of season items. We used to store all winter items downstairs and when I put away the snow pants, hats, and coats for the year I wrote down who needed what next year. In our current home, we have a very mild winter. Sometimes we wear winter coats and other times we can just wear a light jacket. I have just given the children one winter coat and one summer coat. I hope to eventually do a coat rack with one on the top and one on the bottom so everyone can hang their own coat up. But in our current home it is not possible. For now I am training everyone to hang their own coats up.

Go through shoes and boots and decide how many each person needs. In reality a pair of dress shoes, gym shoes, and possibly one more pair is all a child needs. If you are one to have many for each child that is fine, but you need to find a way to organize it. I myself have struggled with that in the past, then I tried just wearing 1-2 different types of shoes on a regular basis and it works just fine.

Just designate a place for shoes and stick with it. You can purchase shoe racks that will hold a multitude of shoes in a small area—think about investing in something like this. It will help keep everything in one areas so that you are not looking for matching shoes while you are trying to get out the door.

If this is part of your entrance way consider keeping a rug here to keep out the dirt. Make sure it is wide enough to hold your shoes but out of the way. This is how MOST all of your dirt is tracked into your home from outside. Train your family if you can, to remove their shoes when they first come into the home AND to put them AWAY where they go.

Put all of your extras in the box to give away.

If you find your closets are STILL too stuffed, go back through them. Honestly ask yourself how many coats you need. You can honestly only wear one at a time.

Any other part of your hallways that need organizing or cleaning? Go through them.

When you finish mark off week 9 hallways/closets

Week 10

Polishing up your hallways.

This week start by dusting all the ceilings in your hallways to remove cobwebs.

Clean any light fixtures to remove dust, dirt, and bugs.

Wipe walls starting at the top and working down. Wipe off stair railings, light fixtures, door knobs, and molding.

If there are any areas to touch up with paint take note and do that as well.

Give the floors a good washing by hand of course to get in all the corners or do a good vacuuming. Make sure to get all the corners really well.

Mark off week 10 polishing up your hallways

Week 11

Bathrooms

Depending upon how many bathrooms you have this might be short or long. Take ONE bathroom at a time, completing each bathroom then moving onto the next. Don't do it all at once that is why we are breaking this up into sections as to NOT overwhelm you.

Start by going through all your cabinets' and cupboards. Take ONE at a time. Take everything out, wipe it down and then decide how you want to organize it.

If you have the same problem as you did with your cleaning supplies and you have 5 shampoo bottles and 3 nail polish removers consider combining them together so that they get used up. Do the same method as you are doing for your cleaning supplies when an item is low write it down on your list. Then you are not second guessing yourself and wasting your money on unnecessary items.

Clean out and throw away an old expired items. Straighten your medicine cabinet. Make note of any items that are needed for first aid and purchase them. When putting items back in the cabinets, stack them in the cupboard like they would be in a grocery store, then you can find what you need without searching for it.

Clean out any hair brushes and combs and throw the hair in the trash. Wash them in a hot soapy sink full of water. You can even squirt some alcohol on them to disinfect them.

Group all hair items together in one area. A small container for pony tails, a larger one for hair bows, etc. Pinterest has some really creative ways for storing these items. Do that at a later time, not now, focus on the organization of the items in your bathroom.

Consider drawer organizers for toothbrushes and toothpaste. You can keep each person's toothbrush in a separate slot as to not "touch" each others. I have also found toothbrush holders that you can put on the inside of cabinet doors and that would allow them not to touch as well.

Clean off tooth paste that has squirted all over the edges. Try and teach your children to squeeze from the bottom up—hard but not impossible.

Go through towels and washcloths. If you are not in NEED and buy them whenever you want, throw out the used ones to the rag pile. Keep only as many as you would need for the amount of time that you do laundry. Sometimes we have too many of an item, even if we keep up with our laundry.

Make up ---some of us enjoy wearing it and that is not a problem, but keep it simple. If you do wear it, keep one of what you use. Don't over complicate your life by having 10 eye shadows, 3 mascaras, 12 nail polishes and 4 lipsticks. Find your favorite and don't deviate from it. I myself personally am a mom who doesn't usually remember to put anything on until I get in the car. I keep a small cosmetic bag in my purse and it carries my mascara and lip stick.

When it runs out, I might decide to purchase another color, but for the most part I stick with what I know. Nail polish, my husband buys me one at Christmas time. My toe nails are about the extent of what stays polished for me. I keep a color I like and apply as needed. When Christmas time rolls around the next year, my polish is usually getting hard and I could use a new bottle. I keep my nail clippers and file in my cosmetic bag so that it doesn't get lost in our home. I know where it is all the time and I don't have to search for it.

Do you keep reading material in here? Consider putting some of those magazines that you have to go through in here along with the folder for the recipes that you rip out to try later on. Might be one way to get it done.

Some might have a closet out in the hallway, separate from your bathroom where you store your extra bathroom items. Use this week to clean those out as well. Take everything out, wipe them down, combine items in the same bottles, and put away neatly.

We have found that towels take up less space by rolling them. When someone has to grab one, especially if they are little and can't reach the top it doesn't mess up the pile. Unlike the tower of towels that gets dumped.

Some of you like rugs in your bathroom, that is fine, but if you have a home with little ones most of the time they just get wet constantly. Consider getting rid of them for ease of cleaning.

Consider the wall hangings and decorations that are in your bathroom. Do they fulfill a purpose? Or just create more work for you to dust. Keep your counter tops clean as it is easier to wipe them up in the mornings.

Decorative towels usually almost always get dirty, especially in a home with little ones. Get rid of these and keep a simple hand towel hung up and change it frequently.

Trash cans, recycle a grocery bag to line your trash can with. It helps to make emptying it easy and keeps your can clean. Plus you can use up all those grocery bags that we accumulate.

WHEN you finish organizing ALL of your bathrooms mark off week 11 bathrooms.

Week 12

Polishing up bathrooms

This week start with the ceilings by wiping for cobwebs.

Clean out lights and any vents in the bathrooms.

Wipe all walls from the tops down. Pay careful attention to around the toilet areas where it can be messy. Wipe light switches, door knobs, and moldings.

Wipe around all of the toilet, do the back and underside which gets over looked sometimes.

The shower and tub, clean it out. Get a shower organizer caddy for items to be grouped together and to prevent mold from accumulating when shampoo bottles sit on the shelf too long.

Bleach your shower curtain, you can do this right in the tub. Or put it in the washer on a gentle cycle with some towels.

Wipe sink and cabinet all around and down under.

Clean the mirror. If you have any closets clean those on the outside as well.

Finish up with a hand washing of the floor. Get in all the corners really well.

Week 12----YES you are progressing quite well. You now have your

- Kitchen
- Dining room
- Living room
- Hallways/entrance ways/closets
- Bathrooms

All CLEANED. This is the majority of your home. Your home should be feeling quite uncluttered now. Yes I know we still have some areas to work on BUT the majority of the living space is complete!!!

Week 13

Office/school

Depending upon your home layout and what rooms you have this room can be different for everyone.

I don't have an office area but we do have a desk that holds our laptop and a filing cabinet underneath. This week I would be cleaning that out.

If you don't have a filing cabinet, I would get a plastic storage crate and some filing hanging folders. I used this method for years and it kept everything together.

I would be taking my drawers and removing all items. I would label the folders according to the types of paperwork that I need filed.

- Check stubs
- Medical—bills, payments, insurance information
- Automobile—loan paperwork, insurance paperwork
- Home—insurance documents, rent or mortgage information
- Store receipts—I keep these when I first buy items at the store and then each month as I know that I don't need to return the items, I throw them away.
- Important documents to keep—birth certificates, titles to vehicles, warranties, etc
- Taxes—this holds all the tax papers, receipts anything that we accumulate for the year that is needed. I can find it much easier in one place.

I myself store all of our school work in here as well. I keep extra crafts and items I don't want the children to have access too. I like to look in here each month and if there is something I want them to do, I move them to our bookshelf with our home school folders.

I keep extra printing paper and cardstock in here as well.

My filing cabinet has a drawer that I store envelopes, and cards in. It is in one area and everything is there. I DO NOT store stamps in here. My children would think they are stickers. I keep them in my purse with my wallet.

I also have a small 3 plastic desk top drawer organizer. In this I store my extra pencils, pens, stapler, rubber bands, push pins, paper clips, tape, and scissors in. I also keep acrylic paint in the top drawer. In our current home it is in my pantry. I know weird place BUT it has to be kept out of reach from children otherwise they will use all of it up. One day it would be nice to keep this on a desk area. I have a small shoe box container that I keep extra craft supplies for the children in. I like to buy crayons and glue at the beginning of the year when it is cheap. I store them in here. I keep a small plastic container that I put 1-2 boxes of crayons dumped into and only allow the children to color with them. When the container gets full of broken, worn down crayons, I pitch them and add a new box. I keep the extras up in my pantry on top of my drawer organizer otherwise they would get a new box every time.

If you have a schoolroom---organize this as well.

You probably have shelves of some sort to hold all your learning material. Take everything off and wipe down the shelves. Go through the games and learning items and group them together. If you have games—ditch the boxes and store the pieces together in plastic bags that close. Do the same for card games. Store all the card games in plastic shoe bins or if you have more store them in plastic dish pans. Label the containers with the items inside and set on your shelf.

This is a great area to remove some of those toys from the children's' room that makes a disaster each day. We had plastic bins for blocks, legos, Mr. potato head, Lincoln logs, play dough, etc. ANYTHING with small pieces get them AWAY from your children's room and into ONE area where you can supervise when your children take items out and make sure that they clean up and return them.

I currently don't have a separate room for our home school supplies but I keep them up high in the pantry out of children's' reach.

We used to have a HUGE shelf full of activities for the children but since moving we got rid of so much. I realize that I was holding onto things that we didn't really need and it was things I "thought" I wanted for my children. I have since realized that my children are just as happy without all of those play items. We currently only have:

- Crayons, scissors, glue and plain paper
- Game pieces---that only fit into a plastic dish pan---in reality we don't play that many games just the same ones over and over.
- Play dough box—we got rid of the big fancy play dough sets that it got hard in and it was a pain to remove. I kept basic cut out tools and rolling pins. It all fits nicely into a shoe box sized container and my children are happy.
- Food set -we didn't need a place setting for everyone just a few plates, cups, and play food that wasn't chewed on.
- Blocks—we keep a big box of these rather than keeping the Lincoln logs, legos, and other building materials. Choose one and get a bunch of it. Blocks are for all ages and will last forever.
- Puzzles, I kept a select few that were worth keeping—and had all the pieces.

Our went Mr. Potato head, paper dolls—that just got scattered everywhere, glitter and craft items—that just made my sanity crazy, and stickers. Stickers are one thing that my children love to have but just get all over items and then I am left to scrape them up. I just get rid of them and life is easier. For everyone your choice of keeping is up to you. Decide which makes you cringe when your children play with it and keep only a few items. Repetition of basic things is good—too many choices is bad.

Your children don't really need that many things to give them a successful education. Time spent with them is more important and better for them as well. Learning to be happy with simple things is good for your child. Trying to keep them entertained all the time is work and it shouldn't be that way. Teach them to be happy with basic things---this goes for you as well.

Move all give away items to your box in the "out of sight out of mind" room.

After you have gone through all of your shelves and storage and desk items you can say that you have completed this section. It will be time to move on. Check it off of your completed list!!

Week 14

Polishing up office/school area

Now that you have worked on organizing and decluttering this area it is time to deep clean it.

Start with the ceiling and wipe all the corners to rid it of cobwebs.

Wash and clean any light fixtures and/or fans.

Wipe the walls from the top down. Pay attention to light switches, molding and any heater/air vents.

Take note if you need any painting touch ups and do that this week.

Any large furniture that you did not wipe off already last week, wipe down this week. Do the entire thing. Start at the top and do the sides and the bottom.

Do the floors. Sweep or vacuum up all of the floor. Move any furniture so that you can vacuum all of it. If you have hard floors do a hand washing to get them clean.

Mark off week 14!! You are moving right along

Week 15

The master bedroom

This room will probably be a tough one to attack, especially if it has been your catch all for all your items. You are going to start on the room first then we will move into the closet.

You are going to need an area to work on. Try and clean off your bed to do all your sorting on.

Start with night stands. Open them out and take out all the items inside. Wipe down the insides with a wet cloth.

Decide which items you want to put back into here.

Everyone is going to be different as to what they keep in here. Decide if the items have another place to be stored or if this is their home. Go through books and magazines and get rid of those that you "think " one day you will read. Put the magazines in the bathroom with your folder to get the recipes and ideas ripped out while you are in the bathroom.

When the night stand is clean move to the right of the room and complete the next big furniture object.

If you have a dresser, start by cleaning off the top of it. Put items where they go and keep them there. Put miscellaneous hair items, beauty products, and jewelry into its rightful place. Don't use this as a catch all.

If you have any type of jewelry container, go through all of it and decide what you will keep and what you NEVER wear.

Move onto the drawers. Take each drawer and dump it out on the bed. Wipe the insides of the drawers and go through the items that you dumped. Get rid of ripped or worn clothing. Don't keep multiple items of the same thing, especially if you haven't worn them for years. Chances are if you haven't worn it for the last 6-8 months you probably won't wear it again.

Take note that if you are recently been pregnant or are REALLY going to lose some weight, you might want to hold onto smaller sized clothing. I kept a container down in storage of the "skinny" clothing that I knew I would wear one day. You don't need to keep tons, a person can only wear so much clothing, but I did keep a few pieces so that I had something when I lost the weight. Being in between babies, I have only kept some of the larger sized clothing that was good enough to keep. Most of it was worn but I did hold onto skirts and some tops that I knew I would wear again. But I didn't hold onto everything. Sometimes I think that if we keep things "expecting" that we "might" be large one day that is more likely to happen. But if we keep that outlook that we don't need to be larger and do try and keep some of our weight down we can also be lighter. It felt invigorating to be able to throw away "fat clothing" and not think twice about having it again. I don't ever plan on being as heavy as I was for as long as I was. Now that I have lost the weight I don't want to go back. Okay that is another booklet.....back to simplifying.

Make sure you go through socks and keep only matching pairs and ones with no holes. Same for hosiery and tights.

Under garments, get rid of them if they are ragged looking. Keep a set for the time of the month and then keep some decent ones for the rest of the month. Don't keep the items that are pinching or don't feel comfortable. Get rid of them. Find a brand you like and stick with it.

You are probably going to be doing the same for your husband's clothing. Go through and get rid of worn, ripped or stretched clothing. Be sure to put them into your rag box for garage work.

Do the same mentality for his "fat clothing". If we have the clothing that says it's okay to be fat, then we won't work so hard at trying to be skinny.

Lastly do your bed and UNDERNEATH the bed. What types of things are hidden?? Pull them out and find a home for them. Don't hold onto items that you are "eventually" going to use one day. Pitch it.

Look at wall hangings and photos in here and decide which ones to keep and which to get rid of.

Sentimental stuff is going to be hard, especially in this room. Stop and ask yourself how many handmade cards do you actually need to hold onto?? How many of your children's childhood items can you possibly save? Think---- if there was a fire in my home----heaven forbid---which items would I really want to save. This will help you decide

which to get rid of. If you have a thousand photos, and were thinking one day you will scrapbook them with all that scrapbook stuff...then start. Make it a goal to work on it for at least 1 hour per week. Set yourself up in an area or keep it all readily available in a box and each week at a set time work on the photos. In one year's time you will be 52 hours more into your scrapbooking than you would have been if you have never started.

What other types of things over take you in your room?? If there is another problem area, then get rid of it. Find what stresses you out and pitch it.

Week 15 can be checked off the chart----we are moving right along!!!

Week 16

Polishing the master bedroom

Start with the ceilings and wipe all the cobwebs.

Clean the light/fan fixtures.

Wipe the walls from the top to the bottom being careful to wipe light switches, moldings, and air vents.

Wipe down any furniture that you did not get to wipe off.

Wash your bedding and hang it outside if you can.

Do a thorough vacuuming of your floors, moving each item and vacuuming underneath it.

Make off week 16 completion

Week 17

The master closet

I did this separate from the bedroom because the room was probably a big job.

Start by taking everything out of the closet.

Dust the corners for any cobwebs.

Wipe down the bar and any shelves.

Vacuum or wipe the floor.

Start with your clothing. Separate your clothing into piles:

- Skirts/dresses/pants
- Short sleeved tops
- Long sleeved tops
- Coats/fancy dresses

If you have any clothing that is ripped, stained, or torn throw it away in your rag pile.

Start with the coats/fancy dresses pile. What are you holding onto these for?? Ask yourself when you will be needing it again. If these are something that you will use one day and don't want to part with, put them into the far back of the closet. Are these dresses that you have had since you were a teen like a prom dress and you want it for the memories? It is time to pitch it.

Next move onto skirts/dresses/pants. Go through these and decide which ones to hold onto and which ones to

donate. You can only wear so many in one weeks time. I would decide which ones I really like because they are comfortable, flattering to my figure, and I just like the way they look. Get rid of those that you wear only at home because they look badly. Or those that you need to change if people would come over, and those that just don't feel comfortable wearing. If you need to keep one for dirty work then do so, but keep just one or two. You can always do laundry. If you have any that need repairs, set them in a pile to be sewn. If you haven't worn them for a year because you haven't found the time to sew them, more than likely you don't really need them---donate them.

It is much easier to choose a wardrobe that is based on one color than a wardrobe that has many different colors. I like brown. Most all of my skirts are solid brown. That way I can find different styles for tops. If I have mostly print skirts than I have to worry about finding different colored tops to match them. Each time I go shopping, I look for different styles of brown skirts and if I like them I add them to my collection. If I find that I have more than one straight long brown skirt, I get rid of one. No need for doubles.

Put those in your closet next. Put the ones that you don't wear as much due to seasons toward the back.

Move onto long sleeve tops. Organize the tops according to style then color. I like to have all my long sleeve tops together with my solid colored undershirts next to it. It

made me realize that I had way too many brown long sleeved undershirts. It helped me get rid of the ones that were stained to declutter my closet. Hang those up next.

Go to short sleeved tops. Organize according to style then color. Keep all your t-shirts that are worn as undershirts in one part. You really only need a few undershirts. Don't keep 10 of the same color shirt just because you can. You will only wear 2-3 before you do laundry that week. If you keep your wardrobe simplified than you can get away with just having 3-4 of the same solid colored tops for underneath clothing.

If you put these back into the closet and find that your closets are still stuffed, go back through the clothing again. Throw out anything not worn in one year's time. If you hesitate into thinking you might want this outfit, don't hesitate get rid of it.

Do the same for your husband's clothing. You as a wife could get rid of the items you know he does not wear. But be sure to ask him if it is okay to pitch them. Ask him to get rid of any that is not comfortable for him.

Any shoes/boots that you may have in your closet go through these as well. Keep a pair of dress shoes, one for every day, and one for exercising.

If you keep your wardrobe simplified by sticking to one color your shoes can be one color as well. No need for multiple colors of shoes.

How are you doing?? How do you feel? Your trash pile should be huge. Your donate box should be huge. Why not take that and donate that this week. Get rid of it before you start thinking too much about the items.

Week 17 completion ---Wow look at how far you have come. You have got to be looking at yourself and feeling rather proud. Chalk it up to God and thank Him for being able to have a heart that is willing to change your ways to be of benefit to your family and others.

Week 18

The children's room

This might take you a few weeks depending upon how many children that you have. Just keep working diligently at it.

Tackle the bedroom this week not the closet or the dresser.

Start and work in a clockwise motion around your child's room. Look at each piece of furniture and decide what purpose it serves. Is it broken? Scratched and need repairs? Too big and bulky and need something smaller? Assess what types of items you have in here and decide what you need.

I would recommend getting plastic storage bins for toys with many pieces like matchbox cars, legos, and blocks. I also recommend keeping those toys that tend to make a big mess in another area of your home—where you can be on alert when they decide to dump the box.

It is much easier for a child if they have a small amount of toys and can easily pick them up versus an entire room filled with toys that you expect them to pick up when they are done playing especially being of toddler/preschool age. If you want your child to learn to take care of their toys give them a small storage container. Like the size of a laundry basket. Allow **ONLY** this amount of toys in their bedroom and help them put their toys in there each night. Just as it is easier for **YOU** to keep a home clean with less stuff the same goes for your child.

Yes I know you want to hold onto all those really cool toys. The dollhouse with a hundred pieces, the little people sets, the wooden train tables, etc. You have to decide which items you really want to keep and which ones you can give away. If you honestly cannot part with them, pack them up and put them in another area of your home for storage. In a few month's time, rotate the toys—your children will enjoy this.

Your child does not need a playroom full of toys, they can get along just fine with having only a few. Pay attention to which toys that they enjoy playing with and keep those. Put the other ones away and if you don't think much about them in 6 months time get rid of them. Save yourself money and LOTS of time by not having to constantly clean these up. Plus make your child and you not stress out by the toy room being messy again.

As you have been moving around the room take note to go through each thing. When you are finished, you probably will think that your child does not have many things---that is okay. They will adjust just as you do with learning how to deal with less.

Keep knickknacks down to a minimum for your child as well. Put a shelf up on the wall and hold just a few. A child does not need 20 porcelain dolls that they are only allowed to look at but never touch. Give them things they are allowed to play with. Just because it looks pretty doesn't mean it is always good to have. Think of not being wasteful and being

more practical. Those dolls are going to have to be dusted and kept clean, that is work for something that you just look at each day. Pack them away, if you don't really miss them in 6 months time—get rid of them.

You should have a large box of things to give away---put that in your "out of sight, out of mind" box. **AND KEEP YOUR CHILD AWAY FROM IT.** If possible do their bedrooms when they are NOT with you. Don't ask the 4 year old which toys they want to keep---they will keep them all. Pay attention to what they are playing with and you be the deciding factor.

I would keep all craft/paper items out of the bedrooms. It is too tempting for a child to write on things that are not paper or cut things that are not paper. Put these in your homeschooling area or an office area.

Does your child have like 20 pictures that they want you to display along the walls after they have created their masterpiece? How can you as a mom not hang up each and every paper? You can!!! Designate ONE area in your home for this purpose. You can even mark off an area on the wall like in a hallway with tape---use electrical tape to create a border for a long and wide picture frame. Tell your child that this is where they can hang their crafts and photos. If it gets full, then they need to decide which papers to throw away and which ones to keep. If they have an aversion to throwing away items---as that can be an issue with people, put them into a large cardboard box and store it away. In

time as they forget about them, you will be able to go through and throw out some of the artwork.

Stuffed animals can take over a person's life. Decide on a few stuffed animals—let your child pick them out and the rest give away in your donate pile. Let your child know that the items you are giving away are going to go to a child that doesn't have as many toys and would greatly appreciate them. If they don't play with them and they are more of a decoration---get rid of them.

Any toys that are broken or no longer work---get rid of them.

Pay attention to which toys you have to constantly pick up around the home. Do you need to organize this item better? Maybe keep it in an area where you can monitor it—like with home school items.

If you have wonderful family members that just keep buying toys just because, talk to them and ask them to consider doing some other form of a gift. Like mention giving a gift certificate for going somewhere. Children love to spend time with someone and would much rather enjoy visiting some place then to receive another toy—that gets thrown under the bed.

When you are considering buying toys for your child—think about the quality and durability of the item. Buy those that are classic toys. You want your child to use their imagination and actually play with the item. These items can

sometimes cost more, but instead of buying a bunch of cheap plastic toys, you can invest in a nice wooden set of something and it will last. Things that require batteries usually only make noise and then you will need to replace the batteries when they wear out

Avoid being tempted at garage sales and thrift stores especially when it comes to toys. Scan the isle but only consider something if it is a durable, classic, and a long lasting toy. Keep all those cheap plastic ones away.

If you must keep all those tiny plastic toys, then keep them in plastic shoe boxes and out in an area where you can monitor them. Sort them according to types—Mr. potato head, little people, matchbox cars, etc.

After you have gone through ALL of your children's room and have sorted through items you can mark off week 18.

Week 19

The children's clothing

This week we will be tackling children's' clothing. If you have a dresser for your item begin by emptying it out. If there are items on the top that you did not go through last week, go through and decide whether to keep them or to throw them away—remember less is best.

Wipe out all drawers before putting items back into it.

If you are able to keep your children's clothing separate like socks and underwear in one drawer, pants in another, tops in one, etc. then do this as it will be easier for them. You can also label each drawer to make it easier for your child to put away some of their clothing. Draw pictures of what belongs for those non readers.

Decide how many of each item your child needs. Pajamas are cute, but most of your children will be clean when they go to bed. Keep only 2-3 pairs of pajamas.

Leggings or pants---keep 5-6 pairs of these.

Underwear and socks---keep them simple—keep the same colors of socks to make matching easier—all white or all dark. Throw away any old, torn socks. Same goes for underwear -buy a package and use them until they are worn. Usually only once per year you need to replenish these.

Once your dresser is done, move onto your closet. Take out the clothing and make outfits for your child out of the tops

and skirts/pants. If you can hang a completed outfit for your child that will help in getting them dressed. No need to search for the different parts that are in various areas. This may take a little extra time to put away, but it will save in getting them ready. Once you have completed outfits, you can decide how many you need to hold onto. Personally I think a child needs only 5-7 completed outfits if you do laundry on a regular basis. Keep 3-4 nicer church type outfits and 5-7 play outfits. It will help in keeping down the clutter in their closets, will make morning prep much easier, and helps you to spend less money on clothing.

I know this may be huge for some, but put away the other clothing items into your "out of sight, out of mind" box. If you decide in a few months that you don't need them, get rid of them.

If you have shoes in here—decide which ones to keep. If you keep a basic plain colored shoe like black or brown-it will go easier with more clothing. Keep a nicer pair for church, a gym shoe to run around in, and one more pair that is easier to slip on for play. Get rid of the others.

After you have completed ALL your children's' clothing mark off week 19.

Week 20

Polishing up the room

Now that you have decluttered your child's room, you should be noticing that it is easier to keep up on the daily clean up of it. If you do not notice that---then you need to do a better job at decluttering it.

This week you are deep cleaning it.

Start with the ceilings and wipe away any cobwebs.

Wipe the light fixtures and any fan blades.

Get a bucket of water and natural cleaning solution and wipe the walls from the top to the bottom. Wipe off any light switches, vents, and moldings.

Wipe down any pieces of furniture that you didn't wipe off last week.

Look under that bed---there shouldn't be much of anything underneath it---double check it.

If your child is having issues with picking up dirty laundry---give them a basket to put their laundry into.

Vacuum the entire room—paying attention to corners and underneath items. Make sure you get into the closet too.

When you are vacuuming move as you do with cleaning, in a clockwise pattern around the room.

Week 20 is completed when you do ALL your children's' rooms.

Week 21

Purse/diaper bag

This week should be an easy week. It is all about your purse and any bags you pack for your children when leaving the home.

Start by dumping out your purse. Go through the contents of your purse and decide if it is trash, something that needs to be filed in your office, or something that you want to keep in your purse.

What types of items do you really need to keep?

I have a wallet that has many slots for the different cards that I have. On the inside of that, I keep my stamps for mailing items. I go through this yearly and throw away any expired cards or cards that I no longer need.

I keep a separate smaller wallet for money. I don't let my change accumulate, I try and use it up especially when I am making small purchases. If I want a treat that costs \$1, I dig through my change purse and use that money. If my change purse is getting full and I find it is dumping inside my purse, I dump it into my change jar at home.

I keep a small cosmetic bag in my purse with my mascara, lip color, some Carmex, a small bottle of hand sanitizer, baby nail clippers, a nail file, and a pony tail holder. I also keep a small bottle of Motrin in my purse with a few extra bandages.

I keep one pen in here.

I also have a small container of mints, my keys, an extra phone battery and my phone.

These are the only items I keep in here. If I don't need them while I am out, I don't need to carry them around with me.

Decide which items you need and which you don't and disperse accordingly.

Each week, on my office day I do this, dump out your purse and go through it, removing trash and putting items where they go.

Diaper bag/child's bag

Depending on the age of your children, you will need different items in your bag that you take out with you. If you have a small infant, your diaper bag will contain different items—it may seem that you take extras of everything with you and that is fine, with babies you never know what you are going to need.

I find that if I keep a bag packed in the car with diapers, wipes, an extra blanket, and an extra outfit for each child than that stays in the car for all the time. I also keep a pair of scissors, band aids, a towel—for any major clean ups, and some water bottles, snacks, and paper plates. These stay in my van at all times. It makes me from not having to get extras all the time. Then when we need to head out the

door, if I forget something, I usually already have a spare in the van.

If we are going to make a quick trip into town, I don't usually need any of my extras and have no need to bring more items with me, but if we are headed out for the entire day, I would grab extra diapers, wipes, and change of clothing.

We always take our water bottles with us when we head out the door and put them in a plastic container. I grab a bag of pretzels in case we need a snack when we are out. I put any other items that I need to take with me when we go out in this plastic bin too like library books, etc. I put my purse in it and set it on the counter top. When we are ready to go, All of my items are in the bin and we grab it and it sits in between the two front seats. I am usually a fan of coffee and I find that if I take some hot coffee with me, I am less tempted to stop in and grab one.

As soon as we arrive home, we empty the box and put it away in the closet by the front door. If I have something that I might have to return to the store, or take to a friend, I stick it in that container as to not lose it and then the next time I go out, it's in my bin already.

Mark week 21 off if you have completed this task.

Week 22

Laundry room

This room is different for everyone. But most people I know, their laundry room is overflowing with dirty clothing. Set up a schedule to do laundry each day or twice a week and stick with it.

If you do laundry two times per week, on those two days do ALL of the laundry until it is finished. If you do one load per day, follow through and wash, dry, fold, and put away.

I like to have baskets for each bedroom and as I do laundry each day as it comes out of the dryer I sort it into the various rooms baskets. Once per week I deliver the baskets for everyone to put away. This works well for me as I have an area to store my baskets into that is "out of sight."

You will have to decide how often you need to do laundry in your home. Try different methods of doing it once per day and sorting it into baskets and then delivering and putting away once per week. Or you might have to do a load a day and put it away, depending upon the way your home is laid out.

If you have older children, they can be responsible for their own clothing and that frees you from having to wash another person's clothing.

If you have been diligent at getting rid of clothing from your closets, then you will probably notice that you will have

to keep up on your laundry better. Eventually you will work out a system. Don't think that by having more it benefits you, most times it hinders you because you know you can wait to do the laundry. Then the piles just get bigger and bigger. Procrastination----is never good.

Wipe down the washer and dryer with a wet rag. Wipe the front and sides of it. Open the doors and wipe the inside as well.

Wipe the ceiling to free it from cobwebs.

Wipe any light fixtures.

Wipe the walls from the top to the bottom.

Finish up by washing the floors by hand.

Mark off week 22.

Week 23

Basement/attic/storage area

Depending upon which areas you have in your home, this is another big task to take. For most of us, if we own a basement, it becomes a catch all for our extras. It is basically an "out of sight out of mind" huge box!!!! We need to be careful as to not let things accumulate down in these areas.

We have lived in a home where we had a basement and it was much easier to just throw my extras down stairs. Then we have also lived where we did not have much extra storage areas and I had to be selective in what I kept. It has helped me to have that balance of things.

Work in a clockwise pattern in this area of your home. Start in one area and go through it.

Clothing bins.

Sort these clothing into bins according to size for your child, it will make finding them easier. Have a separate bin for each size. Don't keep clothing that is stained or ripped. If possible keep complete outfits. If you find that your bin is overflowing----it means you have **TOO MUCH**. Get rid of some of it. Put it into the donate pile. Just because people give it to you, doesn't mean that you have to hold on to it. Your child can only wear so much.

Seasonal items

If you keep decorations for your home, that is fine. Keep a separate bin for each holiday. If you find it takes you hours to decorate your home for Christmas, it might be time to ditch some of those decorations. Get rid of the items that are broken or old. Just because it was great grandmas doesn't mean you need to keep it forever. Go through each box and get rid of items you no longer put out.

If you keep extra paper and wrapping supplies, put them in a separate container. Keep all of your wrapping supplies here, then when you have a birthday or need to wrap a gift for someone, you can find all of your items quickly.

Large items

This will vary with everyone, maybe you have old baby equipment, old household furniture or just items that you have no need for—decide what items you REALLY will need and which ones you can get rid of. Holding onto things that you will not use is pointless—give them away to someone else so that they can use them. It isn't doing any good letting it sit and rot when it can be a blessing to someone else.

It is very tempting to just leave this room because you don't see it but the whole core of making our lives less chaotic is living with less so that you experience more in life. You are purging away the extras--- the unnecessaries in your life. Don't hold onto things because it makes you feel good. Get your peace in your heart, by having contentment with less.

You don't NEED items to make you happy. What you need is relationships and time spent with others. Things take up space and take up time in our lives. We have to take the time to find a place for them, to clean them, to work around them. If they are gone—there is no need to work with these items.

After week 23 is completed cross it off. This might take you a few weeks depending upon how much stuff that you have.

Keep adding items to your out of sight box----if it is overflowing, which I am sure it is---take the time this week to donate it. Take the trash out to the road, don't keep it bagged up in your garage or basement---get those items where they belong. You will start enjoying having some space to move around in your newly decluttered home.

Week 24

Polishing up this area

If this is an area that you can wipe down and clean do so.
Take a broom and wipe the cobwebs from the ceiling.

Wipe the walls and light switches if possible. Work from the top to the bottom.

Sweep and wash the floor.

Move the items that you are giving away out of here and into your vehicle to deliver.

Mark off week 24!!

Week 25

Garage/shed

This will require you to head outdoors. For some of us, this is our husbands domain and that is fine. Ask him if it is okay for you to sort through and throw out the trash.

Gather up some trash bags and work in a clockwise pattern and begin throwing away the garbage. Not your husband's tools, or items he would need, but all of the items you put out in the garage to get rid of them from your home 😊 If there are empty paint cans or spray bottles throw those away as well. Continue working in a clockwise pattern until you have completed this room.

If you have been saving those extra old clothing for rags, make him a box that is completely sealed with the rags inside. Cut out a hole large enough for a hand to reach in and grab out the rags. This will keep them together.

This is probably the catch all for your children's toys as well. Throw out any old toys. Get rid of the broken ones. Put all of the outdoor toys like bats, balls, jump ropes etc into a clean garbage can or other plastic storage bin. Keep all of their items in one area and not spread out all over the garage.

Line up bikes and get rid of ones that they do not need. A toddler can only ride on one bike at a time. No need to keep 3-4 bikes.

Week 26

Polishing this area

You probably won't be able to wipe the walls in this area.
Maybe wipe off the door and the door handle.

If there are cobwebs and you can remove them do so with a long broom.

Sweep the entire floor. Work from the back wall to the front of the garage and sweep it outside.

If you find this area is a mess again this week, you probably have too many toys for the children---purge out even more.

Week 27

Your yard

Start in your front yard. Work in sections. Take each day and work for 20 minutes outdoors. Let the children play while you are doing this. Clean up your front yard, removing any debris, picking up trash, and weeding out any weeds.

Move to the side yard. Continue to the back then to the other side.

Throw away old broken toys, broken pots, or any broken tools. Put away items that should be put in your garage. Be proud of your yard, it shouldn't look like an eyesore. Set your "junk" at the side of the road—if you can. Some scrapper will surely come by and take it.

If you have any animals, be sure to pick up any dog mess left in the yard. Get this on your weekly rotation list for doing.

You can rake out any old flower beds to remove the leaves away from it. This is good exercise and at the same time you are beautifying and taking care of the home God gave you.

Check off week 27!

Wow it has been half a year since you started your less is more year. I pray that you have been diligent in doing this and if you need to go through this again, please do so. If you notice areas are starting to get crowded, you probably need to go back through them and purge out more items.

If you do have a lot, I would encourage you to do this again for the second part of the year. It has been 6 months since you started, your home probably has some new items and could benefit from going through again. Once you get in the habit of decluttering it will start to become part of your life. You may need to do it a few times each year until you get the hang of it. I usually do this same technique twice a year as well. It helps to bring balance to my life and brings me peace.

If you were blessed by this book, I would love to hear your feedback. Email me at luvinmy12@gmail.com

Look at my blog plainandnotsplain.com for weekly organizing series to compliment your book.

Be blessed.