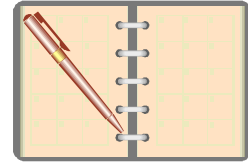


Message from Marcie

Every year, it seems, the back-to-school sales start earlier and earlier. Retailers present goods well in advance of when shoppers use them. That's why Halloween items hit the stores in August, closely followed by Christmas merchandise.



While I am a big supporter of advance planning, I think it's important to take a moment and enjoy today. It might sound corny, but time flies and it seems to move faster the older you get. Before you know it, the event that seemed so far in the future is here.

So often, I see people living for some artificial tomorrow. They can't donate clothes that don't fit because they might lose weight. They can't toss old calendars because they might use the pictures for an art project. They can't get rid of posters they haven't looked at in years because they bought them on a trip and they might get them framed.

Several times a week I find myself telling people to live for today; not for some future event that might not happen and not for some long-past experience they can't recreate. Take a moment today to enjoy who you are, who you surround yourself with and what you do. Think about what makes you happy and do more of it. Don't allow the concept of "someday" or "I should" keep you from enjoying today.

Marcie's Maxims:

Keep it simple. Just because a system is more complex does not mean it will work better. I have found the opposite to be true; try easy solutions first and if they don't work, try something more complicated.

Work Slower for Maximum Productivity

It might seem like you'll get more work done if you work faster, but when your body is constantly fueled by adrenaline, you get less oxygen to your brain and you tend to think reactively instead of creatively and intuitively.

When you're rushing around, you may not make your best decisions. Instead, schedule breaks between appointments; don't rush from one activity to the next.

Give yourself permission to be temporarily disconnected from the rest of the world for at least an hour or two every day. Take a break from your cell phone, e-mail or PDA.

Does anyone really need to reach you immediately or can they wait a short while for a reply?

Just because people have the ability to reach you any time of day doesn't mean you should allow it. In order to be productive, you need to restore some tranquility to your life.

Whether you take a break for lunch, after work or early in the morning, find some time to be free of electronic communication and spend some time recharging your "batteries."

Take Money Out of the Equation

I was at a household-goods store, replacing a broken salad spinner, when I heard two shoppers talking about a bargain they had just found. One was exclaiming about the price reduction, while her friend asked her what she would use it for. “I don’t really need it, but it’s a great price!” she answered.

Does that sound familiar? We often buy things that seem like great bargains, but when we get them home, they just create clutter.

The next time you are in that situation, instead of thinking about what a bargain something is, take the money out of the

equation. Ask yourself if you would still buy it if it cost twice as much. Do you really have a need for it, or are you just buying it because you can?

The same exercise works for sorting and purging what you already have. People are reluctant to part with things that they (or someone else) spent a lot of money on.

Take money out of the equation. Would you still keep it if hadn’t cost anything? Is it really the item you are keeping or the feelings about the money spent? If you don’t love it and don’t use it, it doesn’t matter how much it cost; it’s just taking up space.

Home Inspection’s Not Just for New Homes

It’s a given that you want to have your home inspected before you buy it, to ensure that you’re not investing in a problem. However, have you thought about getting your home inspected after you have lived in it for several years? Consider getting a discovery inspection – you discover what your house needs.

You may not realize that your home has hidden problems or that you should be performing maintenance on your home’s

systems. Knowing that your roof, siding, heating/cooling or appliances are nearing the end of their useful lives will help you plan for replacement or repair. Bill Gray, with All Star Home Inspection, inspects homes and gives homeowners checklists for maintenance. Bill also suggests maintenance schedules for you to put on your calendar. You can call him at 301/309-0303 or 703/560-0525 or visit his website: www.inspectwithallstar.com.



Redefining Organizing

Being organized is not about cleaning closets; it’s about being able to find what you need, when you need it. While most organized environments are tidy, you can live with some disorder if you able to find what you need, when you need it.

NAPO, the National Association of Professional Organizers, defines professional organizers as those who “enhance the lives of clients by designing systems and processes using organizing principles and through transferring organizing skills.”

In her book, *Organizing From the Inside Out*, Julie Morgenstern proposes this definition for organizing:

“Organizing is the process by which we create environments that enable us to live, work and relax exactly as we want to. When we are organized, our homes, offices and schedules reflect and encourage who we are, what we want, and where we are going.”

In other words, organizing is not a one-time occurrence; it is something you work on over time. Think of it as developing a good habit.

The “Desire to Acquire”

Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, writes a monthly column for *Ladies’ Home Journal* magazine. In the August issue, he asked what would happen if someone stood in front of your closet and asked why you owned each piece in it. How much did you buy because you saw it on someone else? Or do you shop out of boredom, restlessness or unhappiness?

Warren says that discontent becomes unhealthy when your desire to acquire becomes your life focus. He goes on to say that your possessions then begin to possess you and your discontent keeps you from experiencing the abundance all around you.

His solution? Learn to be content with who you are and what you have. So many of us are waiting for the magic moment when we will be happy: When I lose 10 pounds,

when I get married, when I get my office organized, etc. Once you reach that milestone, you’ll find something else to distract you from contentment.

In addition, Warren suggests that sharing your things, time and talents will add to your contentment. When you help others, you gain an appreciation for what you have. Instead of shopping for something that you really don’t need, consider spending your time volunteering for a cause you care about. For more information about Rick Warren, see www.purposedrivenlife.com.

For fast-acting relief from stress, try slowing down. – Lily Tomlin

Success Story

Meredith is our current success story. She decided to clear out her cluttered apartment, where she lives with her husband and two young children. To complicate matters, both she and her husband work from home.

We did a whole-home makeover, using basic organizing principles. Over the course of several weeks, we completely transformed the apartment into a functional, welcoming residence and workplace.

We created family rules to eliminate dumping and piling. Everyone got into the act, including the four-year-old.

Like many people, Meredith agreed to things that didn’t fit into her timetable. She also accepted things from others, even though she had no place to put them. One of the issues we had to deal with was an excess of hand-me-down clothes and toys.

After a short while, she realized that it is okay to say “no” to people, and to give away things that were given to her, even though it might hurt someone else’s feelings.

Congratulations to Meredith, who learned the rules to creating a harmonious family environment, where employees also dwell.

College Planning

If you have a high-school student, you may be planning for college admissions, a process with multiples deadlines that generates a lot of paperwork.

To keep track of all the papers, you can create a filing system in a 3-ring binder or purchase the CollegeCase Organizer from <http://www.captio.com>.

At <http://www.collegeboard.com>, you can request a free personalized college planning kit, register for SAT and access practice

questions. The website offers “My Organizer,” which manages requirements for admission, financial aid and testing. One helpful feature feeds application deadlines for specific schools into a personal calendar.

Another online resource is Kaplan's <http://www.kaptest.com/college>, offering a College Admissions Planner, which allows you to create a schedule of test registration dates, application deadlines, admissions rounds, financial aid deadlines.

Gift certificates

If you want to give a meaningful gift to a friend or family member, consider a gift certificate from **Organized by Marcie**.



Instead of creating clutter or giving a gift that might not be “just right,” give the people you love the gift of organization.

Perfect for new parents, newlyweds, graduates, birthdays, anniversaries or any occasion, you choose how much time you want to give, beginning with a three-hour minimum.

Call 301/219-3789 or email info@organizedbymarcie for more information about purchasing gift certificates.

© 2007 **Organized by Marcie**

Marcie Lovett
17723 Lochness Circle
Olney, MD 20832



Call today for a free estimate from a Professional Organizer: 301/219-3789