

 **Message from Marcie**

Every day you have to make decisions about things: How much should you eat for lunch? How much should you spend on gifts? How much time should you spend clearing out your files?

Whatever the situation, you have to decide, based on experiences you have had before. Are you making good choices or do your decisions leave you feeling bad about yourself or the choice you made?

A recent study, published in the Journal of Consumer Research, shows that people make decisions based on their current “frame of reference.” In the study, a group of people were asked to think about all their accumulated wealth before buying lunch. Another group was asked to think about how much money they had in their wallets before they bought lunch. Who do you think spent more? The people who thought about their total assets spent 36% more, on average, for lunch than the people who only focused on how much money they were carrying. The result of the experiment: When you think you have more time or money, you spend more.

Using the wrong frame of reference can cause you to make costly mistakes. People often underestimate how long it will take them to complete projects and routine tasks. The next time you take on a task, change your frame of reference. Instead of saying that you have all afternoon to complete your task, think about how much time you can allocate to it, then spend that time doing it. If you have more work to do, schedule another block of time. Be realistic and you will find your decision-making skills improve with practice.

Marcie’s Maxims:

If you have trouble remembering where you put things, say out loud what you are doing, when you do it. The sound of your voice will help you remember what you have done.

Dispose of Medicine Safely

All prescriptions and over-the-counter medications have expiration dates on their labels, after which they should not be used.

In the past, we were told to flush unused drugs down the toilet to avoid putting them in the trash. However, when you flush medications or send them to landfills, they can make their way into rivers and even drinking water.

To dispose of drugs properly, ask your local pharmacy if they have a drug disposal program. If not, you can do a computer

search of drug repository programs for your state.



If you have current medications that you cannot use, The Starfish Project takes donations by mail and distributes them to needy people in Nigeria. Visit www.thestarfishproject.org for information.

If you have surplus medical supplies to donate, check the following websites: www.medshare.org, www.doctodock.org, and www.med-eq.org.

Make Your Resolution a Reality

If your resolution for the new year is to improve your outlook at work, you can increase your productivity and decrease your stress by following a few guidelines.

- Learn new skills to keep your career moving forward and to prevent boredom. Find out what will make you more marketable or put you in line for promotion.
- Keep clutter from taking over your workspace. Spend 10 minutes at the end of each day putting away materials and preparing for the following day.

- Plan to take short breaks so you don't feel tied to your computer, desk or workstation. Take a brief walk, get a drink of water or stretch. Stepping away from your work will refresh your mind and increase your creativity.

- Schedule time to focus on important activities, so the day doesn't disappear before you've accomplished your goals. Give yourself credit for what you have achieved. Focus on what you were able to accomplish, instead of what you were not able to do.

Referral Bucks



Do you know someone who could use some help organizing a home or office space?

When you refer someone new to ***Organized by Marcie*** and that person becomes a client, you will receive a \$25 gift certificate as a gesture of gratitude for the referral. Gift

certificate choices include Starbucks, Target, Container Store, CVS, Trader Joe and more.

For more information about the referral program, call 301/219-3789 or send an email to info@organizedbymarcie.com

Home Maintenance

In the last issue, I wrote about having your home inspected. Whether or not you have your home inspected, here are some routine maintenance tips to schedule into your calendar, to prolong the life of your appliances:

Refrigerator & Freezer: Unplug your refrigerator and clean the condenser coils. Remove and wash the refrigerator drip pan. Clean the inside of the refrigerator and remove mold from the door gasket. Keep the food compartment temperature between 34 and 40 degrees and the freezer compartment at about 0 degrees. Clean the freezer drain line.

Water Heater: Drain and flush sediment from the tank twice a year. Check the pressure-relief valve once a year to make

sure this crucial safety device is not clogged.

Electric Clothes Dryer: Clean the dryer duct at least twice a year with a dryer duct brush and a vacuum.

Remove the exhaust hose/vent and clean it with a vacuum.

Washing Machine: Clean the tub with citric acid to eliminate minerals and soap build up.

NOTE: Always refer to your owner's manual before making any repairs or performing any maintenance. Be sure to follow the provided instructions in the manual to ensure your own safety and to prevent damaging your unit.



What Kind of Shopper are You?

According to the Federal Reserve Bank, 43% of Americans spend more than they earn each year. People who overuse credit can find themselves overwhelmed by debt quickly. The Association of Independent Consumer Credit Counseling Agencies (AICCCA) suggests you identify your shopping style, in an effort to get control over your spending habits.

Here are styles they have named:

1. The plan-ahead shopper. You shop ahead for deals, taking advantage of sales throughout the year. You get some good buys, but you might forget what you have already bought or find something else that you like better. Your success strategy: Keep a list of gifts that you have already bought so you don't duplicate or overspend.
2. The impulse shopper. You buy whatever you want, whenever you see it. Your success strategy: Since you don't plan for purchases, use cash and when you're out of money, you need to stop shopping.
3. The inspirational shopper. You wait for inspiration to strike when making a purchase. Your success strategy: When you see something that provokes you to open your wallet, stick to paying cash.
4. The non-shopper. You hate to shop and want to avoid traffic and crowds. Your success strategy: Use the internet and stick to a few websites to save on time and shipping fees.
5. The last-minute shopper. You are always running late and you panic, which causes desperation shopping and overspending. Your success strategy: Buy gift cards at your grocery or drug store. You can find a great variety of gift cards and prices and nobody will know that you didn't go to the actual store to buy them.

No matter what type of shopper you are, if you find yourself in trouble with debt, the AICCCA has a toll-free referral line 800-450-1794.

Don't destroy your peace of mind by looking back, worrying about the past. Live in the present; enjoy the present. Simplify.
– Henry David Thoreau

Toss Your Spices

McCormick, the spice company, has set up a website to help you determine how old your spices are. If you still have their small tins, they are probably more than 15 years old. Labels with *Baltimore, MD* on them are also over 15 years old.

Because herbs and spices lose their potency over time, they need to be replaced periodically. Check your spices at: <http://www.mccormick.com/content.cfm?id=11985>

Holiday Preparation

In between cooking, decorating and entertaining, take a few minutes to make your home safe this holiday season.

Make sure that smoke detectors are working and replace the batteries. Replace smoke detectors that are 10 years old or older. If you have an attached garage or gas-fueled appliances, have a working carbon-monoxide detector and check it regularly, too.



Use caution with portable heaters. Keep them away from curtains and furniture. Also, monitor small children and pets in the room when a space heater is on.

Keep a fire extinguisher and flashlights in an accessible place. If you are using candles, never leave them unattended and keep them away from children and pets.

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