

 **Message from Marcie**

April 20, 2008 marked the 38th anniversary of Earth Day. Instead of observing one day, however, you can make every day Earth Day. By making small changes in your life, you can contribute to a better future for yourself, your family and the planet. The use of the motto *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle* has become widespread in the environmental community and also fits in well with an organized lifestyle.

Reduce the amount of stuff you buy. The best way to conserve resources is not to buy things. Before you add to what you already own, ask yourself if you really need it. Peter Walsh of TLC's Clean Sweep says "Visualize the life you want, and then ask: *Does this item enhance that vision or get in the way of it?*" If you already have something just like it, do you really need another? Can you give away or sell the one you already have so you don't end up with clutter?

Reuse things you already own, before you buy new ones. You don't need to be handy or crafty to make new use of existing materials. You can use empty coffee cans to store tools and hardware or cut up old clothes to make rags.

Recycle containers when you can. Consult your local solid waste agency to find out the materials they accept for recycling. Many local governments also collect hazardous materials to keep them out of the waste stream. While you're at it, think about the packaging that needs to be disposed of when you buy something new; is the packaging recyclable or will it end up in a landfill?

Remember another eco-saying: Use it Up, Wear it Out, Make It Do or Do Without. Make sure that you're getting your money's worth out of what you buy – don't dispose of things that still have life in them, just to replace them with the next new thing. You'll save time, money and resources.

Marcie's Maxims:

Just because you're not running around like crazy doesn't mean life can't be interesting. You can learn to enjoy peace, even if you are an adrenaline junkie.

Appliance Repair

Get the most out of your existing appliances by repairing them instead of replacing them.

If you like to do your own troubleshooting and repairs, go to www.repairclinic.com. Enter the part or model number of your appliance and get step-by-step directions to fix the problem.

Sears has a website, *Manage My Home*, that allows you to create a maintenance plan for your home and even find manuals for

products they sell. In addition, there is a section where you can ask questions about products and have your question answered by resident experts. See it at <http://www.managemyhome.com>

There is no charge to use either site and if you aren't a do-it-yourselfer, you can ask for referrals to professionals.

Home Energy Audit

Whether you live in a house or an apartment, a home energy audit will determine what you can do to make your home more energy efficient.

You can perform a simple energy audit yourself, or hire a professional energy auditor to determine the energy efficiency of your home.

During the audit, you can pinpoint where your house is losing energy by checking for air leaks, inspecting your insulation, examining your heating and cooling equipment and considering your use of

electricity. The audit may uncover problems that could be costing you money.

If you perform an audit yourself, keep a checklist of areas you have inspected and problems you found, so you can get professional help if you need it.

To learn how to conduct your own home energy audit, you can go to:

http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/energy_audits/index.cfm/mytopic=11170.

Electronic Garbage

After you clean out your basement, attic or garage, you may find things you're not sure what to do with, including old electronics.

Contact the Electronic Industries Alliance to find out about recycling or donating old computers. Their E-cycling Central website www.eiae.org allows you to search, by state, for a local resource. They suggest looking for companies that are able to recycle 90% or more of the materials, leaving less than 10% for disposal.

You can also visit The National Cristina



Foundation, which provides computers to disabled, at-risk youth: www.cristina.org.

Ask your local police department if they take used cell phones to distribute to victims of domestic violence. If not, you can go to www.donateaphone.com to see how Call to Protect makes the most out of used cell phones.

Before donating or recycling computers or cell phones, ask what the organization's policies are for destroying personal information that may still be in memory.

Getting Help

In her book, *Help Is Not a Four-Letter Word*, Peggy Collins says that people are afraid to ask for help because it makes them feel vulnerable. Instead, she sees reaching out to others as a strength.

If you have trouble asking for help, Peggy suggests starting with small requests:

asking to borrow a book or having someone teach you something you don't know.

If you need help getting organized, there is no shame in contacting a professional organizer. If you lack skills, an organizer can teach you how to create calm out of chaos.

Put More Time in Your Life

In her book, *How to Put More Time in Your Life*, Dru Scott says, "chaos creates excitement."

When you wait until the last minute to do a task or try to cram in too much work in a short amount of time, you experience a "rush" of adrenaline. People who become addicted to that "rush" become accustomed to the feeling of stress and may actually start to look for it, whether they realize it or not.

The physical sensations that accompany stress include elevated blood pressure, temperature and pulse rate. Over time, under continued stress, these sensations can cause cardiovascular disease, stomach disorders, headaches, immune-system disorders, sleep disruption, eating disorders, anxiety and depression. Reduced performance at work or school and relationship problems with family or friends

are common problems for people who are addicted to stress.



David Baron, chair of the department of psychiatry at the Temple University School of Medicine says, "The issue of feeling out of control is probably the single most important universal stressor."

By spending a small amount of time each day organizing your thoughts and planning your tasks, you will actually save time. People who are afraid of "organizing away" the drama in their lives may be keeping themselves in a dangerous position.

Consider how you handle the details of your life. Are you handling daily stress in a healthy way or do you need to develop better habits?

Learn to let go. That is the key to happiness.

– Buddha

Success Story

Elizabeth called because she was feeling overwhelmed by the constraints of her small space and her need to make decisions. Elizabeth's pursuit of the "perfect" solution for each of her concerns was keeping her from making progress.

After she realized that her quest for perfection was holding her back, we came up with workable solutions for maximizing her space and getting rid of the things she didn't need. Her 8-year-old daughter even got in on the act, sorting toys and donating what she no longer played with.

Elizabeth is learning to create small goals so that she can feel successful and stay motivated. At our last visit, she said, "Organizing is fun!" When I asked her why she felt that way, she said it was because you can find what you need without searching.

Congratulations to Elizabeth, who continues to look for ways to make her small space "live bigger."

Product Highlight

If you have trouble keeping track of your TV remote, or if you have a collection of remotes for all the audio-visual products you own, take a look at the Innovage Jumbo Universal Remote.

At 11" by 5", it's hard to lose and it controls up to eight electronics devices.

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 the recipient might not like, give the people you love the gift of organization.

Perfect for new parents, newlyweds, graduates, birthdays, anniversaries or any

You can find it at [overstock.com](http://www.overstock.com) for just \$14.99:

<http://www.overstock.com/Electronics/Innovage-Jumbo-Universal-Remote/2093480/product.html>

occasion, you choose how much time you want to give, beginning with a three-hour minimum.



For more information about purchasing gift certificates, call 301/219-3789 or email info@organizedbymarcie.com.

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Marcie Lovett
17723 Lochness Circle
Olney, MD 20832