



Orderly Lives

HOME MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Tel 416.461.8018 info@orderlylives.net

Simplify Your Life

A common theme in many books on organization is the virtue of simplification. "Simplify your life-that's the key to organization". But what does that mean? We all know that our lives are too hurried, too complex, and too full of clutter-both physical and emotional. But most of us cannot opt out, retreat to a desert isle and leave our cares behind. We want to honor our responsibilities yet feel overwhelmed by the process.

The benefits of simplification can be found by exploring different worlds. In 1995, for example, North Americans enthusiastically rediscovered the world of Jane Austen. Why are Austen's characters so fascinating to us? Globe and Mail columnist Margaret Wentz offers this explanation: "They believe in restraint, decorum, civility, character and large, close-knit families. They marry for the love, but even more for respect. They are cheerful, pragmatic optimists."

Austen's world portrays life with a sense of order. We might think it is stifling by our standards but it is none the less neat, orderly and predictable. Very similar, in fact to the world inhabited by the Amish in Sue Bender's excellent book Plain and Simple.

Bender describes her sojourns with two Amish families and one of the valuable lessons she learns: "To my surprise, keeping my attention steady and confined to a few activities built a whole new discipline. A single-minded focus - repetition, order, an inspired monotony - wasn't wasteful and didn't limit me: the structure brought a different kind of freedom ... I found no shortcuts. Satisfaction came from giving up wishing I was doing something else."

The notion of simplifying one's life must come from the discipline to do only what really matters and to embrace mindfulness. It is only when we try to live in the moment, as the Amish do, that we may find the inner peace that can transcend itself to all aspects of our lives including our homes and workplaces.

We may never replicate Austen's orderly universe but we can incorporate its virtues into our hurried lives.

Spring Cleaning: Closets

As we begin our slow awakening winter hibernation, our thoughts turn to that time-honored tradition-closet purging! Think of all the space you'll gain by getting rid of clothes that a. don't fit, b. you don't like, or c. are out of date.

Here are a few basics to keep in mind:

1. Categorize your clothes by season, type and color.
2. Invest in sturdy well-made hangers.
3. In a hamper or box, set aside clothes that need cleaning, repair and alteration.
4. Keep the closet floor clutter free. Shoes should be stored on racks, in boxes or in fabric shoe caddies.

Kitchens: Priority # 1

Did you know the average family spends about 70% of it's time in the kitchen? Here are a few tips to help you maintain some order in this, the busiest room in the house:

- Identify items that you seldom use (fondue pot, turkey platter) and store elsewhere in the house (basement, garage). You can then use your precious cupboard space for everyday items.
- Store like items together. Frequently used pots and pans near stove, baking ingredients near mixing bowls, coffee and cups near coffee maker.
- In pantry area, store foods either by similar packaging (cans, bottles etc...) or by meal category (breakfast foods, kid's lunch items, etc.)



Estelle Gee is a Member, Professional Organizers in Canada. Golden Circle Member, National Association of Professional Organizers. She is frequently in demand as a guest speaker and has been featured at the National Home Show.

Making space for your life.

www.orderlylives.net