

Is it Clutter?

What is clutter? Clutter is anything you don't *use, love, or need to keep*. For any object, ask yourself:

Do I use it? Really? How often? Be honest.

Do I love it? Consider this: If you love it so much, why is it out in the garage in a box where it may be deteriorating, and you can't even get to it, much less enjoy it?

Do I need to keep it? OK, but can you find it when you need it? How many do you need to keep? How difficult/easy would it be to replace if you didn't keep it and really needed it later?

If the answer is yes -- you use, love, or need to keep it -- wonderful, it stays!

Just be sure to display it, enjoy using it, or store it in an organized manner.

Why can't I part with my clutter? Here are some reasons why this is difficult for many:

It was a gift. Great, so it's yours to do with what you want, right?

I inherited it. Is it a priceless family heirloom? Or is it an everyday object that just happened to belong to a loved one? How many other things do you have to remember them by?

I paid good money for it. So what? Don't clutter your present with past mistakes!

I'm saving it for my children. They probably don't want it...but if they are adults, now is the perfect time to ask them! If they do want it, tell them to come get it, or send it to them.

It reminds me of a good thing. Great! Why not use it or display it? Or take a photo to remember it by, and then donate it?

It reminds me of a bad thing. All the more reason to get rid of it now.

My friend/neighbor/coworker might want it. Great! Ask them. Give it to them now.

I might be able to sell it. If you are already an avid eBay- or yard- or re-seller, great! However, if you aren't, save yourself the hassle and just donate it.

My favorite charity might want it. OK, great! Just keep in mind that the more individual charities you have in mind for donating specific items to, the less likely it is that you'll actually get your stuff to any of them.

The bottom line: If you don't use, love, or need to keep it, it's clutter.

What should I do with my clutter? This one's easy: Toss, Recycle, Sell, Gift or Donate it. All of it.

What if, despite my best intentions, I am still living with clutter?

If a month (or other self-imposed deadline) has gone by since you decided to try to find the *perfect* home for it, or try to sell it, and you haven't managed to do so, ask yourself: Is it in good enough condition to donate to Goodwill, or another default (maybe not *perfect*) charity that takes a wide variety of donations? If so, pack it up and take it there TODAY! If the answer is no, it isn't good enough, throw it in the trash or recycle it NOW!

Congratulations, you are on the road to becoming clutter-free! If you need help, call a professional organizer. It is a myth that a professional organizer will make you get rid of all your stuff. A good one will help you identify what you *use, love, and need to keep*, and will help you store or display it in an organized manner.