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What a Dump!

If this goes through your brain when coming home then this article is for you. There are hidden costs to careless housekeeping, and I am not talking about missed opportunities to appear on a Martha Stewart episode. Exterior clutter has an amazing impact on our mental health. There are those among us who are truly impervious to mess, filth and grime, but for the rest of us, we tend to be more restless and anxious as a result of a cluttered living space. We are more capable of relaxing if we feel "at home" at home. When our living space resembles order, we begin to feel more ordered as well. Environmental factors, in the fullest sense of the word, are known to effect our mental health.

Start Small

Start small if signs of the tornado are still present. Even grouping things into relevant, but unsorted piles is a good start. The best way to kill a new behavior is to overwhelm it by doing it all at once.

Simplify

Most of us have too much stuff -- most of which we probably don't really want, need or use. Get rid of the excess and feel the burden lighten. If you are about to stop reading because of the 'simplicity' b.s. 'your mother reads about,' read on oh doubter, read on. It is surprising how freeing it is to get rid of all that junk.

Make A Plan

Pick one small project a day until you are organized. Look around and write down what the problem areas are. Do you need your laundry basket near the front door since you strip off all the office garb as soon as humanly possible and leave it on the floor? Do you need an extra garbage can next to your beer cooler in the TV room? Identifying problem areas, then modifying your living space to accommodate your habits, may work better than unrealistic or dramatic changes. Once you learn to put your clothes in the basket near the front door, you can then take the next step such as closing the shades and sparing the neighbors. We take a long time to learn our habits and it will take a long time to change them, so do it in steps and stages – it will stick with you much better this way (if your problem is sticking to the floor, consider substituting a different adjective).

Stick To It

Again, start small and make a commitment to following through. Starting small is important for when the inevitable, "I don't care if the world ends" day comes along. Even on those days, if you successfully kept your plan small, it will be easier to follow through. Follow through is important to avoid the gradual slip back into 'messdom'. Remember, tomorrow's mess will be twice as big and twice as unpleasant and therefore more likely to hit the back burner.