CHAOS TO CALM

Practical Strategies To Go From a Life of Clutter and Stress to Calm and Confident

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Introduction

Introduction

Time and time again, others have tried to say that when your space is cluttered, so is your mind. However, that can also go the other way. As your mind becomes cluttered with things to do, meetings to go to, and all the stresses you experience, your space will become cluttered as a result.

A cluttered workspace may say that you are in the middle of a project and need lots of information present at once. However, this same workspace will stress out your mind and hurt your work performance.

Clutter creates a negative impact and our lives. The clutter in the world around us indicates lots of clutter in the mind. When you experience stress and anxiety for long periods of time, take a look around you. Are you seeing clutter that matches the state of your mind?

The first step to bringing your chaotic world down to a calm one is to recognize the clutter around you. Knowing both the physical clutter and the clutter of your mind will let you know what you need to clean to bring you back to peace.

What Is Clutter: Identifying What Triggers Your

What is Clutter: Identifying What Triggers Your Stress

Clutter can be found anywhere. It can be seen in your home with the junk drawer or with dishes piling up in the sink. It can be seen at work with the cluttered state of your desk. Clutter can be seen through piles of clothes on your floor or the stack of mail you've yet to go through. It can even be seen in your mind with all the stressful thoughts you have.

Simply put, clutter is the mess of items that are strewn across your space without any sense of order. Some may associate the word clutter with trinkets and lots of decorations around your space. While this is true, that isn't the kind of clutter we are talking about. Instead, we are talking about the clutter that causes messes and therefore, a chaotic mindset.

Clutter builds up over time as more and more objects are added to the piles.

Clutter can look like:

- A junk drawer that is filled with things you haven't seen in ages
- Piles of clothes that keep building up from you not doing your laundry
- Items that you don't use anymore being shoved in different spaces of your house
- Having several items because you must replace the item after "losing it"

- Dishes that pile in the sink until you no longer have any
- Your house is so messy that it would be difficult to straighten up before guests come over

If your house resembles any or several of the points on the list, that is a good indication that your space has become quite cluttered and that your mental health may be suffering because of it. We are not judging if your house or workspace looks like this. Everyone has experienced a cluttered space at least once in their life and there are many reasons why your space may get to this point.

When your mental health is not the best, it makes it so much harder to prevent and remove the clutter from your space. This creates a vicious cycle where clutter builds up in your house which makes your mental health worse but because your mental health is worse, you have less motivation to clean the clutter, instead, it continues to build.

This leads to a sense of losing control. For many, not having control is a huge stress trigger. People like having control of their lives and space. With lots of clutter and not knowing where everything is, that becomes stressful. Also, it can be quite stressful when you are trying to make your way through a cluttered house but end up stepping on some painful clutter left on the floor.

We now know that clutter, and the loss of control that comes with it triggers stress in many people's lives. However, how does that stress present itself?

The Impact of the Stress from Clutter

Stress leads to numerous detrimental impacts on the mind. The stress that comes with clutter is no exception.

With clutter, it leads to **difficulty in focusing**. It is hard to focus on getting one task done at a time when everything is a mess. It prevents you from moving from one task to the next in a sensical order. Each piece of clutter acts as a distraction until your mind is overwhelmed by everything around you.

You will also experience a worsening in **procrastination**. With all the clutter that you are surrounded by, your mind gets overwhelmed by all of the mess. By being overwhelmed, the idea of decluttering seems so much harder to do and as a coping mechanism, you will procrastinate cleaning up. However, by procrastinating on the task, the clutter problem continues to get worse and even more overwhelming. This procrastination translates to work procrastination too. How could you possibly get work done when there is clutter everywhere?

As stress builds from clutter, so does the damaging stress hormone, cortisol. When your stress levels climb, this leads to **health problems** if the stress is unchecked. The health problems that you can face include:

- Digestion problems
- Heart problems
- Insomnia
- Type 2 diabetes
- Weight problems

It can seem extreme to say that a cluttered home can cause all the problems listed above. However, because clutter has been linked to increased stress levels, your body will be in a constant state of fight or flight. Even though this fight or flight is at mild levels, the damages that happen because of it will not be mild.

What Causes Stress And Clutter In Your Life?

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Let's take a step back and see how you could have gotten to this point. A cluttered home and a stressed mind don't happen overnight. Instead, it happens from a mixture of triggers and a series of events that brings items into your space and doesn't let you get rid of them. Let's go over what could have led you to the cluttered space that you have.

Sentimental Value

One of the most common ways that clutter builds up is the refusal to get rid of certain items because of sentimental value. Keep in mind, we aren't talking about the necklace that has been passed through your family or the outfit that you got from your favorite person that you've worn a million times.

As humans, we can find sentimental value in so many things. You might have a shirt that you haven't worn in years, but it was the shirt you wore on a first date that you can't bear to part. You may even find sentimental value in old homework assignments if you have recently graduated from school.

However, just because something has sentimental value, that doesn't mean that you need to keep it. You don't need to keep homework assignments from years prior and sometimes you have to let go of clothes that you never wear anymore even if it was from a fun day. When you hold onto the things that you don't use for the sake of sentimental value, you clutter your space and therefore, clutter your mind with the things that you don't need.

"But What If I Need This?"

Another common cause of clutter is the fear that you will need something in the future. These items tend to be found in the junk drawer stashed away in a closet.

In some cases, wondering if you will need something in the future is necessary. For financial and legal documents, you should put more consideration into whether you'll need them in the future or not. In many cases, these legal documents should be kept under the idea that you may need them within the next 7 years from receiving that document.

Then there are the items that you definitely won't need in the future. Crafty people experience this problem a lot. You'll find an item and you'll think "I can make something with this," and stash

the item with your craft supplies. However, years later you look at that same object that you haven't done anything with. These items build clutter and should be removed.

Gift Guilt

Have you ever been given a gift that you don't have a use for but feel too guilty to get rid of it? This is something that everyone has felt at least once. However, this guilt about giving a gift a new home means that this item is taking up space in your home which leads to a build-up of clutter.

Cards are a huge contributor to this. So many people hold onto birthday or Christmas cards out of guilt of throwing them away. However, this will build up in your desk or a drawer and become stressful clutter.

Buying Things You Don't Actually Need

It is highly normalized to constantly buy things. New gadgets are always being advertised as making your life so much easier and that you can't live without them! Then, when you cave and buy

the object, you get a few uses out of it before going back to the way you used to do things. Now you have another gadget that you don't need cluttering your home.

Buying stuff that you don't need not only hurts your wallet but also hurts your mental health as you add stressful clutter to your home.

What Causes the Stress in Your Life?

Bad shopping habits aren't the only thing that may be causing clutter-stress in your life. Sometimes, stress causes clutter.

Work can be a huge contributor to both clutter and stress. Imagine that you are at your desk and suddenly your boss drops off a ton of paperwork to get through by the end of the day. This adds both stress and clutter to your space. You have a huge task dangling over your head and a bunch of papers is covering your desk.

Another situation that will build clutter is when you become stressed about completing a project. When you put all your focus toward a project, taking care of your space becomes a secondary

priority. By the time you complete the project, your stress doesn't end because now you are surrounded by clutter.

Be aware of what is causing the clutter and stress in your lives. Is the stress coming first or is the clutter? Knowing what is causing the clutter and stress in your life will help you figure out the best path for removing both the stress and clutter from your mind.

Stress And Mental Health: What You Need To Know

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The impact of stress on the mind and body was touched on earlier, but let's dive deep into how stress over time will hurt the body.

Stress on the Body

Stress in the body is controlled by a hormone called "cortisol." This hormone can be good for the body in the case of an emergency. When the body is flooded with cortisol from stress and/or fear, the body will experience quickened breath, quickened heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and digestion slows among other factors.

When you are in an emergency, this stress helps get you out of the situation while preventing harm. However, the stress we are talking about won't save you from a life-threatening emergency.

Instead, the stress we are discussing from clutter will increase your cortisol levels for extended periods. When a person experiences stress (even if it is a low amount of stress) for extended periods, then the effects of the hormone will damage the body.

Having your breathing and heart rate quicken, your blood pressure rises, and your digestive processes disrupted for long periods of time, then your body will tire and become damaged. Think of it like driving your car too fast. In short periods of time, driving quickly will get you to your destination quickly. However, speed too much and your tires will wear down and the internal structure of the machine will overheat and can break.

When you live in a cluttered space for a long time, that stress will build up in your body. You will experience stomach problems, a possibility of heart disease, problems with your heart vessels, problems from increased blood pressure, increased fatigue, decreased appetite, lack of sleep, inflammation, and so much more.

The body will also hold stress in the muscles and joints. Given enough time, the stress you feel will cause you physical pain by making your muscles ache and joints inflamed.

All of these symptoms can lead to heart attacks, hypertension, strokes, and other unwanted events.

Stress on the Mind

The impact of stress on the mind isn't any better than the impact on the body. Long-term stress makes your mind's ability to function decrease and your mental health will become worse.

In an earlier chapter, we discussed how the long-term stress from clutter would cause increased levels of procrastination and difficulty in focusing. This, and other consequences that we will talk about, happen because of the strain that stress puts on the mind.

When you are stressed, a lot of your brain power is focused on the cause of the stress and what you can do about the stress. Then, as you are trying to go about your day, your brain has to work extra hard to do the everyday tasks you need to accomplish.

With your brain having to work harder than it should, that will exhaust you by the end of the day and make thinking hard to do. You may experience brain fog, increased amounts of stress when doing simple tasks, and an increased number of distractions.

This stress will then harm your mental health. When your space and mind are cluttered, that can make you anxious. There may also be feelings of shame when thinking about having other people in your cluttered space. Your self-esteem will lower in response which can lead to worsening anxiety and even depression.

When depression comes into consideration, a vicious cycle can take form. The clutter that you have in your home can make you feel ashamed and lower your self-esteem. This lowered self-esteem can lead to depression. With depression, cleaning that clutter becomes more difficult which means that your space will stay cluttered for longer periods of time. Then, you get more depressed because you struggle to make these changes. The cycle will then continue.

A similar cycle can happen with anxiety. If you are already an anxious person, the clutter in your space might have built up because you were so anxious with other tasks that your space got neglected. However, the chaos that comes with a cluttered space can make you feel more anxious. The heightened anxiety can make it hard to clean your space, and then the cycle continues.

In extreme cases, high amounts of stress for long periods of time will cause people to turn to substance abuse. While it is highly unlikely that a cluttered space will cause this level of stress to cause people to turn to harmful coping mechanisms, it's important to note just how much of an effect stress has.

Stress From Clutter Will Make It Harder to Clean

For those who are already in a spot where they experience a lot of clutter in their space, we understand that the process of taking the clutter seems daunting and overwhelming. You have gotten to a point where you are in a cycle where the longer you wait, the more overwhelming it is but the more overwhelming the task is, the more you want to push off the task.

In the following chapters, we will go over the steps to change your mindset and how to clean your space to bring the chaos in your mind to calm.

An Introduction
To Mindfulness

An Introduction to Mindfulness

When you think about mindfulness, what are the first things that pop into your head? Do you imagine someone meditating with their legs crossed on the ground? Do you see someone speaking affirmations in the mirror? Do you think about habits and practices that seem so impossible to incorporate into your life?

Mindfulness isn't an exhausting list of healthy habits that you should do every day nor is it a set of rules that you must follow. It isn't something that is just for a healthy mind that doesn't suffer from anxiety or depression. Instead, mindfulness is a simple concept that is the first step to bringing more calm into your life.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the concept where one becomes more self-aware of their present experience without being judgmental or harsh to themselves. It's becoming more aware of the thoughts that you are having, how you react to what happens in your life, and how your thoughts are framed.

With mindfulness, you take a step back. Instead of reacting immediately to an event that has taken place, you take a step back and access the situation first.

Mindfulness is the first step to making chaos into a world of calm. You become aware of what is happening both around you and within your mind. Then, because you don't react right away, you can frame your thoughts and reactions to ones that are beneficial to the situation. This leads to fewer negative consequences and therefore, less stress.

What Does Mindfulness Do for Mental Health?

With how simple mindfulness is as a concept, it can seem like it can't possibly do anything to remove the stress from your life and make you calmer. That isn't true.

Mindfulness can rewire your anxious or depressive thought patterns. It decreases the amount of judgment that you have for yourself and your situation. With mindfulness decreasing the amount of self-judgment you have; it can then boost your self-esteem.

Mindfulness has been linked to reducing the stress that you experience, even if your space is extremely cluttered. It also can improve your immune system and can reverse some of the negative side effects that stress causes to the body and mind.

When you are trying to clear the clutter in your life to improve your physical and mental health, you need to make sure that you are in the right frame of mind. If you continue to look at your space with negative emotions and think of yourself as lazy or another negative quality, the process of removing the chaos won't be as effective. With mindfulness, you can bring calm into a chaotic place and allow that calm to spread until there is no more chaos.

Depending on the mindset that you are starting with, mindfulness will either seem like an easy process or become a challenge. Mindfulness can be challenging to start because you have to be aware of every thought that used to fly through your head. This requires you to slow your thoughts down when they become chaotic and to reword the negativity that your thoughts may have.

Even when mindfulness starts as a challenge, it does become easier over time.

How To Practice Mindfulness Daily

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Let's take a step back from the surrounding clutter. When we are starting with mindfulness, look at it from a general perspective. This will make the application to the clutter in your space an easier step to take.

Luckily, you have many ways to start practicing mindfulness every day. You don't need any fancy or expensive materials to get started. All you need are a few deep breaths and your brain.

Slow Down

In today's busy "grind mode" world, slowing down your pace can be super difficult. We always feel like we need to be on the go to get the next project down. This can sometimes require us to eat our meals while at our desks working, to be on a call while walking to our next destination, or to even put off sleep for a few hours because we are "almost finished."

While those practices are great for getting your work done in a short amount of time, they are also highly stressful and harm your body over time.

To begin practicing mindfulness, you must slow down. Sometimes, this means shutting your laptop off while eating your lunch and giving yourself a digital bedtime, so you are off of technology before bed.

With all these following practices, we encourage you to start slowly. While it would be amazing if you could suddenly switch your habits into healthier mindful practices overnight, this expectation is not realistic at all.

Start with small changes and slowly build up. Again, to begin slowing down during the day, focus on how you are eating first. Make sure that you don't combine your meals with your work so you can focus, and be more mindful, of your food. Once you become comfortable with those practices, then add your digital bedtime. You can start the bedtime later, let's say an hour earlier than what you would do normally. Then, you can make the time earlier and earlier until it provides you with the proper work-life balance.

Engage In Your Everyday Activities with More Focus

Being mindful of your everyday activities will boost your memory and will prevent those feelings that time is slipping away. Also, when you engage with your everyday activities with more focus,

this can prevent clutter from building up as you will be more mindful of what you do with all your stuff.

To engage in your everyday activities with more focus and mindfulness, recall the previous mindfulness practice and slow down. When you are doing an activity, let's say washing the dishes, be aware of every action that you are doing.

Allow yourself to become aware of the water that is hitting your hands (or your gloves if you have them) and be aware of every dish that you are cleaning. Slow down your washing speed to focus on getting the dish in hand perfectly clean. For some, incorporating deep breaths while doing repetitive activities can be extra beneficial.

Another important aspect of mindfulness is to avoid thinking about activities with resentment or disgust. Even if you absolutely hate doing the dishes, instead of thinking about how much you hate the activity, think about how good it will feel to have clean dishes again and not have clutter in the sink.

Over time, thinking about activities with a positive mindset instead of one full of resentment, you will naturally few those activities more positively and will want to do them more.

Take Note of Your Triggers

Practicing mindfulness isn't just about what actions you take, but it's also about how you think and respond to events. Humans aren't positive all of the time. Some things make us hurt, upset, and angry. However, we are sometimes way too quick in responding with those emotions, making the actions we take next detrimental.

Pay attention to what events cause you to flare up with emotion. What makes you mad and what makes you annoyed? This may be one of the hardest mindfulness practices to fully incorporate into your life. Don't beat yourself up if this practice takes you a lot of time to master.

Let's say that you experience a lot of anger when someone breaks your favorite glass. The reactionary response would be to go find that person and start yelling at them. However, this path will likely lead to a harmed relationship, and you might do or say something that you would regret.

This is the perfect moment to note a trigger. Yes, someone breaking an item you cherish will understandably make you angry. You now know that this anger is how you feel when this event happens. You are now aware of the emotion that you are feeling. By being aware of this feeling, you can take a moment to collect yourself before talking to the person you broke your glass.

Taking a few deep breaths will allow you to think about how you want to react. Note the language used "how you want to react." By being mindful, you get to decide the path you want to take when a trigger occurs. This gives you more power because instead of being controlled by emotions, you are controlled by the path that will give you the best outcome according to the situation.

Rework Harmful Thoughts

Another mindfulness practice that is highly important but can be difficult to master is reworking the harmful thoughts you experience. This is especially important for those who experience anxiety and depression and are plagued by self-deprecating and chaotic thinking.

Reworking your harmful thoughts requires you to be especially aware of your thought patterns. You must be able to pause when you experience a harmful thought and take those few seconds (though it could be longer) to rephrase that thought. Reworking your harmful thoughts is training your mind to think more positively with less judgment towards yourself and more self-love.

To rework your harmful thoughts, pause whenever you experience one. You should also take note of the action or circumstance that caused you to have that thought. When you pause, mindfully rephrase that thought into one that is more positive.

For example:

Harmful thought – "I'm so lazy."

This can be reworked to – "I work hard to take care of myself every day."

Pausing when you experience a harmful thought will make you much more aware of the thoughts running through your mind. You will have more control over how you perceive yourself and eventually, you will automatically think the reworded thoughts instead of the harmful thoughts.

Be patient with yourself when you are reworking your thoughts. It will take time to make each positive thought a new habit, but this awareness will be incredibly helpful in the long run.

Ground Yourself

There will be times when it feels like so much is happening all at once. You will experience a rush of stress and a feeling of being overwhelmed. In times like that, it is the perfect opportunity to practice the mindful activity of grounding.

Grounding is a practice where you stabilize your energy through heightened awareness. It is sometimes called "earthing," referring to people walking barefoot on the ground to ground themselves with the Earth's energy.

The mindful practice of grounding is super simple and can be done in even the most chaotic environments. All you need to do is plant your feet (you don't have to be barefoot) on the ground and become highly aware of the feeling of having your feet on the ground. Focus on how the ground is keeping you upright and take deep breaths.

There are many variations to grounding exercises, but the most common one is to imagine a circle of energy going through your body. Coming up through your feet is a stabilizing energy that calms you down and clears away the chaotic energy. That chaotic energy is pushed out into the ground through your feet.

The practice of grounding requires you to practice mindfulness with each breath that you take. In times of chaos, this is the perfect activity to do.

Pause and Feel

Throughout your day, you can practice mindfulness by taking a moment to pause and simply feel. When you pause, notice what your 5 senses are picking up. What are the things that you see around you? What sounds or conversations can you hear nearby? What smell lingers in the air, and can you currently taste anything? If you were to reach out, what would you touch and feel?

Pausing and feeling through your senses allows you to become more aware of both your surroundings and your body. This mindfulness practice is also a very common treatment for when you are in the middle of an anxiety attack. Not only should you feel the outside world with your senses, but you should also use this time to check in with your body.

By checking in with your body, you can notice any aches or pains that you are feeling. Try to notice if you are holding any tension in your body and use this moment to release it through some deep breaths. Check if your heart is beating too fast or if your breathing has become rapid.

When we aren't aware of our bodies, we can get so caught up in the grind of life that we hold onto so much tension we didn't even know that we had. Checking in with our senses and our bodies

allows us to notice the tension we had missed before and gives us a chance to work through it.

For daily mindfulness, pause and feel at least once a day. However, we do recommend that you pause and feel several times a day, especially during the moments that feel more chaotic.

Tips For Daily Mindfulness

It can be challenging to practice mindfulness every day when you have spent so long pushing through the chaos. Slowing down with your movements and bringing up your awareness will seem tiresome and difficult to do at first.

Remember that these mindfulness activities can be established into your routine like any other habit. Start slow and incorporate one mindfulness practice at a time.

One of the biggest tips for practicing mindfulness is to be patient with yourself and not judge. Having this open and caring mindset for yourself allows you to make mistakes without punishing yourself. Mindfulness isn't a task to check off of your to-do list or something you must do to make someone happy. It is completely for your state of mind and perfection won't happen overnight or at all.

Increasing your daily awareness is all you need and if you go through a chaotic moment without taking a step back, don't beat yourself up over it. Reflect on what happened and what actions you could have taken to practice mindfulness at that moment and move on.

How To Organize Your Mental Filing Cabinet

How to Organize Your Mental Filing Cabinet

With how fast-paced and cluttered the world is, it is likely that your mental filing cabinet is overflowing with important memories, tasks that need to be accomplished, and those random embarrassing moments you had years ago. To move from chaos to calm, you should organize your mental filing cabinet to remove the chaos from your mind.

Sadly, you can't just physically go into your mind and sort through papers to clean things up. Organizing your mind will look a bit differently with a few more steps.

Journal to Dump Out Your Thoughts

The first step to organizing your mental filing cabinet is to dump out all those papers that you have so you can see everything that you are working with. This is a common step to cleaning out an area of your house or your closet, and this step can apply to your mind as well.

Journaling is one of the best ways to dump out your thoughts for sorting. With journaling, you don't have to think about creating a story or making your thoughts palatable. All you have to do is write anything and everything that comes to mind.

This practice is sometimes called "stream of consciousness" journaling. When you journal, you write everything that comes to mind with no pause and no judgment. If you get stuck and don't know what to write, you can write "I don't know what to write" repeatedly until you know.

It is recommended to journal every day to take everything running around in your mind and put it down on paper. Journaling is a great mindfulness activity because you become aware of the things you were thinking and by writing your thoughts down, you force them to slow down as well.

Journaling can be done in a notebook or on a word processor. Use the platform that allows you to flow freely with your thoughts.

See What You Wrote

Again, don't judge yourself for the things that you wrote in your journal. Don't even judge the handwriting you used to document your thoughts. A part of this organizational and mindfulness activity is that you are aware, but not judgemental.

Read through what you have written in your journal. Even though you just wrote this all down, you may have not been super aware of every single thought. By reading through what you wrote in the journal, you can notice patterns in your thoughts.

It is likely that everyone has some sort of pattern to their thinking. It's only human to look for patterns and to seek out repetition. Take note of any interesting patterns that you see and the thoughts that stick out to you. This will be important for reflection.

Prioritize the Thoughts You See

Not every thought that someone has is beneficial. When reading through what you wrote in your journal, you may have noticed that you wrote down harmful thoughts. These thoughts that you would want to rework will be lower on your priorities. You never want to prioritize the negative thoughts unless you are actively reworking them.

You can mark up your journal however you want. In this example, we will use highlighters to represent priorities.

Which ideas are the most pressing and need your attention right away? These thoughts might include tasks that have deadlines that are coming up soon, birthdays that are happening soon, or thoughts that you cherish a lot such as a recent compliment you got. Mark these with one color of highlighter, such as green. These are now your top priority thoughts to store at the front of your mental filing cabinet.

Now, organize the thoughts that are still important, but aren't as pressing and can sit further back in your brain. These could be events that are coming up in a few months that don't need much attention yet. They could be a grocery list that you will take to the store another day. This is anything that doesn't need immediate attention and energy. Mark these thoughts with a separate color such as a yellow highlighter.

If you are still using the highlighting method, you only need one more highlighter color. Mark the thoughts that aren't beneficial or important to have. These thoughts won't need attention for a long time or even at all. The thoughts in this list may be harmful thoughts, overall negative thinking, or unnecessary anxiety. Anything thought that doesn't benefit you to have and instead could be detrimental would be on this list. Mark these thoughts with a different highlighter color like pink.

Sorting through your thoughts in this way makes it easier to digest all the information that your brain spews. It also gives you a visual representation of what thoughts are important and which ones are holding you back.

Break Down Complicated Thoughts

When sorting through your journal entry, you may find some thoughts you had that are complex and don't necessarily fit into one neat space. If one of your thoughts is about a big event that is important, then you might have several thoughts connected to this same event to sort through. There may be anxieties along with excitement and different tasks to complete.

For complicated ideas, take time to break them down into separate thoughts. This makes a big project more manageable by breaking it down into bite-sized pieces. Not only will these simpler thoughts be easier to organize, but you will also remove many anxieties that you may feel about an overwhelming project.

Reflect

Your mental filing cabinet is looking pretty organized now that you have taken everything out and resorted them! With an organized mental filing cabinet, you can now reflect on the kinds of thoughts you had. This is the perfect time to note the patterns that you saw when sorting your thoughts.

Did you have any repetitive thoughts? For example, did you have the same anxious thought repeatedly like a worry about a specific project? These patterns should be noted so you can delve into the "why" of those thoughts.

Reflection is also the right time to go back to those harmful thoughts you may have highlighted in pink and rework them. You can rework these thoughts by rewriting them in a more beneficial form above the harmful version. This way, you can see the progress that you make by thinking more mindfully.

For the thoughts that were highlighted in green, use this reflection period to make your plan of action. We highly recommend writing down this plan so you have a physical copy that you can see. This makes it easier to both remember this plan and by writing it down, you are much more likely to stick to the plan.

Reflection is so important to thinking mindfully and having a calm mind. With reflection, you think of the details behind each thought so your brain isn't racing with a million thoughts that aren't organized.

The Things Beyond Your Control
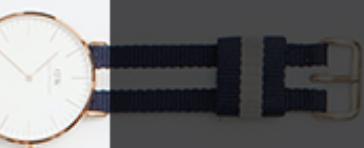
The Things Beyond Your Control (And Why You Shouldn't Stress)

You can control a lot of the clutter in your life. However, there are still many things that may stress you, but you can't control them. We know that telling you to not stress out about something isn't always that helpful, you've been wired to stress out about certain things. Yet, we still want to let you know about the things that you can't control and should work to let them be.

The Past

It's very common to stress out about the past. There are always those embarrassing moments that pop into your head or those arguments you wish you handled in a different way. We want to remind you that the past can't be changed, no matter how much you wish to change things, there is no way to go back in time to alter events. If we had that technology, things would get messed up quickly.

When you find yourself worrying about the past, remember that the past is what made you who are today. Allow yourself to have the thought and feel the emotions that come with it, but then let it pass. Dwelling on the past will only stop you from appreciating the present.

Change

Many people fear change, it is full of unknowns and some change isn't wanted. The only thing that remains constant in this world is change and change is something that can be appreciated once you stop fearing it.

When people try so hard to control change, they end up losing control and spiraling into chaos. Those who flow with change without stressing so much about it are better able to adapt to the changes.

If you find yourself stressed out about upcoming changes, take some time and be mindful of your thinking. Consider all of the good outcomes that could come from the change. If the change is nothing but bad, consider the lessons you will learn from it and make a plan of how to move past that negative change.

Other's Perspective of You

The perspective and opinions of others about how you dress, act, and look can be scary and stressful. Humans desire to be loved and we don't like facing rejection from other people. Yet,

stressing so much about what others think of you will prevent you from enjoying the simple things in life.

Not everyone is going to like you, that's the logic of it all. There will always be someone who doesn't like you, but that isn't something to stress about. The best way to go about others' opinions is by taking a step forward and focusing on yourself. When you focus on yourself, you will think of yourself with more love and less judgment.

The Future

There are many things about the future that you can control. You can make plans for yourself in the future and stick to them, you can plan an event for the future, and you can control the outcomes of some events. Yet, there are still many things about the future that you can't control and you should let that stress go.

For example, you can't control how a presentation next week will go. Sure, you can practice and prepare yourself for the presentation, but you can't fully control the outcome. Many people will stress out about how an event such as a presentation will go, but that stress goes to waste because you can't control everything that will happen.

It is okay and reasonable to feel some stress about the future. However, after a certain point, you must allow those feelings to pass because those thoughts are not of high priority.

Remember Thought Priorities

Thoughts of stress are often not of high priority. When you stress about things you can't control, they aren't helpful in keeping your life calm and away from chaos. If you find yourself stressed out about many things, journal all your thoughts and sort those thoughts into a list of priorities. Oftentimes, those stressful thoughts will be of the lowest priority.

Your Daily Plan For Staying Calm and Confident

Your Daily Plan for Staying Calm and Confident (Even on Busy Days)

You are on your way to living a life of calm even when you are super busy. Having a strong daily plan will keep you cool and collected even if everything has turned into chaos. While you can't control the world around you, you can control your daily routine and how you react to the situations that you encounter.

Start Slow

Never start your day in a rush. Make sure you give yourself enough time in the morning to go through your morning routine with care and awareness. Being mindful, which is a very important aspect of your daily plan, will keep you calm and confident throughout the day.

When you wake up, avoid stressful situations like reading drama on social media. Instead, start your day off with some journaling. Get all of your thoughts out onto paper (or onto your computer) so you can start your day with a fresh mind with all of your thoughts in order.

Starting slow keeps your mental filing cabinet in perfect order. If you start your day out in a rush, papers from your filing cabinet will fly out and create chaos in your mind.

Get Enough Sleep

This applies to how you start your morning and how you end your night. We understand that sleep is very difficult for many people. People suffer from insomnia and sleep disorders that make getting the recommended 8 hours of sleep seem impossible. Sometimes getting enough sleep means resting in your bed. Resting is still better than nothing.

Make sure that you block off at least 8 hours for being in bed. Get to bed at a reasonable time that doesn't have you working on your computer until the last minute. Then, find a wake-up time that gives you enough time to get ready but still gives you the necessary amount of sleep.

Getting enough rest will keep your brain fresh and your mind clear so chaotic thoughts have a harder time rooting in your mind.

Take Mental Breaks

This is when you will pause and practice your mindfulness activities. Take a few mental breaks throughout your day so you can take deep breaths, ground yourself if you need to, and be mindful of all the thoughts running through your head.

By taking mental breaks, you will have a chance to recollect yourself when times are getting crazy. This will keep you calm. You can also tell yourself positive affirmations to build your confidence.

It will seem difficult to take mental breaks when you have a huge list of things to do, but you can even take a mental break while taking a trip to the bathroom. These mental breaks only need to be a few minutes long and they are so important to take.

Practice Positive Thinking

When the day gets chaotic and you have been dealing with people who don't have your best interest in mind, it can be easy to slip into a state of harmful thinking. This is when a pause is necessary to take as you need to break that thinking cycle.

When you find yourself thinking harmful thoughts, take a pause and rework those thoughts that you have. Think positively about yourself by thinking encouragement and not judging yourself if you have made a mistake. Positive thinking will boost your confidence, so you feel stronger about your abilities. This way of thinking will also keep you a lot calmer.

Take Responsibility

Even the calmest, most confident, and smartest people make mistakes sometimes. That is just a part of being human. However, you should not shy away from responsibility for your actions. Not only will this disappoint the people around you, but it will also harm your perception of self. Shying away from responsibility might make you feel like a coward and ashamed.

Build your confidence further by taking responsibility. This will remove the looming fear of others' opinions from hanging over you and will allow you to solve the problem faster. Fixing your mistakes will build others' trust in you and therefore, build your confidence.

End Your Day with Gratitude

As you end your day and being to unwind, think about everything that happened that day that made you grateful. You can be grateful for things both big and small from getting a promotion to having a good conversation with a co-worker.

Practicing gratitude makes you more mindful as you become more aware of the little things that happen throughout the day. It

makes you a more positive person as it trains your brain to think about the good things.

Also, gratitude makes you appreciate what you already have. This makes you less anxious about things you don't have and allows you to be comfortable and happy with where you are now. There is nothing wrong with striving for better but don't let that motivation cause you to ignore the life you are currently living.

Make the Best Plan for You

We could give you a step-by-step plan for living without clutter in your mind and around your space. We could give you the perfect plan to make sure that you are always calm and confident. However, the most important plan is the one that works best for you.

Different people will need different things from their plans. You might need to make sure that you take several breaks throughout the day and some people can be content with one. You may want to journal at the beginning and at the end of the day while others only want to start off the day with journaling.

Using everything that you have learned in this book, make a plan for how you want to live your most calm life. Use the tips that make the most sense for your life needs. When you have a plan that fits, it will be a lot easier to incorporate the new mindful thinking into your life. Everything you plan will apply to what your needs are and you will get the most benefits.

Your plan should include physical actions such as cleaning out your junk drawer and the mindful actions that we had listed above.

We recommend that you write down your plan so that you can see it often. Having a plan written down pushes you to follow it and you won't have to worry about forgetting any detail.

Conclusion

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Whether your clutter is mental or physical, having clutter around your life increases the stress and anxiety you face every day. When you have clutter around your home, make sure you create a plan for how to tackle each room so you can create a living space as clear as your mind. The clutter in your mind can be cleared away through journaling and other mindful habits.

Taking on the clutter in your life will take time. You won't have a perfectly clear and calm life right away. Through these tips, we hope that you can use them as a direction to achieve the calm and confident life that you want.

Always remember to treat yourself with love and care. Don't judge yourself for your mind or for your space. Instead, encourage yourself to make the changes you want to see in your life. Mindful thinking and actions will make your life go from chaos to calm.