



CHAPTER 10

MESSES

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I grew up with a neatnik. My mother was a Grade A “wiper”, never missing an opportunity to use a sponge to spruce up the countertops in our cozy apartment kitchen. Living in small apartments for much of my life afforded me the opportunity to establish a healthy relationship with objects and the space that contains them.

It turns out those early teachings about everything having its place and cleaning up after myself served me well both personally

and professionally. After shifting my career from management in corporate America to diving into the pool of holistic healing, I began to expand my knowledge and education on the power of space.

I dabbled in the art and practice of Feng Shui, an ancient Chinese system of object placement and orientation that is said to affect the movement of energy in any given space. Personally, I could tell the difference in not only how I felt physically and emotionally but also my performance when I was more mindful of where and how I placed my objects. Have you ever entered a space and just felt comfortable because of its breathability and flow? Conversely, have you ever felt ill at ease in some spaces and you didn't know why?

Our spaces are reflections of us.

When we lose control of our physical space because of clutter or uncleanliness, that same lack of control bleeds into other areas of our world. Being mindful of our space doesn't mean we need to have an immaculate, perfectly Feng-Shuied house that Martha Stewart would envy. It's simply about paying attention to your environment and the objects surrounding you at home, at work, and on the road. Do you feel calm, cared for, and empowered when you are there, or do you have a quiet level of discomfort and anxiousness? Are the objects surrounding you *supporting* you or sabotaging you?

Many people I have counseled over the years have had an unhealthy, disempowered relationship with their physical environments. Taking command of our space is tough, and it can trigger

- a lot of feelings of obligation (“I can’t throw that away!”),
- fear (“What if I need it and it’s not there?”), and
- even abandonment (“That’s important to me!”)

It’s *our* stuff! We are like Linus and his beloved blanket. While it may provide some degree of comfort to be surrounded by our possessions (after all, we worked hard to get them!), it ultimately harms us if the maintenance, upkeep, and recycling requires more energy than we are willing or able to commit to. Meanwhile, we are sucking our thumbs with our eyes closed, holding on for dear life to our stuff.

We can, however, mindfully manage our messes. Since it requires a strong will to make tough decisions, we may need some extra help along the way. Do not hesitate to call in for backup. If you are one of those people who would benefit from receiving mental and emotional support by a counselor or organizational support from a dear friend or a professional organizer. This, like any major undertaking, may be better addressed with a team versus alone.

**There is no shame in getting
the help we need. *Ever.***

Consider checking out the National Association of Professional Organizers as an initial resource if you want help in rebooting your space.

Time, money, energy, and space are interconnected; what happens to one affects the others. When you have more time, you

can positively impact your money, energy levels, and space. You may be thinking, "So what if I'm disorganized? I am making great money, so I don't really care about how messy my space is." You may, in fact, be making sufficient or even extraordinary income, but there are other areas in your life that may be suffering if you are not in harmony with your physical surroundings.

The more organized you are, the faster you accomplish your tasks or get from point A to point B. There is a monetary and emotional value to your time. In addition, any time you waste digging through piles and rifling in drawers could have been spent on your personal health and wellness. You could have taken that extra ten minutes it took to find the elusive file to take a brisk walk outside or even close your eyes and sit still for a few moments to reset and practice your mindfulness.

When you are in right relation with your physical world, you will make more time for yourself. You will get more done because you won't be wasting precious minutes sifting through distractions. You will earn more money because you will be maximizing your effort with the right tools. You will have more fun because you will be supported by the positive flow of object-energy around you instead of being suffocated by it.

Go ahead. Clean up. You deserve it.

AT HOME

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Your environment reflects you, so you want it to be as efficient and pleasant as possible. Here are a few mess-management