

# Happy Valentine's Day



FEBRUARY 2007

IN THIS ISSUE, WE WILL DISCUSS:

CHORE MANAGEMENT • THE FULL-TO-THE-BRIM BRAIN • THE MISCELLANEOUS FACTOR

## CHORE MANAGEMENT

Dear Leslie,

I have a ton of household odd jobs to keep track of -like changing the filter on my furnace- how do I keep on top of these ongoing household chores?

Signed,

Oodles of duties

This is a great question and one that I get from many of my clients. The first thing is to sit down and write out everything that you have to do to maintain your household. Afterwards, walk around the entire house and see if there is anything you're forgetting. Organize the list by how often the task needs to be done, such as monthly or annually. One time saving tip is this: when purchasing a new appliance, sign up for the manufacturer maintenance post card reminder.

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# CHORE MANAGEMENT

Below is a color-coded sample list of things to do to upkeep your home:

Monthly (M)

Quarterly (Q)

Biannually (T)

Annually (A)

- Refrigerator – Vacuum coils, clean out refrigerator, & defrost freezer. M
- Oven – clean interior of the oven. Q
- Dishwasher – make sure dishes are washing properly; make sure that water is not storing up at the bottom of the dishwasher. M
- Washing machine – keep an ear open for loud thumping noises when a wash load is going. M
- Furnace – change filter, vacuum out interior. T
- Bathtubs & showers – check for mold and cracks between tiles (does caulk or grout need to be replaced?), make sure drains are clear. T
- Carbon monoxide & smoke alarms – change batteries. T
- Moth balls, or other protectants– change out for new ones. Q
- Mold protectants – change out/renew. Q
- Earthquake kit – update. A
- Insurance photos and list – update. (see Personworks newsletter, volume 27, 2006: <http://tinyurl.com/34yf5k>) T
- Files – update for new year (clear out files you are not looking at or using, such as old articles or recipes). A
- Closets – sort through. T

- Books – sort through. T
- Cabinets – deep clean & change out contact paper (if applicable). T
- Patio & Patio furniture – power spray. A
- Gutters – clear out. Q
- Roof – wash off moss. T
- Lawn – weed (In the spring and summer months).M
- Trees – trim (In the spring and summer months).M
- Lawn – rake (In the spring and summer months). M
- Chimney – have it swept out. A
- Paint – repaint or touch up. A
- Carpets – professionally cleaning. T

After you have completed your list and organized it monthly, quarterly, biannually, and annually you will need to put it into your paper or electronic calendar/organizer to remind yourself to do these tasks. Keeping a master list is crucial to staying on top of your household maintenance for years to come.



## THE FULL-TO-THE-BRIM BRAIN

We all have moments in our life where we find ourselves drowning in a pile of little tasks that have accumulated over time. As a result of putting these little duties off they come to a boiling point where they have to be done -seemingly all at once. The small tasks seem to take over every ounce of space in our minds so that nothing else can fit. This can cause resentment toward anyone or anything that gets in the way of us completing these tasks. Irritability and anger (such as at other drivers causing us road rage) take a front seat in our lives. The good news is that there are steps to release this negative energy.

### TRY THESE FIVE EASY STEPS:

**DELETE-** Take away some of the small tasks – ask yourself: do I really need to do this? If not, say NO to yourself! A good example would be sending out New Years cards. Taking the time to write out individual cards, stamp them and address them may just be too time-consuming. Maybe this year you could send out a friends and family community email explaining that things have gotten crazy this year, and you need to get back on track, that you send your love and best wishes and hope to catch up soon.

**PRIORITIZE-** Rate things 1, 2, & 3. One being the most important and three being the least critical. Yes this will take time to do, but prioritizing is time well spent. You will find that the tension in your shoulders will ease as you are doing this.

**AVOID PROCRASTINATION-** There are always things we dread doing for whatever reason (there are many reasons behind procrastination (see the article entitled “The Problem of Procrastination” by Dr. T. Quek



located at <http://webhome.idirect.com/~read-on/procrast.html> for more on this). Set a timer and tell yourself that you are going to spend “x” amount of time on the task and stick to it (start with 15 minutes; you’d be amazed how much you’ll get done in 15 concentrated, uninterrupted minutes). If possible, spend that amount of time every day until the task is finished. If you are still having a hard time, hire a coach to sit with you while you get the job done. If hiring a coach isn’t feasible, ask a trusted, nonjudgmental friend to sit quietly and read a magazine while you finish your task. There is nothing wrong with having a helping hand to get your through a hard project.

**DELEGATE-** Ask for assistance. Perhaps someone else can do the small task for you, such as running to the post office, picking up your dry cleaning and so on.

**DO SOME SMALL THINGS TO RELIEVE TENSION-** Go on a hike with your closest friend, or meet them for tea/coffee. Or, take a bubble bath at the end of a long work day. By treating yourself to something enjoyable, it will make the next day something to look forward to.

Try doing at least two of these five steps and you’ll find that full-to-the-brim brain of yours is feeling some relief.

# THE MISCELLANEOUS FACTOR

The other day I was chatting with a new client and we were talking about organizing a new closet. She said that she tried color coding, but it didn't work for her. She had been toying with the idea of organizing by event. For example, work clothes in one area, while evening/going out clothes in another, and lounging clothes would go in another area. On the other hand, she liked the idea of organizing by season. This is where she got into a kaffuffle.

Her biggest practical problem was that she couldn't figure out where to put things like sweatshirts. As we know, in the northwest, even in the summers, we need sweatshirts or some kind of jacket for the evening. She said that when she came upon one of those sweatshirts, or jackets, she gave up and left those items in a pile and then forgot about it. This is when I pointed out the evil miscellaneous factor: Never make miscellaneous piles since you may never see those items again.

How do you avoid making piles when you just don't know where to put those "miscellaneous things"? The answer is simple: KISS (Keep It Simple Silly!) This is an excellent mantra for organizing in general. The more complex the system, the less likely you are to maintain it. You also need to stick with one theme; either

organizing by event, or by season. If you are going to organize it by event, then have a sub-section for summer outdoor events or hiking. The key is to put labels in the closet. If you decide to organize your closet by season, stick to a spring, summer, fall, and winter format. Even if it gets cool in the summers, you will know that your sweatshirts are in the fall clothes section and you can retrieve from, and return them to, the right place in your closet.



## **KISS** *(Keep It Simple Silly!)*