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FIVE WAYS TO UNCLUTTER YOUR LIFE

BY NATHAN FOX (MBACP)

Now I'm not just talking about the physical items that we collect, but also the mental clutter that we carry with us every day. Clutter in our lives can lead to two things:

- 1) Repetition of our past choices and mistakes.
- 2) A reduction of our ability to keep up with the speed of life. People around you can do three times as much as you.

We can only have success in life if we are able to keep moving and deal with the changes life throws at us. So where do we start?

Get rid of all the rubbish

Toss it, give it away, take it to a charity shop. Never put it in a box and say I'll take it later. If you realise that you don't need it, get it out of your life.

A good rule of thumb if you haven't used it in 12 months you probably don't need it. This isn't a hard or fast rule, there maybe things that you don't use often but you need to keep, that's fine. You know what is rubbish. You should understand that every small thing is a small part of your energy. Ask yourself "Do I want this or do I want new energy in my life?" Do this at work as well as at home, research has shown that a tidy physical space can have a positive impact on our mental health.



Clean out your virtual life

How much time do you spend online? Is it to relax and unwind, work related, using social media? The internet can be a great place to help us get information and keep in touch with the people we love, but it can also be a curse. Social media use has been linked with depression and feeling inadequate, if you ever feel worse after going on Facebook, maybe you need a clean out? What about your news feed is there any clutter spamming your inbox? Also, look at the files on your computer what have you got clogging up your hard drive?

Get organised

Do it. Sort stuff out and know where it is. You need to be able to react to life, reduce your stress by being able put your hand on that information you need right away. And as I said before, a tidy environment can help our mental health.

Filter

New information and new things continually come into life. If you're making new space, you don't want to fill it back up with old bad habits. This is about changing things, not more of the same old habits.

Finish all outstanding jobs

What's on your to-do list, what have you been putting off? Get on it, each unfinished job or project takes up a little piece of our brain power leaving less room for creativity and inspiration.

This will be tough, let's not beat around the bush. But you have read through this far, so something is driving you to change so give it a go. Maybe start small, just a few small things and then build to bigger ones. I'm not saying that you should get rid of your sentimental items, they can help to boost mood and remind us of good memories. Remember to reflect on how you feel after each time you clear something out, how does it feel? Keep going until you think you are done. Take as long as you need to and go at your own pace. You can do it. All humans have the drive to change and grow towards what is good for us, even you.



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