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Tidying Up Shouldn't Be Overwhelming
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There are so many organizing shows on television; it's difficult not to be swept into the frenzy. Even going to your favorite retailer gives rise to finding a better way to sort your "stuff." Rest assured, it is rare to find homes where people have a place for all of their things (and, more importantly, can find them). Even those shows you love to watch often have large teams of people, off-camera, that make the place come together in such a short amount of time.

So, what can you do to make your life a little simpler? Think of organizing like any project you might start. Get your tools together: 3-4 medium size boxes, a couple of large, industrial-size garbage bags, a pad of paper and a pen.

Label your boxes with the following words:

Donate/Sell (for things you don't need to keep but someone else might actually want),
Repair (if you're not really going to repair these things, put them in the donate box or let them go),

Other Places (this is for things that go elsewhere inside your home)

Toss (this is your trash)

"?" (this is for things you really don't know what to do with, or you have to ask a family member about it before it leaves the house).

Make sure you have your pen and paper, because as you're sorting your things, you'll think of things you may need to purchase to make it more organized before you put it all away.

One big mistake many people make is they go and buy a bunch of beautiful plastic boxes and spend lots of money, only to find that once they've sorted out their things, the boxes don't fit their needs. If you wait until after the sorting, you'll know exactly the size box you need for each area you're keeping. In addition, while you are sorting, be ruthless. The reason you've gotten all of this stuff is because you're probably someone who likes to save things. If you haven't needed it in the past year, chances are, you don't need it now.

We find that most people don't want to tackle their projects because they don't know where to start. If you're at a loss, call a friend or relative and just begin, as long as you start somewhere, the project will eventually get done.

Of course, if you get in a bind and need it done quickly, you can always call a professional organizer. They can guide you through these steps and give you the motivation to get it finished more quickly than you might have on your own. Organizers have the latest shelving and storage options available and know exactly where to find what you need to clear up your space. Then you can get back to spending time with family and friends, without that big project hanging over your head. Happy Organizing!

Sharon McRill is a professional organizer and the owner of The Betty Brigade, a full service, personal assistance company founded in 2003 and based in Ann Arbor MI. Find out more at 734-994-1000 or www.bettybrigade.com.