

# *Enough Stuff*

How to Eliminate Clutter and Simplify Your Life

A Presentation By



# Program

---

## **Our Stuff**

- Where does it come from?
- Why does it accumulate?

## **Taking Control**

- Common barriers to downsizing
- Benefits of downsizing/rightsizing

## **Completing your personal downsizing project**

- Getting started
- Managing your work areas
- Managing your time

## **Plan and Organize**

## **What Stays and What Goes?**

- How do you do it?

## **Passing on Personal Possessions to Family and Friends**

- Six primary factors to consider in the process

## **Questions and Answers**

# Stuff

---

- It begins accumulating on the first day we move into our first house
- That's 10,957 days
- The term of a typical mortgage is thirty years
- Thirty years is 10,957 days worth of stuff!

# Why does it accumulate?

---

- Our possessions provide a sense of continuity and security
- Hobbies and crafts — we tend to keep things that we make ourselves
- Knowing an item's original cost may make disposal difficult
- Some of us have emotional barriers to parting with possessions
- We keep the old one as a “spare” in case the new one breaks

# Why does it accumulate?

---

- Our possessions provide a sense of continuity and security
- Hobbies and crafts — we tend to keep things that we make ourselves
- Knowing an item's original cost may make disposal difficult
- Some of us have emotional barriers to parting with possessions
- We keep the old one as a “spare” in case the new one breaks
- Sometimes “keeping it” is the most attractive alternative

# 30 Years of Stuff

---

## Where does it come from?

- We shop
- We give and receive gifts
- Newer models of existing products become available

# 30 Years of Stuff

---

## Where does it come from?

- We shop
- We give and receive gifts
- We transfer possessions to subsequent generations
- Newer models of existing products become available
- Mementos of trips, vacations, and outings

# Taking Control

---

## Common barriers to eliminating clutter and downsizing

- It's a daunting task, I don't know where to begin
- I don't have enough time

# Taking Control

## Common barriers to eliminating clutter and downsizing

- It's a daunting task, I don't know where to begin
- I just can't cope with the dust and cobwebs
- We own so much stuff, what will we do with it all?
- I don't have enough time
- How do I decide what to keep?

# Taking Control

## Benefits of downsizing or de-cluttering

- Fewer possessions will help your house “show” better if selling
- “Less is more” — more space, more options
- Those less fortunate will appreciate your unwanted stuff
- Allows you to control where your possessions go
- There may be safety considerations
- Less to move means lower cost



# Taking Control

## The difficult part

- Making the decision and the commitment is the most difficult step
- Parting with possessions can cause anxiety and depression
- Age may increase physical difficulty or add emotional strain
- Developing a personal plan



# Getting Started

---

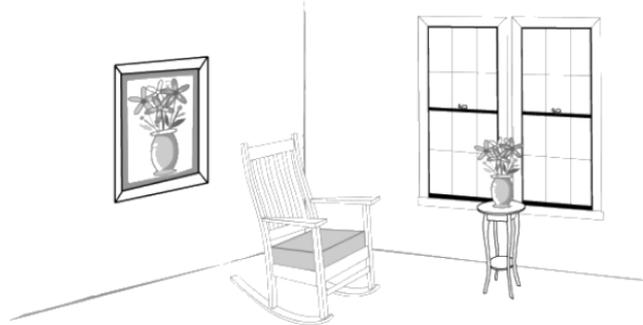
## How do you begin?

- Establish a goal - Ask: what do I want to accomplish?
- Arrange listed tasks so you can proceed step-by-step
- Develop a floor plan of your new residence, if moving
- Make a list that includes each task required to achieve your goal
- Identify resources you'll need
- Arrange for help to lift or carry heavy items — safety first!

# Getting Started

## How do you begin?

- Check the policies of charities for pick-up of donated items
- Know local policies regarding rubbish collection and recycling
- Begin in the areas of the house that you are currently NOT using?
- Tell family and friends that it's time to come get their stuff!
- Proceed step-by-step one room at a time, one box at a time
- Work with the end in mind - focus on your goal



# Plan and Organize

---

**Manage your work area - assign a holding zone for each category**

- Keep

# Plan and Organize

---

**Manage your work area - assign a holding zone for each category**

- Keep
- Transfer to loved ones

# Plan and Organize

---

**Manage your work area - assign a holding zone for each category**

- Keep
- Try to sell
- Transfer to loved ones

# Plan and Organize

---

**Manage your work area - assign a holding zone for each category**

- Keep
- Try to sell
- Transfer to loved ones
- Donate

# Plan and Organize

---

**Manage your work area - assign a holding zone for each category**

- Keep
- Try to sell
- Recycle or Rubbish
- Transfer to loved ones
- Donate

# Plan and Organize

---

## Manage your time

- Set a goal each day that will advance your project
- Prepare for rubbish and recycling (bin and trash bags)
- Keep work sessions to 1 or 2 hours (be easy on yourself)
- Be realistic in your expectations
- Avoid repeatedly moving the same item

# What Stays and What Goes

## How do you do it?

- Start with large items
- Sort similar things together and purge extras
- Remove refuse from site as soon as possible
- Complete one section of a room at a time (start with a drawer if you have to!)
- Keep a rubbish bin centrally located
- Walk away when you reach your goal for the day



# What Stays and What Goes

## Ask yourself the following

- Do I love it?
- Do I want it?
- Do I need it?
- Do I use it? Have I touched it within the last 12 months?



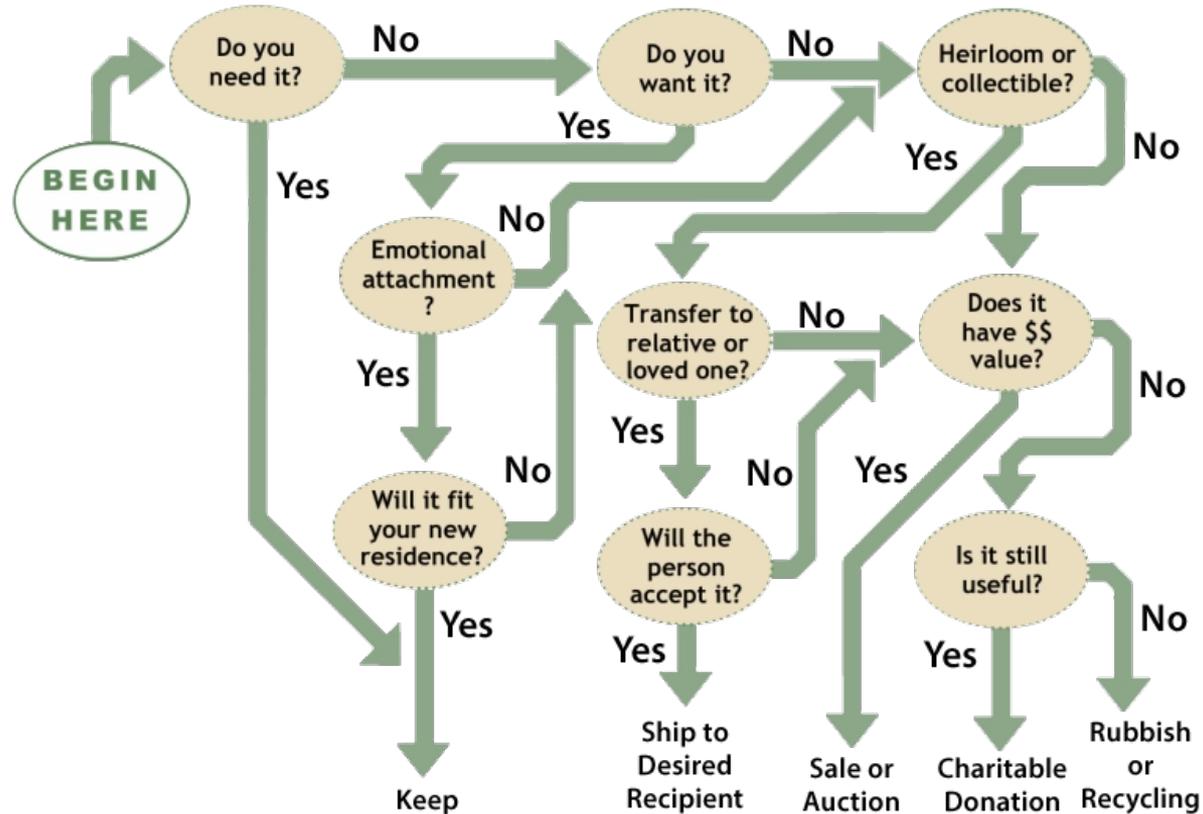
# What Stays and What Goes

## Ask yourself the following

- Do I love it?
- Do I want it?
- Could it have meaning to someone I know?
- Do I need it?
- Do I use it? Have I touched it within the last 12 months?
- But... take the time to enjoy your memories and reminisce



# What Stays and What Goes



# Problem Areas

## Clothing and shoes

- Ask: Does it suit the way I live today?
- Ask: Does it still have the price tag?
- Think practically
- Ask: Have I worn it within the last two years?
- Ask: Is this item about my past or my future?
- Try to make the most of your storage space



# Problem Areas

---

## The Kitchen

- What you keep needs to fit the way you really use your kitchen
- Think about accessibility and space utilization
- Do you really need all seven frying pans?

# Problem Areas

## The Kitchen

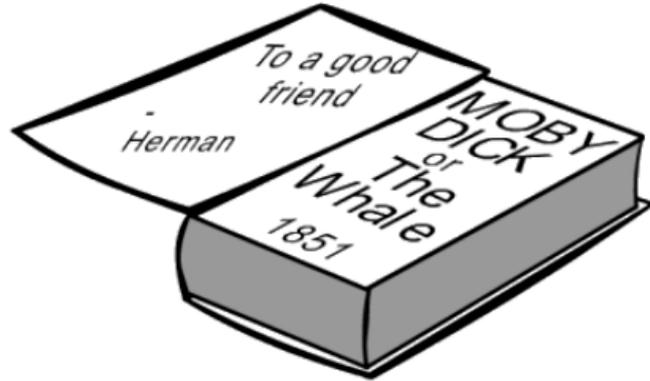
- What you keep needs to fit the way you really use your kitchen
- Think about accessibility and space utilization
- Three sets of china?
- Do you really need all seven frying pans?
- Ask: How often do I really use it?
- Think practically about each item and consider clean-up time



# Problem Areas

## Photo albums, books and papers — suggestions

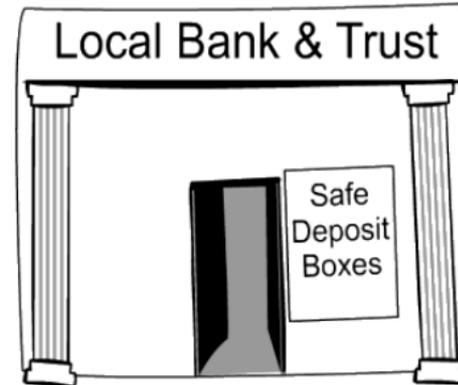
- Sort loose photos and make a surprise gift to those in the pictures
- Sell or transfer first editions, signed or rare books
- Transfer loose photos and albums to DVD or utilize an online service



# Problem Areas

## Photo albums, books and papers — suggestions

- Sort loose photos and make a surprise gift to those in the pictures
- Sell or transfer first editions, signed or rare books
- Cancelled checks — 3 years if tax return related, otherwise 1 year
- Transfer loose photos and albums to DVD or utilize an online service
- Rent a safe deposit box for storing important documents



# Where it All Goes

---

## Suggestions for possessions you no longer want or need

- Transfer cherished items to a relative, friend or loved one

# Where it All Goes

---

## Suggestions for possessions you no longer want or need

- Transfer cherished items to a relative, friend or loved one
- Unusual collection? Find it a home at a local club or museum

# Where it All Goes

---

## Suggestions for possessions you no longer want or need

- Transfer cherished items to a relative, friend or loved one
- Dispense unwanted household items and clothing to a local charity
- Unwanted possessions of value can be sold
- Unusual collection? Find it a home at a local club or museum
- Have a gift party where your guests must take something when they leave
- Today, more items than ever can be recycled

# Passing on Your Personal Possessions

---

## Six primary factors to consider in the process

- Determine what you want to accomplish in the transfer
- Understand the sensitivity of the issue
- Consider distribution options and consequences
- Belongings have different meanings for different individuals
- Decide what is “fair” within the context of your family
- Agree and be prepared to manage conflicts if they arise

# Passing on Your Personal Possessions

## Challenges that you may face

- Difficult to divide items in a way that seems fair to all
- Discussing your possessions may be uncomfortable to both parties
- Individual perceptions of what constitutes fair vary
- Highly recommended: *Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?*<sup>TM</sup>



### Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate

A Guide to Passing on Personal Possessions

Available From

University of Minnesota  
Extension Service

<http://www.yellowpieplate.umn.edu/>

Google: "yellow pie plate"

?

# Thank You

## Services for Graceful Aging

- Downsizing and Moving
- Floor Plans and Organizing
- Consignments
- Daily Money Management



<https://gracefultransitions.biz>