The Organization Process Explained

Step 1 | *the Organizing Process* | **Assess**

The first step is to evaluate what you have.

Take Inventory | A visual inventory if you will. During this step, look for hidden potential in the way of unused spaces high and low. Check to see what type of storage is available, and what kind, if any, storage containers you have. What kind of clutter is there; piles here and there or piles stacked up to your knees!

Remain Objective | An objective inventory of the situation is crucial. Leave behind any judgment of yourself or others that utilize the space – judgment will interfere with the process of getting organized. Assessment is a fact finding mission.

Take Measurements | It's useful to take measurements and photos as well. How much space do you have to add a bookshelf? How deep and wide are the shelves you have? Having measurements to refer to when shopping saves you time by avoiding purchases that will not serve your purpose.

Step 2 | *the Organizing Process* | **Sort**

Regardless of the space you wish to organize, its contents will need to be sorted.

Tool for Sorting | Trash bags, a couple empty boxes or empty storage containers and a little bit of physical space are all you need to start. Other helpful items could be Post-its and a marker, but most people remember what their piles are after a minute or so.

Sorting Categories | 1) Trash 2) Donate or Give Away 3) Keep, but in another Space/Room 4) Keep in this Space/Room

Purge | Weed out items you no longer want or that just don't belong in the space is also important; you only want to keep in the space items that belong there. Ask yourself *reflective questions* to help you determine what still serves you at this point in life.

Focus on this Space | Your mission is to peel away everything else to reveal only what will remain in the space you are working on. Focusing on this one space and you will make faster progress; that's why you have boxes. Box or bag up donations, things that belong in another room can go in another box. Stay in the space you are working in by putting items that would otherwise leave, in a box or bag. You can label them if that helps using the Post-its and marker.

As you sort, the things you will keep in the space may not actually need a box, but can be just grouped as you work. In a closet it might just be pushing the hanger to the side, pulling out only what leaves. If it's a

storage closet with shelves, start grouping on the shelves. What is leaving is what is removed.

Categorizing | What is left is what remains in the space. Now, it's important to know how much of any one category or item you have so you'll know how much space it will take up, which is why you will need to group like items together. This moves you into the organizing phase.

Step 3 | *the Organizing Process* | **Organize**

When everything is sorted out and you know what's what, you can finally put it away in a logical organized way.

Group | Keep like-items together. Ask yourself, "Where would I find this in a store?" or "Where would I think to look for this?" Grouping can be a little challenging because so many things straddle the line of categories. What makes the most sense is usually the best answer.

Compartmentalize it | When it comes to putting things away, compartmentalization is key and there's a great deal of manipulating the various components to see what works the best. Compartmentalization can be little – like a drawer divider - and it can be big – like a bookcase. **Having organizing elements to compartmentalize things is how things stay organized!**

Prioritize | Think about the frequency of use of an item to determine its importance. Some parts of a space are more "valuable" than others so it's important to consider the frequency of use as well as the real estate it occupies. The end goal is to be able to easily access what you need. If something is too crowded, it'll be more difficult to store and retrieve.

Simplicity | When organizing, the simpler the set up is, the more likely it will be followed. Avoid getting too complicated and detailed. If you had the mannerisms to maintain things that are super detailed, you likely would not get disorganized in the first place. Keep it simple. ☺

Step 4 | *the Organizing Process* | **Maintain**

Nothing stays organized without maintenance. Regularly putting things away it goes is how things remain organized. It isn't magic.

Discipline | No one's home remains perfect. We use our homes and our things, so our stuff gets out of place. It's up to us to return everything to where it once came. There is an element of self discipline to maintain organization. How frequently will depend on many factors, but it's important to not allow it to ever get past the point of no return!

New Stuff Comes In | Most people have a regular stream of new items that come into the home. As this new stuff comes in, it's important to take action and make decisions right away as to where it will go. It needs a home. Grouping these new things with what is like it makes the most sense. Remember to ask yourself this question, "Where would I think to look for this?"

Take it Out of the Bag | If you want to actually give the gift or use what you purchased, take it out of the bag. Bags are masters of hiding even the most important item.