

FEAP NEWSLETTER

A Series of Educational Articles from your Faculty & Employee Assistance Program

Getting Organized – Let’s Streamline and Simplify – NOW!

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A disorganized life is a series of missed opportunities. Lesser concerns wind up stealing our time and energy, while people and activities we care about suffer for lack of attention.



The busier we get, the greater our need to be efficient. We all know that we must set priorities, delegate tasks and manage our time. The trick is to find simple, straightforward and creative ways to achieve these goals.

Here are some favorite strategies:

- **Perfectionism is the problem-not the solution.** Good organizing is a series of choices. It’s the ability to differentiate what you *need* to do from what you might *like* to do if you had unlimited time-which none of us ever has.

Because perfectionists tend to dwell on the secondary, they often procrastinate, pushing the envelope of their deadlines.

We often think neatness equals being organized. A clean desk is not necessarily an organized desk. A home that appears tidy may not run efficiently. Neatness can be a product of organization. However, organization must come first.

- **Organizing is a process, not a one-time event, nor is it a product.** If you spend 15 minutes a day on the task-while watching TV or waiting for dinner to cook-you’ll stay ahead of the clutter. Do a little bit every day. Keep on top of it. Prior to a major move last year, my wife and I took nearly 8 months tackling this organizing challenge. At the end of the day, we eliminated at least 30 to 40 percent of our “stuff”. Remember, getting organized doesn’t necessarily require spending money.

Getting organized at home and at work involves time and thought, motivation and effort...and you can’t buy these factors in any store.

Toss obvious junk. Walk around your house with a plastic garbage bag. Toss out expired coupons or packages of food no one will ever eat...single or worn socks...old

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travel brochures...expired medicines...makeup that is more than a year old...extra grocery bags (10 are enough)...things that are broken...old, rusted tools and utensils.

Sort your things. Now comes the hard part, deciding what to get rid of! Attack each room of your home one at a time including bathrooms, garage and basement! Now let's try this rule of thumb. If you haven't used the item for a year-*get rid of it*. If you really want it-*put it back*. Place items you're unsure of in a box. Seal the box and date it. After six months, if you haven't gone back to retrieve anything from the box, get rid of it or have a yard sale, church sale or donate to a charity.

- ***Watch what you bring home.*** When you buy something, get rid of something else. If you get two new sweaters for your birthday, get rid of two old sweaters.
- ***Workplace tips.*** Have an annual spring or fall cleanout. Go through your hard copy AND your e-files and attempt to eliminate at least 20 percent of your files. A corporation I am familiar with annually required every employee to document their personal efforts to this goal!

Remove everything from your desktop. Put back ONLY the necessities and keep a large clean space for current projects. Necessities include a phone, notepad, calendar and current project(s).

Put an end to telephone tag. Leave messages that ask for specific responses...instead of vague requests to call you back. In you're not by your telephone when your call is returned, the caller can still provide the information you need-on the answering machine.

Create a daily to-do list. Spend some time either at the end of the day or first thing in the morning in the planning process. Close your door, turn off the phone and concentrate on priorities.

In conclusion, feeling better organized can give us more of a sense of control and mastery over our lives. Most, if not all of us, feel a certain level of stress in our daily lives. I am confident that putting effort into the process of "getting organized" will help restore a sense of balance! A final thought...go into the web, and go to google.com then enter "getting organized". A lot of great free web sites await you! Have fun!

