



January is the time to start getting organized!

by Ellinor Ellefson

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As I walk around in my neighborhood, I still see quite a few homes with Christmas lights still dangling from houses and bushes. Some reindeers are still standing sadly in the front yards, and hey, there is a Santa – did he forget to go home to the North pole! As of this coming weekend has passed, most of us will have taken down all of our Christmas decorations, and hopefully stored them away, nice and neat, in our garages. Right? Or, do you every year think that you would like to put every strand in a plastic bag, marked with were the light goes, but it does not happen? And do you every year promise yourself to either throw out the strands that does not work, or fix them *before* you put the strand away – but your intentions somehow gets stuffed into one of those boxes? Did this years Christmas decoration takedown somehow get as disorganized as last years?



Becoming organized is not easy. The reason is, it takes time, and time is something we usually do find in short supply. However, becoming, and staying organized, is one of the most liberating things there is in life. It does not cost much money (just the cost of boxes and other systems you might need), and once you are on track with staying organized, it will actually free

up time. Nevertheless, how do you get started? Where do you start if your home is filled with stuff that you never use, your closet is ready to explode from clothes that you bought 10, 15, maybe even 20 years ago. And the garage... Well, the answer is, you start small and you go slowly. Just as you can't take off 20, 30, or 40 lbs of overweight that have crept upon you over the years, you should not expect to be able to get your entire home organized in a short amount of time. Start small. This year, start with the Christmas lights. Do put every strand in a bag, mark it, and do not put away the ones that do not work. Fix the ones that have lights on them that does not work – do it now, do not wait until next December. There is a great tool that magically fixes portions of Christmas lights that are out. It is called The Lightkeeper Pro, it normally retails for around \$40, now after Christmas I have seen it for \$5. Even my husband calls it magic! Then – leave the garage for later, and start inside your home.

Again, start small, maybe with one drawer. Start with your “junk-drawer”. Clean it out, throw out everything broken, dirty, and unused. Then go to the next drawer, and then take one kitchen cabinet. Slowly work yourself around your home, room by room. When you are done with the house, turn to the garage. Chances are you have been putting many of the things that you cleaned out from the inside of your house out into the garage. What you really have been doing is delaying what ultimately has to happen – and that is to throw or give away anything that you do not need anymore. But the time of truth has come – this time you will liberate yourself from all the unnecessary items that take up space and energy in your home and in your life.

Take a weekend and empty the entire garage, every shelf, every cabinet, get it out on the curb. Then look at everything, and decide whether to keep it or not. But, you might say, how do I know what to keep, and how would I know that what I am throwing out or giving away, is not something I might need in the future? Ask yourself these questions:

1. When did I last use it? If it was longer than 2 years ago, toss it or give it to Goodwill.
2. Does it have any sentimental value? If it does, keep it, if not, throw it or give it away. But here you need to be honest to yourself, things with true sentimental value are things like your kids first clothes (not their clothes as 3, 4, or 5 year olds), your dress that you got engaged in (not your outdated sweaters that your mom gave you for Christmas in 1981 and -82). Also, remember, most things can be replaced, should the need come up again.

Clean out your home and take your time. When you are done, you will realize how liberating it is, how easy your life feels, and how all the sudden, there is room for new ideas to grow! This is my promise to you! Good luck getting organized, start today, but start small, it will be worth it, I promise!

If you need help to get started, or would like ideas on organizing systems, call or email me at: 602-751-1178, ellinor@elleinteriorsaz.com. I am also here for all your interior design, decorating, and remodeling needs!

Happy organizing!

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