

CLUTTER-PROOF YOUR BUSINESS

Turn Your Mess Into Success

MIKE NELSON

MIKE NELSON is the founder of Clutterless Recovery Groups Inc., a non-profit organization which helps people overcome their cluttering tendencies. Mr. Nelson's business background is in the banking, insurance, publishing, hospital administration and investment industries. He also has several entrepreneurial business adventures including a publishing company, a travel agency, a business consultancy and a publishing company. Mr. Nelson is the author of 14 books including *Stop Clutter From Stealing Your Life* (2001).

The Clutterless Recovery Groups Web site is at www.clutterless.org.

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MAIN IDEA

To overcome a cluttering habit, you can logically expect to take one of two approaches:

1. Try and restrict the inflow of “stuff” into your life – so there are less things to organize and find space for.
2. Better understand why it is you feel the need to hold on to things – and address those root causes rather than the symptoms.

The conventional solution to cluttering has usually been along the lines of the first approach. That is, develop new and improved ways to organize your life and to store things so they can be found when needed. Unfortunately, with the explosion of the amount of information which is flowing into people’s lives every day, the shortcomings of this approach are becoming obvious. It is now almost impossible to deal with everything that comes along. Getting better organized and trying to restrict the inflow of information are at best a band-aid approach to cluttering, when really something more robust is needed.

Clearly the second approach to cluttering has the potential to deliver more long-term benefits. In other words, this involves striking at the source of the clutter rather than trying and better deal with the consequences. For example, some people are afraid to throw things away because of a fear they will need that item in the future. To deal with this fear at its very source, one approach is to consistently ask yourself: “What’s the worst that could happen if I lose this piece of paper?” Or alternatively, you might consider the replaceability of most paper documents if needed. By doing that for each source of your cluttering tendencies, you get to the heart of the matter rather than simply trying to deal with the result.

Put another way, to clutter-proof your business, don’t try and change your outside circumstances alone. At best this is only a stop gap measure. Instead, try and understand what it is you fear will happen. Then systematically deal with each of those fears. Sometimes, just the act of identifying your fears will be all that’s required while at other times, further action will be called for. Address those true inner beliefs or fears and the clutter will naturally subside.

“Disorganization is more than piles of paper. It is an expression of a blockage in our lives, physically, emotionally, spiritually. Too much organization is not the answer. It is a thief just like cluttering. Neither disorganization nor its solution is about piles of files, crowded To-Do lists, or endless time thieves lurking in the alleys of your workaday world. It is about how you relate to things. Disorganization isn’t about our stuff. It’s about ourselves. The ‘why to’ is more important than the ‘how to’.”

– Mike Nelson

“The chronically disorganized try to control everything by not getting rid of anything. We waste mental energy trying to decide what to keep, what to toss, and where to start. A better idea is to save your energy for things that are important: our goals, our families, our friends, our creativity. We can live happier, richer lives by controlling less, but better. Keep in mind it took years to get where you are today. It will take time to be clutter-free. Your organization will improve right away but you’ll have to work at non-cluttering for the rest of your life. The longer you do it, the easier it gets. After awhile, you’ll wonder how you ever lived the way you are now.”

– Mike Nelson

How To Clutter-Proof Your Business

1. Identify your fears – why you actually clutter.	Page 2
2. Remember information is of no use if it cannot be made available.	Page 2
3. Recognize fear is behind the cluttering habit.	Page 2
4. Understand your own personal learning style and apply that style effectively.	Page 3
5. To change your life, change your vocabulary.	Page 3
6. To make a start, visualize the end of the process.	Page 3
7. Understand the importance of overcoming the cluttering habit.	Page 4
8. Accept that time spent now saves more time later.	Page 4
9. Use the clutterer’s 80/20 rule.	Page 4
10. Realize you’re going to make some mistakes. Get over them.	Page 5
11. Remind yourself too tidy is stressful as well.	Page 5
12. If your personal values are muddled, you’ll always feel disorganized.	Page 5
13. If you’re in the wrong job, you’ll always be disorganized.	Page 6
14. Recognize the self-defeating nature of cluttering.	Page 6
15. Realize there is no universal solution to cluttering.	Page 6
16. Tidy your desk. A cluttered desk encourages the cluttering habit.	Page 7
17. Whenever you feel overwhelmed, take a short break.	Page 7
18. When feeling swamped, break large projects into small tasks.	Page 7
19. Remember all decision-making is a gamble.	Page 8
20. It’s natural to wonder about the paths you did not take.	Page 8

