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The sentimental person's guide for letting go of belongings

By Jennifer Raftis, CPO



Professional Organizer, Jennifer Raftis, CPO founded Efficiency Matters, LLC to help you with all of your organizing needs for your home and business. She is a Certified Professional Organizer and an active board member with NAPO, National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals. She is also an independent representative for The Container Store and has expertise in designing closets, garages, pantries, playrooms and more. In addition, she is a Corporate Organizing and Productivity Consultant and has worked with Fortune 500 companies across the U.S. Another large part of her business is move management especially working with seniors who are downsizing. She and her husband have lived in Moraga for 30 years, raising 3 kids and working countless volunteer hours with many local non-profit organizations and schools. Jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com, 925-698-3756 www.efficiencymattersllc.com

not being trashed, it can help us let them go. I would recommend spending some time doing the research as to where you want your items to go. What charities are close to your heart? Have you already asked your family and friends if they would like any of the items?

Once you have decided to let items go, I recommend taking them out of your house as soon as possible. The sooner you let things go the sooner you will see progress. I do not recommend leaving those boxes in your car or your house as you might be tempted to go back through them. It's kind of like ripping off a Band-Aid - if you go slowly, you prolong the pain; if you do it fast, you'll get it over with.

Kids' memorabilia can be a very difficult category for many people. I recommend only keeping a few items from grade school, junior high, high school and college for each child. You could create a memory book or box for each child with photographs of all of their accomplishments.

When it's time to start reducing your belongings for whatever reason - downsizing, decluttering or there's a move in your future - it's often very difficult for the sentimental person to let go of their possessions.

Sentimental people see the memory value in their belongings and have a hard time letting go of them, which can create trouble when their possessions start to take over their space. This often leads to large amounts of clutter everywhere and can cause overwhelming feelings and even depression.

The sentimental person often keeps items because they represent or remind them of someone that they have lost or of fond memories from the past. They keep items from their kid's childhood, things that reflect their accomplishments, things that remind them of who they used to be and the things they used to do. This is why it can be so hard to let go of these items. Rather than letting go of all of these things, the goal is to keep a small amount of the most precious items. Items stuffed in a box in a garage cannot be easily enjoyed. Culling a special few items out of hundreds or thousands of items that have been stored can reduce the volume of belongings and do a better job of honoring the memories of the people and events in your life.

"I inherited my family's belongings and I can't seem to let them go" is something I hear from many of my clients. The items that you have inherited from your family may not fit into your life, but you're afraid it will upset other family members if you decide to get rid of them. They might take up space in your garage and they might even have been there for years and years and years. Because you feel so guilty getting rid of anything, you decide not to decide because decisions are just too hard. One of the reasons the decisions are so hard is that we are afraid if we give up the item, we will lose the memory. One of the most effective ways to keep the memory for you and for your family going forward is to create memory books with photos of the items. This is a great way to honor the legacy of the person it belonged to. The photo memory books are also a super way for you to start your own legacy memories for your family - these books can include photographs of your accomplishments and experiences.

Another hurdle to getting rid of things is the feeling that we want to make sure they go to a good home. If we know somebody will appreciate them and the items are

If your kids are grown and they do not have interest in keeping their old toys, are you hanging on to them for the day you may have grandkids? Even if you do have ample space to store these items, will they last over time to be safe enough, clean enough, and interesting enough for your grandkids? I know some people like the nostalgic value of old toys, but again these nostalgic items can be shown in a picture album to your grandkids instead of holding on to all of the actual toys.

For many people, giving up items that have sentimental value is always going to be challenging. Sadly, we can't hold on to everything. The more we hold on to from the past, the less meaningful items from our present can come into our lives.

I hope everyone has a very happy New Year and that you enjoyed spending time with your loved ones over the holidays.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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