

Are You a Clutterer?

Are you a clutterer, or do you know someone who is one? A clutterer is a person who struggles to get rid of unneeded possessions, leading to an accumulation of items that crowd their living space and daily life. Are there things you have not used or cannot use that are just cluttering the place? If so, you are a clutterer.

Just for fun, I am going to share some words that also mean clutter: chaos, confusedness, confusion, disarrangement, disarray, disorder, disorderliness, disorganization, jumble, mess, mixed-up, and topsy-turviness. Wow. Do any of these words describe you?

How do you know if you are a clutterer? Here are some questions to think about:

- Do you have more possessions or items in your life than you can handle comfortably?
- Do you find it difficult to dispose of many things, even those you haven't used in years?
- Do you rent storage spaces to house items you never use?
- Do you spend time looking for things that are hard to find because of all the clutter?
- Do you find it easier to drop something than to put it away, or to wedge an object into an overcrowded drawer or closet rather than find space for it?
- Do you collect things to give to others?
- Do you bring things into your house without establishing a place for them?
- Is your clutter causing problems in your relationships?
- Are you embarrassed to have visitors because your home is never presentable?
- Do you hesitate to share this problem because you are ashamed of your clutter?
- Are you constantly doing things for others while your own home is out of order?
- Do you miss deadlines or abandon projects because you can't find the paperwork or material to finish the work?

- Have you tried to clean up from time to time but find yourself unable to stick with it?
- Does the problem appear to be growing?
- Do you sometimes get buried in detail, making projects take much longer than is really necessary?
- Do you procrastinate about cleaning up because you believe you must do it perfectly or you won't do it at all?
- Are you easily sidetracked, moving from one project to another without finishing any of them?
- Do you have problems with time management and estimating how long it takes to do things?
- Do you believe there is all the time in the world to clean your house, finish those projects, and read all those piles of old magazines?
- Do you use distractions to escape from your clutter?

Once more, I ask the question, "Are you a clutterer?" But what about emotional clutter? Writer Jodie Foster states, "Emotional clutter is a form of interference. When a river is blocked with trees, logs, bushes, etc. the water doesn't flow easily. The river begins to stagnate. Do you feel that your life is so difficult? Like it is stuck?"

EMOTIONAL CLUTTER: Are you an emotional clutterer? Psychologist Donna Cameron, also known as the Clutterer Doctor, gives five things to do to eliminate emotional clutter: "1. Sorting: Sort in your mind the flow of thoughts, feelings, and external stimuli to prioritize the most important. 2. Awareness: Recognize your thoughts, feelings, patterns, or the specific reality of the situation without judgment. 3. Intention: You define your purpose. This shifts you from passive observation to active determination, deciding *how* you want to align your energy. 4. Choice: You evaluate your available options and select the specific path that aligns with your intention. 5. Action: You execute the chosen path. This is the physical or mental implementation that bridges internal alignment with external reality."

FOOD CLUTTER: Are you a food clutterer? There is the food or nutritional clutterer. Too many sweets. Too little water. Too much meat with

little or no fresh vegetables. Alcohol – Guinness, Red Stripe, Sands Beer, Kalik. Illegal Drugs. Eating too late at night. I can go on and on.

MARITAL CLUTTER: Are you a marital clutterer? Here are a few ways to know if you are a marital clutterer. Too busy with work outside of the home. Too busy to work within the home. Too busy to wash dishes. Too busy to clean the house. Cannot hug longer than a split second. Cannot kiss longer than a split second. Ashamed to hold hands in public. Ashamed to show affection in public. Cannot linger for a long time in bed while naked without having sex. Pornography addiction. Flirtatious behavior

If you are guilty of any or all of these things and if you know you are a clutterer, start a program of de-cluttering. Let's call it spring cleaning. Do "spring cleaning" (de-cluttering) every morning of your life. That's physical and emotional de-cluttering.

Barrington H. Brennen is a marriage and family therapist. Send your questions or comments to question@soencouragement.org or call 11242 327 1980 or visit www.soencouragement.org