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Getting Organized

An e-newsletter of organizing tips for faculty members. February, 2008.

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→ Some pages will open in a new browser window. M. D. Anderson does not endorse external sites.

Between Valentine's Day and Heart Health Month, matters of the heart are important in February. We all know diet, exercise and sleep go a long way in protecting our hearts, but clutter and unfinished to-do's are stressful too. Stress can affect your heart and both your short-term and long-term health. Now author and organizer Peter Walsh has taken it a step further by exploring the connection between weight and clutter in his new book [Does This Clutter Make My Butt Look Fat?](#) This is the best book title I've seen in a while, and Walsh, a former addiction counselor and organizer on the show Clean Sweep, doesn't pull any punches about our large American lifestyle.

"We are living large in America," writes Walsh. "We're getting bigger and bigger. We're in an orgy of consumption." For those of us around in the '80s, the large soda back then is now the medium soda at McDonald's. In fact, portion sizes are bigger at most restaurants. Walsh also points to other examples: the proliferation of SUVs and Hummers, bigger houses, bigger children, and fast food restaurants and convenience stores opening on every corner. Even the health of the economy is judged by whether or not we're spending money and buying things. "Consumption is king," Walsh says. "We spend too much, we buy too much, and we eat too much."

If you read his last book, *It's All Too Much*, you know Walsh has never been one to sugarcoat anything, and this book is no exception. This is not a diet book, but Walsh's goal is to redefine the relationships we have with our bodies, much like how we organizer types help people redefine their relationship with their stuff. "Declutter your mind, declutter your home, declutter your relationship to food," said Walsh. "Then watch the ripple effect this has on every aspect of the way you live life. Clear out the junk, and in doing so clear out the patterns of thought and behavior that prevent you from living the life you want."

When working with clients, I've often equated de-cluttering with losing weight. With de-cluttering and dieting, you have to take it one day at a time and make decisions daily about whether to keep a piece of paper or stuff a piece of cake in your mouth. When you shed pounds and clutter, you feel lighter, less burdened, and less stressed. And when you can't do it by yourself, you can hire a trainer or a professional organizer. Sometimes we all need a little adult supervision.

Some other advice from Walsh:

- Respect your body. "Your body is your responsibility. Your voice should be the most powerful one in your head. Change comes from within you."
- Dress your body in clothes that fit, and donate the clothes that don't. "Don't waste time dreaming, regretting, or shopping." A pleasant and organized kitchen will help you to eat out less and take more pleasure in preparing meals.
- Stock healthier choices in your pantry and refrigerator and toss the unhealthy items.

If your New Year's Resolution to lose weight and get healthier is waning or you've hit a plateau,

pick up Walsh's book for a kick start. He'll give you the motivation to get on the right path again!

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Doodle: Set Up Meetings Faster

Do you have a difficult time juggling meeting availability with a group at the office? Is it hard to round up your friends for a gathering because you're all so busy? Are you tired of juggling several e-mail replies to find out who's available and who's not for a meeting? Doodle can help. Someone sent this to me to set up a conference call, and I just fell in love with it!

This free website allows you to create a new poll, and you can select the dates and times available for a meeting. You then cut and paste the link to send to all of the participants via e-mail, and they enter their names and check the times they're available. If they're available, the space is marked as "OK" and turns green. If they're not available, the space is red. As the administrator, you can quickly see at a glance when the most popular times are to meet. I used it myself to set up a recent conference call, and it was much easier and faster than juggling a bunch of e-mails from people on opposite coasts and in different time zones. To visit the site, click here: <http://www.doodle.ch/main.html>.

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An Extra Day...

With Leap Year, we get an extra day this year. What are you going to do with your extra day? Give it some thought and go do something nice for yourself, your family or the planet.

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Cool Product

Here's a smart idea. [KeepSafe Hanging File Bags](#) from the Container Store are perfect for holding receipts, warranties, small notebooks, passports, and other items that fall out of regular file folders. The clear file bags snap at the top, are gusseted at the bottom, and can fit in a file cabinet. The plastic is acid-free and moisture-resistant. They are sold as a package of 10 for \$11.99 (they're currently on sale for \$9.99), and labels are included.

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Got Clutter?

I have developed 15 minute, 30 minute and 45 minute presentations on organizing, time management, and productivity. Moving to a new building? I also have a 30-minute presentation on preparing for a move for your department. I also do one-on-one sessions in your office and help you come up with a solution to your organizing problems. To schedule a presentation or a one-on-one appointment, call (713) 792-8061 or e-mail [Janice Simon](mailto:jsimon@mdanderson.org) (jsimon@mdanderson.org).

To subscribe to this newsletter, e-mail [Janice Simon](mailto:jsimon@mdanderson.org) (jsimon@mdanderson.org).

Happy Organizing!

-- Janice

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1515 Holcombe Blvd, Houston, TX 77030
1-800-392-1611 (USA) / 1-713-792-6161 (5)

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