

# Faculty Development

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### Getting Organized

An e-newsletter of organizing tips for faculty members. July/August 2007.

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*"Getting organized for the sake of getting organized is a waste of time. Getting organized because it helps you live a richer, less stressed, happier, and more focused life, now that's a goal worth pursuing."*

-- Peter Walsh, Author of *It's All Too Much*

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### Sweeping Out the Clutter

*It's All Too Much: An Easy Guide for Living a Richer Life with Less Stuff* by Peter Walsh of TLC's Clean Sweep is a great guide for those who have trouble letting go of clutter. If you have ever watched Clean Sweep, Walsh takes no prisoners when making his clients face up to their chronically disorganized ways. His book is the same way, full of blunt and straightforward advice and tips.

By keeping things "just in case," Walsh says clutter stops us from living in the present. "We become so focused on holding on to our clutter that we are unable to be truly present and live our lives fully in the right here and now," he writes. "If our focus is constantly on what might be, we lose the present and the present, like it or not, is the only thing we have."

Walsh outlines tips on how to get started and how to work in each room of your house. He even includes a monthly maintenance schedule of projects to tackle all year long. To kick start yourself on getting organized, one of his tips is doing "The Trash Bag Tango." To tango, grab two trash bags. Take 10 minutes each day for a week, and go around your house filling the bags. One bag is for trash, and the other is for items you want out of your house. These items can be given to charity or a friend. The goal is to get them out of your house.

Another great tip is creating the "Experience Fund." Spur-of-the-moment retail therapy leads to extra clutter, and anytime you don't buy a "spontaneous" purchase, Walsh suggests putting the money you would have spent into an "Experience Fund" for a trip. He said children can get in on the act. Everytime they ask for a toy, do the same thing by telling them that instead you will put the money into the vacation trip. In planning a trip to Disneyland, one of my friends did the same thing with her children and had a "Mickey Money" fund. After all, experiences last much longer than things.

Walsh's book is good resource to inspire and motivate you. He is currently working on his new book *Does This Clutter Make My Butt Look Fat?* (No, I didn't make this up.) Due at the end of the year, this book will be about the relationship between clutter and our waistslines.

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### Schedule a Cleanout Day

Want to make a big impact? Schedule a Clean Out Day at the office or home. With all of the rain we've had here in Texas, it's easy to spend a rainy weekend cleaning out your closet. Turn on some music, order a pizza, and get organizing.

**At the Office.** With the end of the fiscal year upon us, it's time to clear out the old and make room for the new. Declare a Clean Out Day for your department or office. Wear jeans and t-shirts and order lunch. Spend the day going through old files and stuff to clean out those things you no longer need.

If you're at MD Anderson, call housekeeping to bring you a large dumpster, and you can dump confidential CDs, papers, and videos into the Shred-It boxes.

**At Home.** You can schedule your own Clean Out Day at home. The kids return to school in August (can't you smell the new school supplies?). Get ready for the new school year by clearing out last year's school papers and things. In Peter Walsh's book, he talks about a man who had saved every single homework assignment, artwork, and report his two grown sons had ever done in school "just in case they wanted it someday." So Walsh called the man's sons, who said they didn't want it. Not everything is memorabilia, and just because you throw something away, it doesn't mean you're throwing your children away. In fact, you're modeling good organizing skills for them.

After clearing out the school papers and things, see what can still be used for the coming school year and what needs to be replaced. Carve out a place to store school supplies so the kids can grab and go when they need something.

If you don't have children, clean out an area that's driving you nuts. Clear out the stack of magazines and catalogues, shred old receipts, take the boxes to charity that you've been meaning to do for some time, and clean out the closet. The summer has already flown by, and the winter holidays will be here before long. Doing something now will make your life much easier down the road.

**Your Vehicle.** Cleaning out a car or truck shouldn't take too long. Tossing the trash is a no-brainer. It's time to make a decision about that stuff you're been hauling around in your trunk until you figured out what to do with it. Time to lighten the load -- which also saves you on gas mileage.

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### Organizing E-Newsletter Update

The next Organizing E-Newsletter will be in September since I will be out of the country on vacation. Enjoy the rest of the summer, and I will see you in the fall! In the meantime, have you started planning your vacation time for the coming year? Don't lose your vacation days by forgetting to take your days. Vacation makes you a healthier and happier employee, and the people around you also appreciate it when you're happier.

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### Got Clutter?

I have developed 15-minute, 30-minute and 45-minute presentations on organizing and time management. Moving to a new building? I also have a 15-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 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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