

# Faculty Development

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## Getting Organized

An e-newsletter of organizing tips for faculty members. September 2006.

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*"Have you ever noticed that on your last work day just before going away on vacation, you get three days' work done?"*

-- Alec Mackenzie, Author of *The Time Trap*

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**"Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it turned into a butterfly."**

**-- Anonymous**

Caterpillars and butterflies are often used as ultimate examples of transformation and change. The caterpillar creates a cozy cocoon for itself and emerges later completely transformed into a beautiful, winged creature. People usually find a caterpillar annoying and usually downright icky as it leaves a trail of munched on leaves behind, but few people complain about the glamorous butterfly. As comedian George Carlin once said, caterpillars do all the work, but butterflies get all of the publicity.

We all have our cocoons, and clutter can be a comforting one. Although clutter causes stress, it becomes a protective barrier, holding us back from the life we really want. Some of my clients feel that they are their stuff, and if they throw away their stuff, they're losing a part of themselves.

The transformation within the cocoon into a butterfly is the most uncomfortable part of the process, and during the change, "you're nothing more than a yellow, gooey sticky mess," said Dr. Scott Simmerman of the Performance Management Company on his website [www.squarewheels.com](http://www.squarewheels.com).

"We need to deal with the gooey glop that most people find uncomfortable," said Simmerman. "But you have to metamorphose in order to change and that will involve going through the discomfort of being less and less a caterpillar while you're in the process of becoming a butterfly. Expect the transformation process to be somewhat uncomfortable and note that it takes some level of commitment."

Cocoons are only so big, especially for butterflies, and you can't live in a cocoon forever. Life happens. Change happens. You have to move forward and let go of those things that weigh you down. Butterflies need space for their wings.

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## The Little Things

They say it's the little things in life that mean so much and can make a huge impact.

Here a few little things to make your life a bit easier:

### **Declaring E-mail Bankruptcy**

Here's an amusing yet painfully familiar anecdote from Wired magazine about how editor Lawrence Lessig declared "e-mail bankruptcy." After 80 hours of working on e-mail, Lessig's inbox was so clogged that he raised the white flag and issued a total and complete surrender to the inbox. We all feel his pain and completely understand it.

What he did was cut and paste all of the addresses of the people who e-mailed him into a blank e-mail, and then wrote a polite and apologetic e-mail explaining how he declared e-mail bankruptcy and had deleted everything to start over. He pledged to keep up with future e-mails. Read the story [here](#). The article also features a few other tips for improving productivity and clearing your desktop.

### **Amazon Grocery**

Yes, that's right. The [website](#) that sells books, CDs, and pretty much everything else now sells groceries. Save a little gas money by ordering non-perishable items in bulk delivered to your door. The list includes everything from diapers and paper towels to cereal and popcorn. Natural and organic items are also available. You can send a case of mac and cheese to your favorite starving college student!

You can even create a shopping list, which is similar to Amazon's "Wish List" feature, and most items are eligible for free shipping, depending on the amount you order and how quickly you want it shipped. This is an easy way to stock up on non-perishables, but be wary of overshopping. Make sure you also have the storage space.

### **Organization Nation Radio Show**

Monica Ricci, one of my organizing colleagues, now has the radio show Organization Nation, which you can listen to on the web. Monica, who has appeared on Mission: Organization and wrote the book Organize Your Office in No Time, talks about organizing anything and everything you can imagine. Click [here](#) to listen.

### **Airplanes and Toothpaste**

If you're flying anytime soon, the airlines have new restrictions on what you can bring on the plane, and toothpaste is one of those banned items. For those longer plane rides, pack a few [Oral B Brush-ups](#) to freshen up. The Brush-Ups don't require water or rinsing so you can use them anywhere, anytime. Now you can fly minty fresh.

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### **Organizing Expo 2006**

**Got Clutter? Got Scary Clutter?** The annual Organizing Expo will be from **10:30 a. m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, October 31** in Cancer Prevention Building, 8th Floor, Rooms 1-8. Vendors from Office Depot, local professional organizers, Borders, Employee Health and Wellness, Ergonomics, Records Management, and many others will be on hand to provide tips on organizing, time management, and life management.

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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:jjsimon@mdanderson.org) (jjsimon@mdanderson.org).

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

*Happy Organizing!*

-- Janice

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