

order. balance. beauty. Scrap Your Junk Drawer

Marin Rose



Apparently the Internet is now in the business of guessing — usually with very little accuracy — a variety of personal traits about its viewers. I haven't succumbed to surveys claiming to identify where I grew up or which "Downton Abbey" character best represents me. But you won't be surprised that I paid attention what NPR

photojournalist Linton Weeks documented in an August 15 article, "What Your Junk Drawer Reveals About You."

Weeks interviewed consumer psychologist Kit Yarrow, who offers a list of common junk drawer contents, including "frequently used tool-like things," "small objects," "infrequently used medications and knickknacks" and "hastily stowed items." Based on her experience snooping through people's junk drawers, Yarrow claims that these odds and ends can provide a window into our past, a picture of our "household's composition and hobbies" and insight into our abandoned "good intentions."

I agree that, like any personal space, junk drawers do say something about their creators. Working with people in their homes is very intimate and, as an organizer, I have the privilege of coming to know about my clients' interior lives through exploring their physical spaces. Junk drawers are just one example of a household area as a snapshot representing people's lifestyles and personal preferences, dreams and doubts. Above all else, though, they scream, "it takes me a long time to find my scissors" and "my coupons expire before I get to use them."

Most seem to agree that any "dumping area" in a house is a drain on time, space and energy. Even the most luxurious walk-in closet becomes a monster when it's crammed with old photos, giftwrapping supplies, extra paper products, emergency canned food and whatever else is tossed up into the air and happens to land there. So why is the concept of the junk drawer so universal — and so universally accepted?

What strikes me as most impractical about Yarrow's junk drawer observations is that most such drawers seem to contain both frequently and infrequently used items. So the pen and paper that are needed at a moment's notice to take down a phone message are buried among old love letters and expired medication.

Stop the madness! Dump out the contents of your junk drawer and toss all the garbage that's getting in the way of your important stuff. In other words, get rid of the junk so you can focus on the worthwhile things.

School and office supplies — such as pens and pencils, scissors, paper clips and notepads — should live with their friends in the desk or cabinet that stores printer paper, school notebooks, files and the like. Gift cards and coupons deserve a place of their own — maybe even in your car or handbag — so that you'll have them on hand when you need them.

Once you've eliminated the junk, you'll be rid of your junk drawer by default. Designate appropriate places for critical, everyday-use items — not because junk drawers are messy and embarrassing — but because life is nicer when you don't spend an hour a day searching for stuff you need.

More simply: life is nicer without junk.

Questions for Marin? Inquire at info@libraorganizing.com for a response in next month's column.



Marin Rose owns *Libra Organizing*, an Augusta-based organizing, home staging and move assistance business. *Marin* serves clients throughout the CSRA, as well as in her hometown of Washington, D.C., New York and beyond. For more information, including notices of free seminars and community events, or to hire *Marin* to speak at your event or organization, visit libraorganizing.com.

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