

Facilitator CHIPS



Constructive, Helpful, and Informative Practices

Prepared by the ORO Facilitator Program to help enhance individual and organizational excellence

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Spring Cleaning: Controlling the Clutter

It's that time of year again. . . time for Spring Cleaning. As I walk down the halls at work, and back to my own office, I see many examples of the flood of paper we deal with on a daily basis.

If you are having a difficult time seeing over the heaps of paper at work, or even maneuvering around the clutter at home, consider these suggestions for improving your environment. But do take heart, big projects are best handled in small manageable steps, and the same goes for conquering your clutter.

1. Immediately handle the new papers that you receive. If something can be addressed right away, do it. You won't have to worry about a future action, and you will keep the stacks of paper from getting larger.

2. For each paper ask yourself "Do I want or need to deal with this?" If the answer is yes, then categorize your papers by action: To Do, To Read, or To File. A fourth option might be To Delegate/To Pass On, if something is more appropriately handled by another person.

"Habit is either the best of servants or the worst of masters."
- Nathaniel Emmons

3. Once you have a system to tackle paper as it comes, it's time to look at the existing piles. Try devoting just five minutes of every hour to working through the clutter. If something requires an action, don't let it slow your momentum. Make a note of what you will do at a later time, or do it immediately after your five-minute session.

4. Use a single notebook or folder to capture any stray notes, reminders, lists, etc. in one place. Rather than keep old grocery lists for weeks, take time to look through the notebook on a regular basis and purge the information that is no longer needed.

5. Schedule an hour at the end of the week as "clean up time." Inevitably, something will come up during the week that will prevent you from following these guidelines all the time. Use this scheduled time to keep clutter from creeping back into your environment.

These few tips will help control the clutter that creeps into your environment - at home and work. By removing and preventing clutter, you will experience more energy from the space you have created (or actually found again) around you. Enjoy!