Lighten the Load

Grand Canyon hike in early spring

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Simplify… Organize... Lighten the Load!

N is for Nemesis

Nemesis:

- An opponent that cannot be beaten or overcome.
- Downfall, undoing or ruin

Now that you know what the word "nemesis" means, let's discover some ordinary things that have the potential to be a nemesis in your life. Maybe it is the endless pile of mail or overflowing closets and drawers? How about a crushing schedule or the never-ending obligations? Some people may think it is the clock, the telephone or the washing machine. For others, it may be boredom or worn-out relationships. And, during these difficult financial times, money could be the nemesis for you.

A nemesis can be anything in your life that blocks you from achieving your goals or sticking to your resolutions. It tends to create barriers to happiness and suffocate life. It can prevent you from being who you really want to be or doing what you want to do.

You've heard it said before, but here it is again: We live in a world with too much information, too many demands and too little time to accomplish the important things. As Peter Walsh explains in *It's All Too Much*, all of us are overwhelmed with too much stuff which often robs us of space, energy and time. There is just too much stuff!

Whatever your nemesis may be, you will continually feel its force if you do not grasp control of the situation sooner rather than later. It can be conquered, but only if you are willing to acknowledge its existence, decide what is truly important in your life and develop an action plan to eliminate the problem. As English writer Aldous Huxley once said, *"There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving and that's your own self."*

- Imagine what your ideal life would look like from morning to night. Don't focus on the clutter (the nemesis), but rather take the time to dream what life could really be like if you had it your way.
- Focus on the energy and joyfulness of your day.
- Look at your life today: Where has your nemesis taken control? Does the stuff your own and the time you expended contribute to that ideal life you dream about or is it getting in the way of your vision?
- Recognize what is holding you back! What is suffocating your life, what is your downfall?
- Take the necessary steps to rid yourself of your nemesis.

Do you need help overcoming your nemesis? Sometimes all it takes is to talk it out with an accountability partner—someone to listen, support and offer advice. Call me at 860-747-8962 or send an email to Judith@OrganizingResources.com and discover how powerful coaching can be. Take control now, before the flood line rises any higher.

"Clutter robs you of far more than the space it occupies—it steals your life."
~ Peter Walsh

February Challenge: Clean Out the Files

This month's challenge is to take control of the accumulation of papers that clog life. All my clients complain of too much paper as it amasses in the files, on top of the desk, on the counters and even on the floor. Over the next 28 days, schedule time to clean out the files. Don't try to organize your whole office, just concentrate on your files and you will be on your way to getting paperwork well under control.

After gathering supporting documents in preparation of tax day, take a look at what is left in the file drawers. It is time to shred anything that is not prevalent to business, home sale, investments or tax verification. You may find that the papers you kept months ago, because you thought they were important, are no longer relevant. Check out http://www.irs.gov and download Publication 552 to learn what records should be kept and for how long. Looking at this task may seem daunting, but think how pleased you will be when April arrives and you have already prepared your taxes and set up your current files with room to spare.

Fact: 80% of papers kept are never looked at again.

Fact: It is not the volume of paper itself that is the problem, but rather the decision-making process.

Check out the ***Secrets from a Professional Organizer: Managing Files*** at http://www.organizingresources.com/secrets/2ssmf.htm.

Why Shred?

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing types of fraud today. The simplicity of it is shocking. Most credit card applications request a name, address and Social Security number. This information can be easily obtained from your wallet and pre-approved forms in the mail. "Professional thieves know how to steal even secured information with legitimate access," says Beth Givens, Project Director of the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse in San Diego. "Credit reports are master finds. Not only do they contain current information, but they also include records of credit card accounts you have not used in years."

You need to place considerable emphasis on security, both in terms of identity and finances. One way to thwart the handiworks of thieves is to shred all documents that contain information about you or members of your family. Home shredders are a cheap and thorough way of ensuring the destruction of information. Once the paper has been shredded, you can do your part in protecting the environment by recycling or reusing. Shredded paper, without paper clips or staples, can be used for rabbit, hamster or guinea pig bedding. You can also soak the paper in a bucket of water and use it for mulch or mix it into your compost heap.

It is a wise practice to make it as hard as possible for the identity thief to succeed. So, start shredding today!

Simple Ways to a Healthy Heart

February is National Heart Month. Resolve to make 2010 a heart-healthy year! If you haven't started already, now is the time to eat right and exercise. Check out www.nhlbi.nih.gov for a Body Mass Index calculator, menu planner, cholesterol information and more. Then, get started!!!

Exercise has long been recognized as the most effective means to prevent fatigue and promote health and well being. It is evident from studies on aging that exercise is the most powerful tool to slow the rate at which our bodies change with age. Exercising should be as much a part of your daily routine as brushing your teeth and flossing. According to Dr. Steven Fleck, the key to physical fitness is to be *consistent* in an exercise program. The benefits of regular exercise have long been acknowledged, but they don't come for free. It takes regular workouts to see results.

Well, you know all this, right? You really want to exercise, but you ask, "Where do I find the time?" Let's look at a few ways to incorporate exercise into your busy schedule. First, be creative. Walk to a colleague's desk. Take the stairway instead of the elevator. Park your car and walk a few extra blocks. Do arm curls with canned soup while you prepare a deliciously, healthy dinner. It doesn't take much to compound the benefits of exercise.

Secondly, take out your day planner and make an appointment to exercise. The act of scheduling an appointment increases the chances that you will actually do it. Take a walk at lunch time, get up earlier and head outside, solicit a partner's assistance and exercise together, take up a sport or walk after dinner. It takes 21 consecutive days to make or break a habit. Start today on a program that fits your lifestyle. It can be done. It is important that you schedule time to take care of yourself because no one else will do it for you.

Thirdly, watch less TV. With the advent of HDTV and home-theater surround sound, Americans are vegging out more and more in front of the tube. We take our leisure time seriously. After all we work hard and deserve to have a little relaxation time. The only problem with this attitude is that it perpetuates heart problems. Being a couch potato does not relieve the stress, clear the arteries or elevate the energy level. On the contrary it increases our chances of coronary heart disease.

Beware, it is not exercise alone that will protect your heart. Nutrition plays an equally important role. So, get smart this month and organize your *Heart Healthy* schedule. Eat healthy, exercise, get plenty of sleep, and rejoice — it is almost spring!

February

Have a Heart Month

- Bake for Family Fun Month
- Boost Your Self-Esteem Month
- Friendship Month
- Grapefruit Month
- Library Lover's Month
- Plant the Seeds of Greatness Month
- Return Carts to the Supermarket Month
- Senior Independence Month
- Sleep Safety Month
- Time Management Month
- Wild Bird Feeding Month