

# Decluttering our Lives

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Pruning and purging unnecessary things in our lives.

Yeshua's approach is to only gather things that bear good fruit in our lives; that is, only things that promote the character qualities of Himself and to get rid of everything else. Period!

This pertains to:

- Activities
- Relationships
- and stuff of any kind.

Paul also talked about getting rid of everything that didn't enhance our relationship with Yeshua.

You do this by asking:

- Does this item/relationships/activity promote my growing in HaShem

If the answer is no, then you trash it.

The criteria for this is to throw away anything that holds us back from HaShem and the purpose we are on earth for. If something in your life—again, it can be an item, activity, commitment at your place of worship or work or relationship—that is a distraction from the call of HaShem- then you trash it (or donate it if it is an item.)

The Yetzra Hara

Your evil inclination wants you to be distracted so that we do not fulfil our HaShemly goals in this world. It will use people, social media, illnesses, chaos, kids sometimes lol, you-name-it, he'll use it to get us off our course.

Our job is to evaluate our lives and what we do with our time, asking HaShem to help us prune things back and throw things away that are sent to distract us from why we're here.

### Organize your life around spiritual transformation.

If you spend too much time cleaning the house that you can't hang out with your husband or enjoy your kids- you need to declutter because:

- Physical clutter is caused from Spiritual immaturity.

While HaShem gives us freedom to enjoy the fruit of our labour, having too many things where we can not physically take care of them is harmful both to our physical area and awareness.

Having this extra stuff around makes it hard on our mental and spiritual state. Mentally something happens to people when their physical space is cluttered.

- Depression and unhappiness is often accompanied by clutter.

You can tell how well a person is spiritually and financially by his or her environment. If it is often cluttered, they have not matured where they need to be spiritually in some area or another.

The truth to this hurts, but it is still the truth.

What it means is that each time the person cleans and declutters, some kind of way that clutter creeps back into their space- just like when we have not truly gotten rid of spiritual clutter. For example, like when we have not gotten rid of bitterness, unforgiveness or sin, it creeps back slowly and we never even realized how bad it got or how we allowed it to get this bad. This process repeats itself over again and again and again... This is a sign of spiritual immaturity because we have not worked out or salvation in this area of our lives so HaShem keeps allowing us to deal with it until our soul corrects it.

Something about having a clean space gives the soul hope and peace. We have peace when the house is tidy.

- This is not talking about the daily tasks that we all must do such as cooking, washing dishes, picking up toys, or washing the clothes. Just as Paul says that we need to renew our minds daily and to daily work out our salvation- we can not just clean once and then our homes are magically tidy forever. No, it is a daily maintenance task that brings patience and teaches us to value our time and days as well as to take care of what HaShem has blessed us with.

The problem with daily tasks and chores is when we ignore them, they often pile up, forcing us to hurry to clean. This is how we create our own anxiety.

See, spiritually we can not just do something once and then all our spiritual and emotional problems go away- we must maintain it in order to be peaceful and enjoy life.

- Overwhelmed Moms, yes sometimes you have to rest and let the piles get done a different day, but we have to eventually get to it so that it does not pile up on us. HaShem does give us grace to rest even when we have work to do but simply can not work at the moment.

But that grace only lasts for the moments we need it. Otherwise, it becomes poor choices and bad habits to let clutter sit for months because you feel overwhelmed all of the time.

When this is the case, it is due to the lack of prayer and the lack of walking with HaShem. The problem can be cleared by talking to HaShem and then making a plan to clean your physical clutter one area at a time. Eventually that depression and overwhelm feeling will go away but only after decluttering.

### Less is More

Yeshua was more interested in relationships, impacting people, and serving his Father. He concentrated on his calling in life and his importance in the

heavenly realm, so he wasn't cluttered with excess and unnecessary things. He trusted HaShem and had the full expectation that all his needs would be met.

A person can not be this determined unless he or she knows their calling in life.

*What will you declutter?* Wasted time, money, energy, and space, as well as misguided notions as to what is truly important. Excessive spending, guilt, wasted time, and distraction from what truly matters most should be decluttered.

### Project Management

What do to now?

- Break down your decluttering task into smaller, manageable chunks, and take action.
- Walk around your home and make a list of everything that should go. Before you begin, set a time frame that's comfortable for you, and if you haven't used something in that pre-determined limit, it's gone! This is a great way to self-monitor in case you start second-guessing yourself in the process.

Where should it go?

- Make three piles – Trash, Donate, Sell.

The bible commends hard work and warns about slacking. Ask HaShem to help you overcome any tendencies towards procrastination and put your Decluttering Project Management plan to work!

*What will you declutter?* Unwanted stuff that can be turned into cash or blessings, cluttered spaces, and procrastination.

### Put Friendships To the Test

- What does the word "friend" mean to you?

HaShem teaches us the value of deep, meaningful friendships. Think about David and Jonathan. Elijah and Elisha? Consider Job's friends and what they meant to him. The biblical examples are endless.

We should be surrounded by people who support, encourage, inspire, and genuinely love us. It is also equally clear that we should avoid the company of those who are hurtful, destructive, and otherwise bad influences.

*What will you declutter?* Reflect on the people closest to you. Ask HaShem to help you remove any negative and draining people from your life, and also for the ability to draw closer to healthy, uplifting people.

### Boundaries Bring Freedom

Envisioning boundaries often evokes negative responses such as lines that aren't to be crossed, restrictions from what you want or crave, and, of course, being told 'no'. None of us like to be told NO.

But, consider this. What if the boundaries kept you on the protected side of the fence? A place where you could relish in the joy and freedom HaShem desires for you, while still being under HaShem's protective covering.

Doing 'whatever you want' may sound attractive and exciting at first, but the thrill will quickly fade once reality sets in. If we stray away from HaShem's protection, we are left to our own devices and are a much more vulnerable target for our Yetzra Hara.

So make a budget and stick to it or tell yourself that you will only keep 5 magazines and if a new one comes in, you have to get rid of 1 old one. Or you will only keep enough toys to fill one shelf. If any more toys come in, you will donate some in order to keep only 1 shelf of toys, etc.

If you budget well and establish financial order, you'll eventually release yourself from financial bondage and heartache. If you don't, the destruction from financial disarray will not only stay with you forever, but often get much worse.

## Decluttering at Work

There is nothing worse than a cluttered workspace. Whether that refers simply to counter space, a desk, full office, or even a vehicle, keeping it decluttered will help you to function at maximum efficiency with the least amount of frustration and distractions.

- Tasks like sorting and shredding paperwork, cleaning drinks and food off your workstation and keyboard, and vacuuming your floor can bring new life into your space.

Do you drive around all day? Give the same care to your vehicle, both inside and out. Remember, you are a representative of the company you work for. Make a good impression. This is even more important when you're away from the office with your company logo embroidered on your shirt or wrapped around your work truck.

What about gossip and drama in the workplace? Decluttering these destructive behaviors is a must. Avoid competitive or jealous type games. Is there unhealthy vying for position or attention. Stay as far away from that as possible. And do your best to maintain only business related conversation.

Your personal effort and care has a lot to do with creating the environment you work in. Regardless of your position or title, opportunities to shine HaShem's light are everywhere. Promote excellence in all you do and bear great witness to his name. Your kingdom purpose is significant, both inside and outside of work.

*What will you declutter?* Dirt and grime, inefficiency, disrespect, drama, conflict, and a poor witness.

## Healthy Living

Our bodies are the temple of the Ruach HaKodesh, so we should be keeping our physical bodies as healthy as we can. This involves getting proper exercise, sleep and rest and eating right- healthy when we can and most

importantly- keeping kosher laws to ensure both HaShem's blessings on our lives and to keep ourselves out of the prayer lines.

What motivates you? Being healthy enough to work hard and provide for your family? To keep up with your kids? Take fun vacations? Enjoy hobbies you love? Volunteer in the community? The healthier you are, the more likely you will get to enjoy all of the above, and then some!

*What will you declutter?* Excuses, irresponsibility, unhealthy eating, laziness, shame, regret, and missed opportunities.

### Decluttering for Kids

Would you like to give your kids the gift that keeps on giving? Teach them to declutter when they're young so staying that way will be a natural, normal way of life.

Bedrooms – Kids need to play, and yes, even be messy at times, but they need to be taught how to straighten up, organize, and keep things tidy. Regardless of how old your children are, give them age appropriate daily and weekly responsibilities, and hold them accountable, doling out consequences when necessary.

Stuff – Teach your children to periodically sort through their stuff, clothes and toys alike. Are they broken, torn, outgrown, etc.? Make it a quarterly task to decide what stays, gets tossed, donated, or sold. If you enjoy yard sales, they're a great opportunity to wet your child's entrepreneurial appetite. Donating to those less fortunate is another valuable teaching moment.

Schedules – If you have an over-achieving go-getter, it may be hard, but sometimes necessary, to hold them back. Each child is unique, so evaluate individually, but teaching the beauty of balance will impart life skills that will serve your kiddo well for their entire life. Being healthily involved is one thing, but being overwhelmed and stressed out will only hurt not help. Teach them the value of saying 'no'.

So this begs the point. Not only should you coach your kids to declutter, but you must lead by example. HaShem doesn't ask anything of us that he isn't doing himself, and the same should go for us and our children.

*What will you declutter?* Cluttered kids, children with no decluttering life skills to guide them as they grow, and years of heartache, frustration, aggravation and wasted resources for them, as well as for yourself.

### Stress is Distress

We all suffer from a bad moment, or even a bad day, but how we manage stress in our lives makes all the difference in the world, and in our walk with Yeshua.

'Good' stress, short term, can motivate us to accomplish goals and find victory. In small doses, this type of stress can not only be advantageous, but it generally doesn't promote serious, long term health risks.

'Bad' stress, left untreated and unchecked, can hold us back from experiencing joy, finding purpose, and living our full potential. This type of stress, emotional in nature, can incite serious bouts of anxiety, worry, depression, and promote addiction disorders. It can also produce very real, debilitating physical ailments such as high blood pressure and heart attacks. Bad stress can shorten your life.

HaShem wants 'all' of us, and he wants us to be healthy, mind, heart, body, and soul. Don't delay in seeking help for any untreated stress challenges you may have. Commit to managing your stress, and not allowing it to manage you!

*What will you declutter?* Stress of course! But also a host of other life-altering and joy stealing emotional and physical issues, including the ability to fully serve HaShem.

## Replace the Space with HaShem

Now the question is, “What to do with all the good stuff you’ve uncovered?” Even a minimal decluttering effort will produce an abundance of time, energy, freedom, joy, and money that you never had before. Reflect on all that you’ve obtained and refrain from allowing it to get absorbed back into old habits and bad decisions.

Consider yourself as an empty vessel before HaShem. You’ve emptied yourself so that you can be filled wholly by HaShem. Just make every effort to ensure that HaShem is exactly what you fill the space with.

We must always be on guard and make intentional choices. Unfortunately, if left to our undisciplined, sin nature, we’ll quickly freefall and end up right back where we started from, or even worse, which would certainly not be to our advantage.

Consider that all we are and all we have is from HaShem. He deserves our ‘firsts’. With room made, you can give him the top pick, cream of the crop, of your fruits and labors. Don’t hold back.

You can now see what you have space for in your physical life and spiritual life. In your home, you may have uncovered extra space that you can now redecorate or move items into that did not have a home before. You might now be able to “shop your home” and move things around differently that you could not see before. Now you do not need to shop for items, you found some in your home. Problem was that those items were buried under things you didn’t use or need.

Lastly, ask HaShem for wisdom to keep up the good work and to develop a schedule that is just right for you so that you do not fall back into the unwise decisions that lead to you hoarding unhealthy thoughts, things and people in your space.