

Declutter and destress

You could say I've always been an organized person. My notebooks for school were always neatly divided and every paper had a place to go. I made detailed lists and schedules. Back when JCPenney and Sears still out Christmas catalogs, my list was so detailed, you wouldn't even have to have the catalog in front of you to order as I had already given you all of the information necessary!

Many of us did the annual spring clean and waited just a bit longer to put those cold weather clothes away. What was I doing? Having dreams about how I needed to declutter my room!

I have to give a little back-story. In my mom's house, paper is the enemy. There are piles of paper for everything including permission slips, fliers, mail, schedules, etc. If it's paper, there's probably a pile for it.

Mind you, these piles aren't random. It's more like controlled chaos. And now that I've tried to make it sound better than it is, I will admit my room has fallen victim to the paper monster.

Well, to be perfectly honest, my room didn't stand a chance back in 1993 when I started boarding school. I accumulated things and they ended up in my room. Every once in a while I would get rid of something, but it never amounted to much. Now add another four years of being at the Naval Academy and you can imagine my stuff just piling up.

While stationed on my ship in Bremerton, Washington, I lived alone in a minimalist apartment. No stacks of paper. Nothing out of place. I didn't have much and I liked it that way. Which is why it's all the more perplexing why I have so much stuff now!

There is so much clutter I have dreams of getting rid of this stuff because I have to move and nowhere to put everything. I'm no dream specialist, but I'm sure there is a correlation between the two. I have also been known to look around my room and feel a little trapped by the stuff. That left only one option for me: it has to go!

Now if you remember my previous blog, you know I don't have a car. So, I can't just fill a bag or box and stick it in the trunk and drop it off later. Nope, getting rid of things that can be donated requires a bit more planning on my part. Luckily, the Internet is a wonderful place to find that help.



As I got excited about starting to declutter and give away things, I needed to know which charity would come and pick up donations in an inner city neighborhood off of North Avenue. Even I wasn't hopeful about that one! The first place I tried didn't pick up in my zip code. The next place didn't have an opening until early August (I was preparing for this about a week and a half ago) and that was too long. Third

time was a charm when I hit upon Green Drop.

I remembered getting some post cards in the mail before from the Purple Heart talking about a truck coming by to pick up donations. Since I didn't have anything ready, I always ignored the cards. Lo and behold, Green Drop is the business that handles donation pickup for the Purple Heart (and the National Federation of the Blind). The best part? They could come and get my donations the following Monday! Yea!

After that successful pick up, I scheduled another and I'm going to keep scheduling them weekly until my room is the way I want it to be: minimal.

Just the knowledge of knowing that I'm getting rid of clutter has brought my stress down because I don't have to find space for things. And I had to establish ground rules. The rules include: unless they are specialty shoes, in order for me to buy a new pair, I have to get rid of an existing pair. I had other things to consider, like wardrobe. For that I have a nice selection of fun shirts and interchangeable bottoms. My shoes are usually multifunctional and there are some items you'll just never see in my closet (I'm talking about you mini skirts and short shorts).

I know some people get weirded out and stressed out just by doing the things I find calming such as making lists and getting organized. How do you get around that? Get some help and make it fun! Swap items with your friends or make it a family game to see who can fill up a bag of donations the fastest. However you choose to declutter, remember it helps clear your life of unnecessary items and, best of all, there is so much less to clean! Sounds like a win all around!

Here are links to the three organizations I looked at, including Green Drop:

Goodwill <https://www.goodwill.org/donate-and-shop/donate-stuff/>

The Salvation Army <https://donate.salvationarmyusa.org>

Green Drop (serving the Purple Heart and the National Federation of the Blind)
<https://www.gogreendrop.com>