



less clutter, more clarity

A WORKSHOP ON ORGANIZING & DOWNSIZING

FACILITATED BY MELISA MERAL



MELISAMERAL.COM

Welcome

For over a decade, I built and led a successful home organization business in San Diego + expanded my impact through an Amazon Best-Selling book, an online course, a YouTube channel, and a podcast.

Today, as a global speaker and workshop facilitator, I empower others with practical strategies to **create order, reduce overwhelm, and implement simple strategies** to get organized.

My goal in this session is to share several organizing strategies that you can add to your personal and professional toolbox - ***take what resonates and leave the rest.***

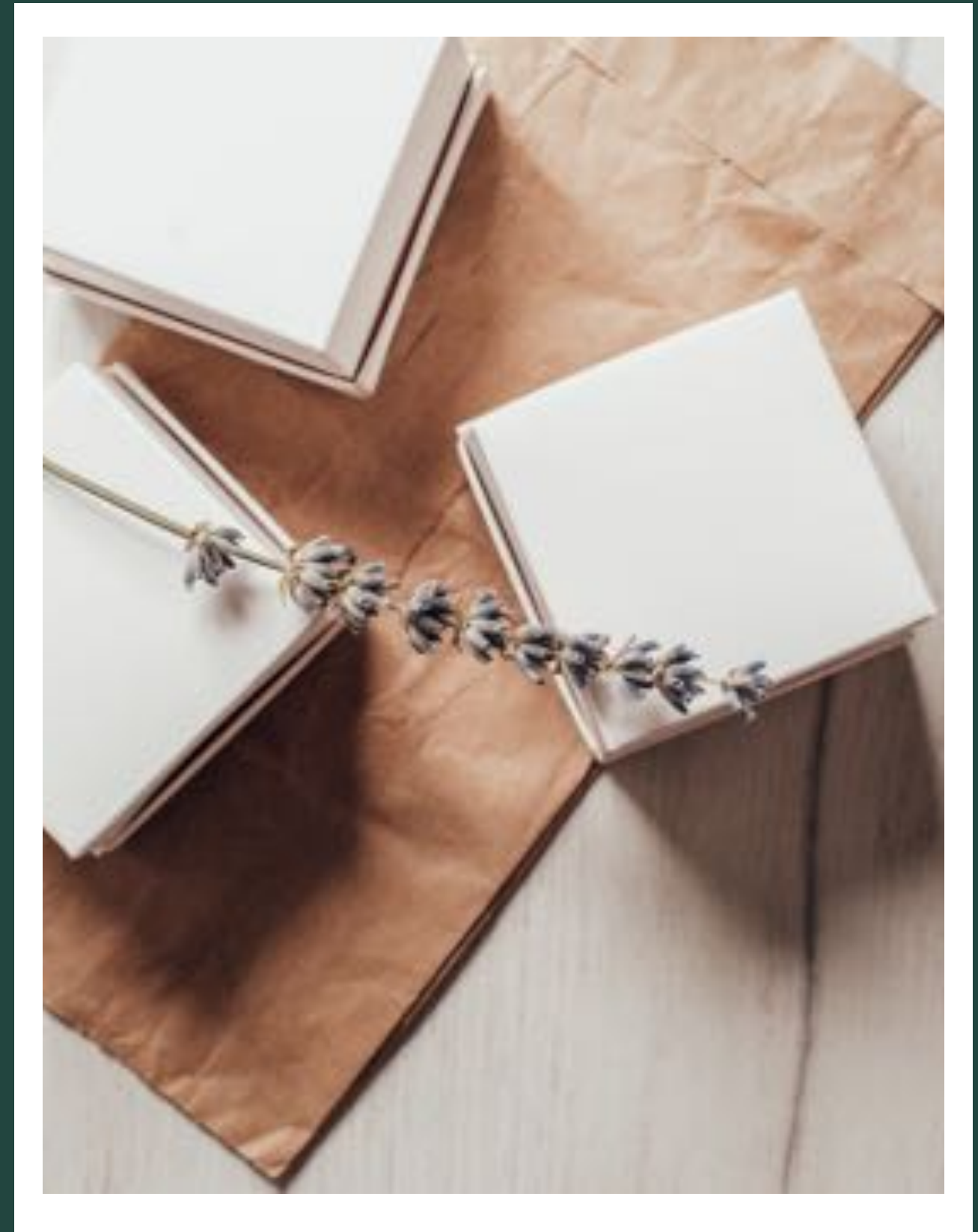
Please engage and ask questions to keep us going.

Let's do this!

Today we will cover:

- How we got here
- How to start small
- How to reduce decision fatigue
- How to clear your closet chaos
- How to downsize estates
- How to combat digital clutter

+ Closing Reflection & Supplemental Resources



how we got here

A BOOMING INDUSTRY,
WITH A GROWING NEED

During the Great Depression, scarcity led much of our U.S. population to **save and hoard** everything **out of necessity**.

This mindset carried into the Baby Boomer generation, who, raised by Depression-era parents, many became **“pack rats”** continuing on that similar **mindset of scarcity**.

*Over 35 million people (approx 10% of the U.S. population) utilize offsite storage units for their belongings when **homes become overstuffed***

In millennials and Gen Z, trends such as **minimalism, tiny home living, and the “digital nomad” lifestyle** have emerged, promoting intentional living and **reducing excess**.



Living Lighter & Letting Go



The average American home contains
over 300,000+ items

Where can YOU
reduce clutter in your life?

A person is holding a large, vibrant green leaf in front of their face, completely obscuring it. The person is wearing a light-colored, button-down shirt and a tan jacket. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The overall mood is calm and focused, suggesting a connection to nature and personal growth.

START SMALL

MICRO HABIT SHIFTS CAN
LEAD TO BIG RESULTS

ONE IN ONE OUT RULE



Every time you bring something new into your home, commit to removing one item to prevent accumulation and makes your purchases more intentional

CREATE DROP ZONES



Designate a small basket or bin near stairs/entryway for random clutter that accumulates daily- empty and find homes for things on a weekly or daily basis!

USE VISUAL CUES



Keep a donation box in your closet—whenever you find something you no longer wear, drop it in.

Label storage bins clearly to avoid “out of sight, out of mind” clutter buildup.

progress over perfection

The One-Minute Rule

- If something takes less than a minute to do, handle it immediately (e.g., putting shoes away, tossing junk mail) to prevent small messes from turning into overwhelming clutter!

Declutter Daily

- Momentum builds when you start with easy, manageable tasks rather than tackling an entire home at once. Set a 5 minute timer once daily or weekly, decluttering a small space (medicine cabinet, under the bathroom sink, spice rack, car glove box, etc.)



Try my *D.R.E.S.S. Method*
when decluttering

Donate
Return
Eliminate
Sell
Sto



reduce decision fatigue

**Set up “book ends” to your day with
streamlined morning & evening routines**

WE MAKE 35,000-50,000 CHOICES PER DAY!



creating "zones"

Family calendars

Lunches and meal prep

Backpacks, shoes, jackets

CONTROL THE CHAOS



stop living in the someday

**EACH OF US OWN OVER 100 ITEMS OF CLOTHING,
BUT WE ONLY WEAR 20% OF OUR CLOSET**

Your closet should serve the present you, not a version of yourself you're holding onto for "someday." If an item doesn't fit, flatter, or feel good, why let it take up space? Ask yourself:

- ✓ **Does it fit right now?**
- ✓ **Do I feel confident wearing it?**
- ✓ **Is it damaged?**

A cluttered closet equals decision fatigue, stress, and wasted time. Let go of the pieces that no longer serve you and make space for a wardrobe that truly reflects who you are today.

Try a capsule wardrobe

Steve Jobs

- Known for his black turtleneck, blue jeans, and New Balance sneakers uniform to focus on innovation.

Mark Zuckerberg

- Sticks to gray t-shirts and hoodies with jeans to focus energy on important decisions.

Barack Obama

- Same suit, different day- "I don't want to make decisions about what I'm eating or wearing. I have too many other decisions to make."

Albert Einstein

- Multiple identical gray suits to avoid wasting brainpower on clothing choices.

Who else do you know?



Leave a legacy of less

Helping aging parents downsize can feel overwhelming, but it's also an opportunity to **preserve meaningful memories** while ensuring they aren't burdened by excess

- **Start Early-** Downsizing an estate can be emotionally and physically overwhelming, so don't wait until a crisis to begin. Take it one room at a time to avoid decision fatigue and overwhelm.
- **Honor the Memories, Not the Clutter-** Digitize old photos, letters, and documents to preserve them without taking up space. Create a memory box with select keepsakes instead of holding onto everything.



simplify & downsize

- **Avoid Burdening the Next Generation-** Many millennials & Gen Z don't want bulky furniture, china sets, or collectibles (Beanie Babies!). Instead of assuming heirs want certain items, ask them directly what they'd like to keep.
- **Make It a Family Effort-** Have a "take what you want" day before donating the rest. Share stories about special items to pass down the history, stories, and memories even if the physical item isn't kept.
- **Shift the Mindset from "Stuff" to "Legacy"-** Remember the history of scarcity- you can help our aging population realize that their legacy isn't tied to possessions but to the impact they've made. Less clutter = less stress for them and for future generations.





COMBAT DIGITAL CLUTTER

- The average person spends 3.1 hours per day searching for emails, files, and digital documents. (McKinsey & Company)
- The average inbox contains over 10,000 unread emails, contributing to decision fatigue and mental overload. (TechJury)
- 60% of people feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of digital notifications they receive daily. (Pew Research Center)

so what can you do about it?

organize your tech

- Hit “Unsubscribe” whenever you spot a promotional email or use a service like Unroll.Me or Trimbox
- Delete duplicate files and outdated documents you no longer need
- Create a simple folder system on your computer (e.g., Work, Personal, Finance, Photos) to stay organized
- Delete unused phone apps and turn off non-essential notifications to limit distractions



closing reflection

Reflect on this after today's session or feel free to share your key takeaways with us:

What are your “golden nuggets” or “lightbulb moments”?

What are you going to STOP doing?

What are you going to START doing?

*our CHOICES compound into RESULTS -
it takes 21x of doing things to make it a habit*



GO FURTHER, FASTER.

As a supplemental resource for today's presentation, you will receive a digital version of ***“Less Clutter, More Clarity: A Companion Guide”***

which includes 10 pages of prompts and activities to get you started on your decluttering journey or streamline the systems you may already have in place



DOCUMENTARIES & MORE.

- *The True Cost* - Peacock
- *Wall-E* - Disney+
- *We Rise Up* - Prime
- *Minimalism* - Prime
- *Textile Mountain* - YouTube
- *Buy Now* - Netflix
- *Get Organized with Home Edit* - Netflix
- *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo* - Netflix
- *Tiny House Nation* - Netflix
- storyofstuff.org



DONATION RESOURCES.

- Local homeless & women's shelters
- Locally owned thrift stores
- Vietnam Veterans of America - [pickupplease.org](https://www.pickupplease.org)



Thank You

for participating

*Melisa Meral on LinkedIn
melisameral.com
vivhomeandlifestyle.com*

