

# What Is Clutter?

## For Newcomers

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Clutter is anything we don't need, want, or use that takes our time, energy or space, and destroys our serenity. It can be outgrown clothes, obsolete papers, broken toys, disliked gifts, meaningless activity, ancient resentments, or unsatisfying relationships. We may be selective in some areas, but not in others. Objects may be strewn about or wedged into drawers; neatly stacked or stowed in storage.

Our clutter seems to have a life of its own, to multiply without effort on our part. We may feel overwhelmed, controlled by our possessions, and/or doomed to be hopelessly disorganized. No matter how we deal with our clutter, it can be a source of pain and shame to us and to those we live with.

Despite this pain, we fear throwing things out. We think we might need it, fix it, or wear it again. We don't want to be wasteful or ungrateful. We don't know what to keep and what to discard. We don't know how much is enough.

Decluttering is not merely eliminating, but gradually transforming our space so that we surround ourselves only with things that express our purpose. It means turning something useless into something useful; creating more leisure and space; being more honest in our relationships; eliminating distractions and simplifying our lives in order to find our spiritual roots.

Although we may cling to our clutter, what we really yearn for are surroundings of beauty, order, serenity; a balanced life; and harmonious relationships.