



Create a *home* for everything you own.
“A place for everything and everything in its place.”

This saying has been around for years. And like all old sayings, it still rings true. The number one reason that people don't put things away is that **they don't have a place to put them.**

If you are constantly losing your keys, make a place for them. If the kids drop their backpacks and coats on the floor the minute they walk in the door, create a space for their gear. Designate hooks and bins for each person. If a bill doesn't get paid, it could be because all of the bill paying equipment is not stored together. You might miss an appointment if you operate with more than one calendar. My point is that the reason for chaos or disorganization in a home is generally because a person doesn't have a system in place.

What is a system? It is a method of organizing things so that you always know where an item is, and you can find it easily. Think about a filing *system*. You may have a file for paid bills, a file for charitable contributions, a file for insurance information. In your kitchen, you never have to look around for a fork, because you know it will always be in the flatware tray. Expand this thinking so that you consciously plan to consistently put things in the same place every time.

Creating centers is the answer. Organizing expert, Julie Morgenstern, is well known for her “zone” organization, modeled after a kindergarten class. In order to keep things organized, teachers create centers for different activities. There is often a reading corner, an arts and craft area, and various other stations. Many teachers divide the stations even further, containing scissors in their own holders and supplying individual boxes for pencils, crayons and glue sticks. Use this idea in your own home.

Set up centers throughout the house. Each should take care of a specific purpose. Try a bill paying center, a gift wrapping area, a recycling center, and a craft and/or photo management zone. Keep objects that are alike together. That way you will always know where everything is for each project you undertake.

Imagine if you had a wrapping center. When it was time to wrap a gift, you would have a place to go. The ribbon, the wrapping paper, boxes, tape, and bubble wrap

would all be together in one area. When you came home from the store with supplies, it would be easy to put them away immediately.

I've found that if storage is inconvenient, it doesn't get used. If the phone book goes in a tight, dark, low, cupboard, it will more than likely end up next to the cupboard, instead of in it!

A few tips:

- Keep it simple. That which is simple gets used.
- Don't stack things too high, keep items accessible.
- Put essentials at eye level and everyday items within easy reach.
- Store seasonal items away.
- Make it easy to view and don't forget to label!