



Know yourself.

This concept dates back to the Ancient Greeks and it's still good advice. How well do you know yourself? Many people struggle with habits that they hope to change, yet never do. If you have experienced this phenomenon and have a feeling deep-down in your soul that you probably won't change a habit, you might like this idea.

Acknowledge your personal idiosyncrasies or mental discipline issues, embrace them and learn to work *with* them. Take a few minutes and think about how you react to different situations. Be honest, you're the only one who'll see the results. Here's a list to get you started.

Your cleaning standards. How clean does your house need to be? Some people vacuum several times a week, others use the Dust buster in the corners to catch the dust bunnies. How do you feel about dusting? Is it a priority for you? Are there certain areas that just have to be clean, like the bathroom or kitchen counters? Once you make peace with your answers you can plan your strategy. You may decide that cleaning once every two weeks is enough for you. You may decide to hire a cleaning service. You may look for new products designed to reduce cleaning time. I've heard the Roomba is a great purchase for someone who hates to vacuum--although they sometimes scare pets.

Managing time. Do you feel exhausted when you get home from work? If you keep meaning to get started on a project, but never get around to it, ask yourself "Why?" Everyone has their own high energy times. Are you a morning person or a night owl? If you are tired in the evening, get up earlier and tackle projects when you're fresh. If you wake up slowly, save the big stuff for the evening.

Do you hate the idea of devoting a whole Saturday to cleaning or organizing projects? Chip away at these tasks little by little. Fifteen minutes each day can really make a difference. Schedule routine tasks--build them into your life. For example, Monday could be grocery day or Thursday could be Errand Day.

Are you often late? It could be because you're always trying to fit in one more task. If you fall behind because of things like a last minute phone call or getting caught in traffic, learn to *pad your time*. And *limit last minute interruptions*. Don't take a call or answer an email right as you're heading out the door. Do you lose track of time? *Start wearing a watch*.

Clothing choices. Some people love trends. They love change and updating their clothing so that they're always current. They have an out with the old-- in with the new mentality. If this sounds like you, it's OK, it's who you are. Just make sure that you keep passing things on. Think of how fashion keeps moving in cycles and keep your clothing doing the same. Out with the old-- in with the new! Donate clothing to a charity or sell it on eBay or at a garage sale once your interests have changed.

When purchasing clothing consider the care labels. How do you feel about hand washing? Are you OK with the extra time required to maintain it or do you put it off because it seems like a pain? How about dry cleaning? Some people hate the extra errand and the cost and so they delay taking things to the cleaners. If you don't like hand washing or dry cleaning you may find yourself

running out of clean clothing. It might be time to consider buying less high maintenance clothing and making the majority of your purchases machine washable.

Hair Style. How much time are you willing to put into hair maintenance? If the answer is “not a lot,” tell your stylist. Find a low-maintenance cut that fits your lifestyle.

Convenience. Are you addicted to convenience? Most of us thrive on it. We'll do things if they're easy, but even minor inconveniences can thwart our follow-through. An example, if you have things piled up in front of a cabinet, it's unlikely that you'll move the stuff, open the door and put the stuff away. It's human nature, if the storage is difficult to access because it's too high or in a dark corner or on another level of the house, it probably won't be put away. Keep that in mind when you are establishing a place for things. Keep them close to where they're used.

Keep ease and convenience in mind for more than just storage. Do you put off cleaning because it seems like it'll take too much time to get your supplies together? Then keep a cleaning tote close to the area that needs to be cleaned. If you have a container of cleaning wipes under the sink, a quick mop-up will be easy.

Do you put things off because you overestimate how much time it will take to complete the project? Time it. Once you realize it'll only take 3-5 minutes, you'll be more likely to tackle it.

How about coupons? Do you take the time to clip and then use them? If you aren't skilled in this area, look for other ways to save. Wait for sales, be on the look-out for in-store coupons or use the 20% of all merchandise coupons mailed out by department stores.

Running on Empty. Do you run out of cash before you can make it to the ATM? Do you frequently run out of things like milk or paper towels? How about things that you need to replace periodically, like batteries or printer ink cartridges? Do you occasionally drive your car on fumes--hoping you'll be able to coast into the gas station in time? Use a few strategies to overcome these aggravations.

- Keep a little stash of cash in a drawer at home or in your car, and then... don't forget to replace it.
- Put a running list on the side of your fridge. When you are running low on an item, write it down.
- When you take the last battery or replace the ink cartridge, immediately buy a new one. That way you'll always have a back-up.
- Pay attention to things like diminishing vitamins and prescription drugs so that you can get the prescription filled before the last pill is gone.
- Fill up your gas tank once it hit's a quarter tank.

Do you have great intentions but little results? Call or email me and we can work out a plan for you.