

Clutter to Calm

The Simplified Office DIY Decluttering Course

Decluttering is the first step to getting organized and will help you find everything you were looking for. This Workbook is your guide through the course. You can expect checklists and ratings, progress trackers, and areas to write your thoughts, take notes, and journal as you go on this journey. Although this is a guide, you can easily personalize things as you go through each step.

I'm not going to sugar coat things and say this is an easy task. It will take some effort. To make this daunting task easier, I've already broken down the steps for you, so you know **WHERE** to start, **HOW** to start, and **WHAT'S NEXT**. **Print this workbook to get the most out of it.**

The questions and journal entries will help you think and recognize different aspects of yourself throughout this journey - physically and mentally. This self-awareness allows you to understand yourself and why things are/get cluttered. Knowing this, and documenting it, becomes easier to prevent clutter later on.

Once you get through the first 5 lessons within the course on Membervault, you'll unlock exclusive videos for more tips and strategies to help you on this journey. Be sure to check them all out! [Link to course](#)

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Supplies before you begin:

- Pen & Note pad to track categories and make notes
- Take notes as you go. I've left space for notes and journaling.
- Get a trash can, recycle bin, and paper shredder
- Take "Before", "during", and "after" photos of your office space, so you can compare photos to see your progress.
- Make space on your floor (or in boxes/large storage bins) for sorting.

Disclaimer DO NOT buy anything for storage until AFTER you've finished decluttering, so you know what you have on hand, need to upgrade, or buy otherwise.

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Who am I?



Hi there action-taker! My name is Jennifer Vaaler and I'll be your guide as you simplify your work space - whether that's a room with a door, a desk in your bedroom, the kitchen table, a co-working space, or mobile office.

I'm a Business Productivity & Home Office Efficiency Coach for online **Coaches, VA's & Thought Leaders who work-from-home and/or travel**. I help them go from overwhelm to calm and order, so they can focus on what they love, give back, and earn more money.

With a background in business, interior design, organization, and coffee shop efficiency, I offer a unique skill set and insight to help you create an office you love that is inspiring and functional and help you best utilize your time. Time=Money. I want to help you get more of both.

What does a coffee drive-thru have to do with your home office?

Before I started this business, I was in the high-end coffee industry for over a decade and decided to take all I knew and have two coffee drive thrus. I had to really get organized and make the most out of the tiny space that utilize any storage space, increase efficiency for faster service, and stay on top of inventory, ordering, hiring, marketing etc. This forced me to become super organized, get rid of what wasn't needed and cut costs, and increase customer service.

With my "highly efficient coffee shop" concept, I apply it to an office setting, which creates order and flow to increase productivity and sales.

Here's to the journey! Let's begin.

~Jennifer

<http://thesimplifiedoffice.com>

[Link to course](#)

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Phase 1: Before You Begin

Goal Setting

Before starting any task, you must first set some goals. The ultimate goal by the end of this course is to have your office ready to organize it.

As you set your office decluttering goal, keep in mind your current situation of everything else going on with clients, family, etc. You don't want to burn yourself out. Make sure your goal pushes you, but what you can logically reach. If you set a goal too high for this type of task, then it's too easy to not finish what you started.

On a scale of 1-10 (1 being weekend ready and 10 being 1 month), how cluttered is your office office now? _____

WHY do you want to spring clean and Declutter your office space?

WHAT do you want to accomplish by the end of this course? Why?

What needs to be done each day to make you feel like you're moving forward?

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Planning

□ Schedule time to Declutter

To make sure you start, and consistently simplify, make sure to schedule time each day to work on your office space. Whether it's 30 minutes or an hour, it won't get done if it's not on the calendar.

You can do this in one block of time each day, or divide the task. For example, 15 minutes in the morning before everyone else wakes up, and 15 minutes in the evening, after dinner.

When do you want to have your office space done decluttering? Why?

How much time are you willing to declutter each day? _____

Notes



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Mindset

Spring Cleaning your office space is quite the task, so before you begin, let's go over a few things to ease into this journey.

First, the reality.

1. The upfront work WILL make life easier long-term.
2. This is a process and doesn't need to *happen overnight*.
3. Your space will get messier before it gets better. Don't get scared, this is normal, and you ARE making progress, even if it doesn't feel like it right away.

Once you accept these facts, it's easier to switch your mindset going into this process.

Next, the adventure. Finding things you forgot about is like a treasure hunt. Who knows, maybe you'll find some money or that journal you were looking for!

What's held you back from decluttering your office space so far?

Why do you want to decluttering your workspace now?

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Progress Tracker

To help motivate you and keep you accountable, use the progress tracker and tips below. Don't forget to refer back to your goal notes as well. **Print this page out to get the most out of it.**

Use the boxes below to check off each day you simplify your office. 1 box=1 day. Then, share your accomplishments (large or small) in the group with us so we can cheer you on. This tracker can be used up to 1 month.

| | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 |
| Day 8 | Day 9 | Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 | Day 13 | Day 14 |
| Day 15 | Day 16 | Day 17 | Day 18 | Day 19 | Day 20 | Day 21 |
| Day 22 | Day 23 | Day 24 | Day 25 | Day 26 | Day 27 | Day 28 |
| Day 29 | Day 30 | Day 31 | | | | |

Take Photos

You may have seen and heard about taking “before” and “after” photos for organizing. That is great and all, but when you're in the throes of a task like decluttering, it's important mentally, to see the entire process - before, DURING, and after. Share your photo process in the Facebook group with the hashtag below, so we can cheer you on!

- #Before
- #Day 7
- #Day 14
- #Day 21
- # Day 28
- #After



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Why Declutter?

We must be aware of what we need to tackle and why, before we take it on.

Clutter.

It comes in many forms. Some forms of clutter you may not have realized.

As you begin Spring Cleaning your Office space, think about these types of clutter that decreases your productivity when you work.

6 Types of Common Clutter That Decreases Your Productivity

1) Trash

This is the easiest to get rid of.

Are there candy wrappers, bottles, pens, dry erase markers, or highlighters that don't work anymore? Can you shred old statements, bills, or credit card papers you no longer need, but take up space? Are there boxes, papers, and magazines you no longer need?

Get rid of it.

2) Can't Resist a Deal & Abundance Clutter

This one I'm sure we've all done.

You go into Office Depot for "only one item," but walk out with five cute notebooks, more sticky notes, and those cool desk accessories, all because it was on sale. Can we say "back to school sale"? This is "stuff" clutter.

3) Doesn't have a home

There's a saying that has been attributed to Samuel Smiles, Isabella Beeton & Benjamin Franklin: "A place for everything, and everything in its place." Sounds simple, right? Not always.

Some of your clutter isn't really clutter. It's "stuff" without a home- mail you have yet to open, books you haven't put on your bookshelf, office supplies laying around, etc.



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4) Aspirational Clutter

These are items you may buy to make your Instagram look more interesting, or tech gear you don't need yet, but don't actually use on a regular basis otherwise.

Are you being authentic, sharing who you really are, or who you think you want to be to others?

5) Sentimental Clutter

Ah, items that are so near and dear to your heart that take up space, but you can't seem to get rid of, or **MUST** have in your space when you work - Kids drawings and cards, gifts from clients and fans, etc.

These take up a lot of space. But it doesn't mean you have to get rid of them necessarily. There are other ways to store keepsakes (but that's for another day).

6) Emotional Clutter

Being an Entrepreneur is hard enough. Don't make it worse by being around negative people. Do you have "friends" or family who are always negative and pulling you down? It may be time to cut some of those ties. No one has time for external negativity in their life.

We grow by surrounding ourselves with people (like you!) to build each other up, learn from, and support each other.

As you look around your office space, take notes on the next couple pages, how many different types of clutter you see. How does it make you feel? What have you forgotten about?

As you come across each of these type of items in your workspace, **write down what they are, on the next page.** Writing these down will help you become more aware, so it's easier to prevent clutter later.

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What type of trash do you see and need to get rid of?

What items have you bought just because it was on sale? What about items you have kept because you'll "use it one day"?

Take note of items that don't have a home. This will help you get an idea of what storage to use you already have on hand, or if you need to buy any storage for it later.

What items are in your office space that you printed or bought because you had good intentions to pick it up as a hobby or add to your business? Don't use it? Write it down.

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What items and trinkets do you have in your office space that have a lot of emotional value to you? Write each of these down and WHY you keep them (kids drawings, etc).

Who are people in your life who tend to be negative, aren't supportive, or are overall demeaning everything you attempt to achieve? Do they need to be cut out of your life altogether? If that's not possible, how can you handle their negativity going forward?

Who are people, groups, or masterminds you want to reach out to and be around, who can lift you up and be supportive?

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Make it fun!

I hope that at this point, decluttering doesn't seem as overwhelming.

Now that you have set your goals, planned your time to declutter, and aware of the type of clutter you may come across, it's time to make this task fun! Yes, really.

Whenever I take on a task that I don't want to do, like cleaning, here are a few ideas to help push past the rest of the overwhelm.

- Create a playlist of music that fires you up so you can dance your way to a decluttering space.
- Listen to podcasts so you can learn as you work.
- Set a timer and see how much you can get done within that time frame.

Choose what works best for you. I'd love to hear how you make this task more fun, over in the [facebook group](#)! You may even inspire ideas for others on this journey. #makedeclutteringfun

Playlist/Stations/Other fun ideas

As you begin this journey, keep these questions in mind, and handy, as you go through each item in your officespace.

Questions to ask as you declutter

- Does it belong in the office?
- How important is the item?
- How often do I use it?
- How does it need to be sorted?



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Phase 2: Where to Start?

Where do you begin?

Desk

Why start with your desk? It's because not only is your desk the main area you work in, but desk clutter can affect your performance and productivity. At the very least, you'll have a clear space to get more work done, even if the rest of your office is a mess.

- ❑ Take EVERYTHING off your desk and start over.
- ❑ Spread out on the floor. Give yourself a lot of space, and begin sorting through papers and office supplies.
- ❑ Do you have **unrelated work clutter** on your desk? Consider whether you really need all those figurines, photos, post-it notes etc. Keep these to a minimum to help prevent distraction and clutter and give you more space to work.
- ❑ Do you seem to have **multiples** of the same type of pen, eraser, tape, box of paperclips, etc? Put all your pens, pencils, post-its, etc into the designated 'office supplies' box for now. We'll come back to this later.
- ❑ Wipe down and **sanitize your desk**. Dust triggers allergies and asthma. Crumbs attract bugs. I bet these aren't the co-workers you're looking for.

Pens, markers & highlighters

Grab a blank piece of paper and all your writing tools.

Go through each one to see if it still writes, or it's dried up and needs to be tossed. If you have a child, partner, or friend to help, this is a task they can do for some bonding time while you focus on other areas of your office.

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Trash & Recycle

Now that you have a clean desk again, the next area you want to focus on is trash and anything you can recycle. This is the easiest stuff to get rid of.

- ❑ Are there candy wrappers, bottles, pens, dry erase markers, or highlighters that don't work anymore? Can you shred old statements, bills, or credit card papers you no longer need, but take up space? Are there boxes, papers, and magazines you no longer need?
- ❑ Do you still have boxes laying around from Amazon, or other stores because you wanted to make sure you were going to keep the item or return them? Check each box and recycle any boxes you no longer need. If the box is smaller, hang onto it for now, it could be recycled into a storage container.

Bookshelf & Books

Are their books you haven't read in a long time, or at all? Go through each of these and see which you want to read. **Note:** If you're feeling queasy about the thought of simplifying your beloved books, remember, **you can always rebuy the physical book, as an audio book, or as an ebook.**

- ❑ **Keep** any books that are currently for personal growth, business, and continuing learning. Don't forget to keep a couple fiction books for fun.
- ❑ **Donate** all other books to teachers, gift to other small business owners; give a book away in your business/Facebook community, schools, or libraries. Others will love these books :)

You may need to repeat this process a couple times to really clear out what you're not going to read anytime soon and is only taking up space.

Drawers

If you have a desk with drawers, or use a piece of furniture for drawers, like I do, then it's time to declutter these next. Organize your desk drawers by importance – items used most should go into the closest drawers. If you can reach it while sitting at your desk, start here.

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Phase 3: Paper Clutter

Before you begin going through all your paper, it's important to remind yourself WHY this step needs to be done. Going into this without purposeful reasons makes it easy to procrastinate.

- ❑ Use your pen/pad, or print it out, to answer these questions:

Why do you need to file certain things? - Prevent auditing, make Accountant happy, etc.

Who to file things for?- Clients, suppliers, Bills, etc.

- ❑ Use the 'How long to keep paper?' (**checklist**) while sorting



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What, & When, should things be filed? Daily, weekly, monthly

❑ **Ask yourself** these questions WHILE sorting your papers:

- Does it belong in the office?
- How important is the item?
- How often do I use it?
- How does it need sorted?

❑ **First, sort paper by need** - Grab a small pile (about 20 pages) and sort at a time:

- Toss
- Recycle
- Shred
- Donate
- To Categorize & File
- Office Supplies
- Return to other room

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- ❑ **Next, go through your papers a second time and sort them by categories.**

There are many ways to sort your papers, but I am not going to tell you which way to do it. Instead, sort based on how YOU think and search for items. This is YOUR office so customize everything to you.

- ❑ Use sticky notes to label each category for now to keep up with them.
 - By Clients
 - Color-coded
 - By Date/Year
 - By category
 - By topic
 - By project
 - Utilities/Bills
 - Suppliers/Manufacturers
 - Yearly Taxes
 - Office receipts, coupons, etc
 - Warranties on purchased items

Notes



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Phase 4: Mobile Office Decluttering

Whether you're traveling around town or jet-setting to retreats and conferences, your vehicle, bags, and luggage is bound to get cluttered.

Depending on how much your travel and what you need to haul, the size and type of your bag (or bags) you take with are bound to cluttered.

Book Bag/Tote Bag Clutter

- Take everything out of your bag
- Sort Items
- Toss Trash
- Save Receipts
- Clean out crumbs
- Wipe down the inside of you bag
- Refill any toiletries
- Only put back what is needed on a daily basis, plus a backup of writing utensils

Vehicle Clutter

- Take everything out of your vehicle
- Sort Items
- Toss Trash
- Vacuum out crumbs
- Wipe down the inside of your vehicle, seats, etc.
- Only put back what is needed on a daily basis

Your vehicle is also a great place to keep backups of brochures, business cards, extra batteries, chargers, notebooks, set of clothes, lint roller, feminine products, snacks, etc. so you're always prepared.

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Phase 5: Take Inventory

Take inventory

As you take inventory, you'll realize what you have too many of, that something is in the wrong room, needs relocating, or you've started a collection of sorts. I was guilty of collecting pretty journals at one point.

Taking inventory allows you to begin taking better documentation in general, better budget for office supplies, and through decluttering finding receipts, that you need for business taxes. Besides, you may not realize you're low on printer ink/toner and don't want to scramble when it's needed or not in the budget for more.

- ❑ **Take inventory of office Supplies**
 - ❑ Test and Toss any pens, highlighters, etc, that no longer write (great task for a child)
 - ❑ Put empty notebooks and journals to the side

- ❑ **Take inventory of storage and decor**
 - ❑ What storage do you already have you can use for now? Any storage that may be in the attic, storage building, or receive from family? Write it down so you know what current items are available to utilize until you buy new or upgrade.

 - ❑ Is there any decor -around the house or in storage- that you would enjoy in your office space? Use this for now. The point is to fix up your office with what you already have, then "upgrade" decor later to go with your brand better.

- ❑ **After you take inventory** of your items, determine what you need to buy later, if anything.
 - ❑ Go through and pick only your favorite notebooks and journals to keep. Also think of a purpose for each of them. If you can't, donate it, someone else will love it.
 - ❑ Recycle any notebooks or journals that just take up space and you don't need to archive for later.

- ❑ **Donate** extra office supplies to teachers or a parent with school-aged kids.

- ❑ Are there any pretty, empty journals or notebooks? **Send them as a gift** to clients and other business friends.

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| Item Name | # of items | Room it belongs in | To Donate (how many?) | To Buy (how many?) |
|-------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Ink pens | | | | |
| highlighters | | | | |
| notebooks | | | | |
| journals | | | | |
| Sticky-note pads | | | | |
| Printer ink/toner | | | | |
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Phase 6: Digital Declutter

Digital Clutter

Backup everything

**Disclaimer* Before you begin ANY digital decluttering, do this first!*

If this is something you haven't already started, it's time to put backing up all your files and folders on the schedule once a week, or more. Back up to at least 2 other places, whether it's a flash drive, external hard drive, the cloud, Dropbox, Google Drive, etc. Choose 2-3 places to save everything.

Don't risk losing your important documents and all your hard work. Learn from my mistake. Check out my [learning moment about this, here](#).

Computer Clutter

❑ Icons

Keep icons easily accessible without the clutter by keeping icons off your computer screen.

❑ Computer Programs

Uninstall any programs you don't use on a regular basis in over three months. This frees up space on the computer to add more, important programs and files instead. Besides, videos and photos take up a lot of space and there is a high chance you want to keep those, right?

❑ Files & Folders

To stay consistent and search faster, use the same system as you used for your paper categories.



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Phone & Tablet apps

Do you really need ALL those selfies? Really? When was the last time you went through all those photos anyway?

- ❑ Make sure all your photos from your tablet and phone are backed up as well
- ❑ Delete any apps you haven't used within the past month

Email

Oh email.

It's a love-hate relationship. We love signing up for stuff, but hate clearing everything out. Well, it's time to tackle them.

❑ **Delete**

Delete all spam, trash you don't need, and

❑ **Unsubscribe**

Unsubscribe from multiple emails at once with unroll.me

❑ **Reduce Emails**

Instead of writing notes or constant emailing, try a business messaging system to reduce emails in your inbox and to maintain communication, files, links, all in one place.

I personally use a combination of Google docs, Facebook messenger, and Asana to share documents, make comments, and update projects.

❑ **Repeat as needed**

This may take a few rounds to go through everything, but absolutely worth it to clean out your email. Do this over a couple days, if needed.



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Social Media Clutter

As you and your business grow and evolve, your content, photos, branding, and groups you're involved in no longer align with your current brand and goals.

Take time to go through Facebook Groups and remove yourself from the ones that your ideal client isn't in, or you don't engage in.

Tips to prevent email clutter:

If you're a pen and paper person like me, I'm not telling you that you have to ONLY be digital. Instead, I'm saying take notes, make them "pretty", and organized with digital tools.

Conduct your business communication with technology as much as possible. You can do this with project management programs like Asana or Slack, and customer relationship management programs like HubspotCRM, Insightly, or all-in-one paid version like Ontraport or Infusionsoft.

There are even online services to sign documents digitally, like DocuSign.

It also helps to create a separate email for emails, webinars, downloads, etc. you sign up for, that's separate from your main business email. This makes it much easier to skim through your main business email for the things that matter most and find them easily.

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What's Next?

1) Get it out of the house

- ❑ Take the **trash** out and ready for pick up
- ❑ Take the **recycle** out and ready for pick up
- ❑ Put items in their **proper rooms**
- ❑ Take **donations** to your preferred organizations and people
- ❑ Take important documents to a place for **shredding**, or when you're ready to empty the shredder, most recycling programs will ask that you put shredded paper in a larger container, such as a paper or plastic bag. You'll want to check locally for your city's instructions.

If you have everything checked off all the lists, written/typed in all the boxes, only have what you need in your office, and your paper piles are ready for filing, Congratulations! It's time to start the fun part, Organizing!

2) Personalized 1:1 guidance and accountability

Need extra help and accountability to get your space decluttered?

I'd be happy to finish guiding you through this process with a 90 minute Coaching call via Zoom.

Contact me today

Ready to start Organizing your office space, but not sure where to start, how to make it inspiring, yet functional? Then my [personalized 1:1 Organizing Coaching](#) is for you.

I'll coach you through the entire progress of setting up systems and organizing and setting up your office space so you can find what you need, when you need it,

[Discover more](#) about how together, we can finish getting your office from clutter to calm.