

*“Choose only those things that move you in the direction of the life you desire, and dare to declutter the rest.”*  
- Cleaning Therapy

Hey Friends!

Welcome to the Dare to Declutter Challenge! I created this challenge for us to complete together in our own time and at our own pace. So take your time, and try to enjoy the process! Your home will feel more clean and calm with each area you complete.

We all have different starting points. Some of us have decluttered before, so our inventory will be lower than those who haven't decluttered in years, or even decades. That's okay! It will get done, one area at a time. Below, I have divided the home into 10 areas, but not all of the areas are created equal. For example, the kitchen might be way more involved than the living room, so feel free to further break up the kitchen into sub areas. For example, upper cabinets, lower cabinets, and drawers. The more you can break up each space, the less overwhelming it will be!

Over the past 20 years, I have managed several anxiety disorders, as well as depression. In the last 3 years, cleaning, decluttering, and organizing have been so beneficial to me in reducing stress and anxiety, and allowing my mind to rest as I look around my home. This has been life changing for me! My passion is to share that journey with you, through everything I do here on my website, as well as on my YouTube channel, Cleaning Therapy. Thank you for stopping by!

Please feel free to download or print this decluttering guide as we go through this challenge together. And don't forget to subscribe to Cleaning Therapy on YouTube to watch the accompanying videos, as I declutter and organize my own home this year.

We can accomplish this together, friend. Let's do this!

## Area 1: Kitchen Cabinets and Drawers

Look on top of your cabinets and fridge. If you see any clutter there, go ahead and remove it now. I don't like to keep anything on top of my cabinets because it feels unreachable and just tends to collect dust. But if you like having something up there, make sure it's intentionally placed and as minimal as possible. This will make deep cleaning much easier for you!

Start by removing all trash and any items that are too broken or worn to be donated. Work on one cabinet at a time. You actually don't need to take everything out. If you want to, go for it! But if you can see what's in there okay, just pull out what doesn't need to be there. If you see an item that belongs somewhere else in your home, bring it there immediately. Yes, right now. You'll thank me later!

Once you are left with items that belong in the kitchen and are in good condition, you are ready to ask yourself an important question... "Are these the items I currently use and love?" Notice, the question is not, "are these items I might use in the future?" (We will always answer yes to that question, just to be safe) If the answer is yes, keep them. If the answer is no, dare to declutter what doesn't make the cut. You can do this!

Repeat the same process with your kitchen drawers. Free up some space so they are more manageable and hopefully will close a little easier... Don't worry too much about what's in them and whether or not they are grouped correctly yet. We'll address that coming up!

After you've decluttered all of your cabinets and drawers, you are ready to start deciding where everything will reside. Everything in your kitchen will need a home, so be specific. I like to group like items and store them near where I will be using them whenever possible. For example, my cutting boards are in the cabinet right below where I like to chop and prep. Go ahead and choose a home for everything that works best for you and your family. If the location you have them in currently is working for you, leave them there. No need to reinvent the wheel here!

Once everything in your kitchen has a home, you will need to check your inventory to see if you have everything you need. Did you declutter that cracked colander? If so, you will need a new one, so make sure you jot it down on a list if it's something you use and want in your kitchen.

## Area 2: Pantry + Fridge

In these two areas, focus mainly on decluttering expired food and donating any food you don't plan to use.

## Area 3: Dining Room

The dining room might not be an area we worry too much about when decluttering, but it's worth getting in order just like any other room in the house.

You may keep extra silverware, dishes, serving ware, china, or linens in this room. Go through each cabinet and drawer and determine if these are pieces you do use and enjoy.

If you have pieces that were passed down to you, ask yourself if you like them enough to keep them in the house every day. If not, maybe someone else in the family would love to have them. Or maybe they can be stored elsewhere, to free up space in your cabinet.

Remember to focus on keeping only the things you use and love and dare to declutter the rest! You don't ever need to feel guilty about letting go of something that is no longer serving you. You deserve to live in a home that is free of clutter and relaxing to your mind.

#### Area 4: Living Room

Depending on what you have in your living room, take a survey of what areas seem to be prone to clutter. It could be the TV area in the form of DVD's, video games or other electronics. Maybe you have a bookcase that needs to be decluttered or a cabinet or two that has gotten full of things you no longer use.

Check your living room decor. Does it enhance the space and make you feel at ease and at home in your space, or does it stress you out? Declutter your decor until it feels right for you and your family.

Check inside each piece of furniture to make sure the items are truly in the place that makes sense to store them in, and make sure those items are used on a regular basis and in good condition.

As you're decluttering, remember that it's perfectly okay to have an empty drawer or cabinet! We don't need to fill every space in our home, just because it's there. It's nice to have some breathing room.

Continue working in your living room, until all that's left are the items you truly need and want. And dare to declutter the rest.

#### Area 5: Hall Closets

As you declutter your hall closets, pull out any trash or expired medicines or products. If you see something that belongs somewhere else in your home, bring it there now.

Remember that these closets are for you to use based on your own family needs. I do not believe that there is a wrong way to use a closet! Don't feel like just because a closet is in your front hallway, that it must be used for coats. Or just because a closet is in the back hallway, that it must be used for linens. I use my back hallway closet as a cleaning closet, and it works well for me. Determine what needs you and your family have, and put those closets to work for you!

## Area 6: Bathrooms

Take a look in your shower. If you have too many products in there, try to simplify and remove some of them. This will make your bath or shower more peaceful and much easier to clean.

When decluttering your bathroom drawers and cabinets, pull out any trash or expired medicines or products. Keep only the items you use on a regular basis and make sure everything is in good, working order.

## Area 7: Bedrooms

Here in the bedroom, I like to keep this space as minimal as possible. According to a recent study, researchers found that a cluttered bedroom leads to poor sleep and increased anxiety.

Personally, I have an ongoing struggle with piling things up in the corner of my bedroom, and I've noticed that having that clutter staring at me as I fall asleep is not a good thing for my anxiety levels... Take some extra time here to come up with a strategy for those items. If you bring in bags from shopping, or have a pile of donations waiting to be dropped off, maybe designate a special place for them in a closet or in your garage, not in your bedroom. You will be so glad you did this!

If you have a dresser in your bedroom, designate which items will get folded in the dresser, and which items will hang in the closet. Inside the drawers, choose an organization method that works for you. For most items, I like to use the file folding method, and I use drawer dividers to keep everything in its place. Use the system that works best for you. It may take some trial and error and that's okay. Clear off your dresser top, so that it's calming and clutter free.

In your nightstands, try to keep only the items that you use right when you go to bed, or right when you wake up. Clear your nightstand of clutter on top.

## Area 8: Bedroom Closets

Bedroom closets can be a tricky space, since they are mostly filled with clothes that we may or may not be wearing. Why is it so hard to declutter clothes? I can get really overwhelmed when I consider that every single piece of clothing represents a decision I need to make. Yikes! To avoid this, I rely on methods from the capsule wardrobe community. Do I actually have a capsule wardrobe? No, not exactly, but here's what I love about it.

Capsule wardrobes are built by laying all of your favorite clothes out on your bed and taking inventory of what you actually love to wear first. The focus is on choosing what you love, not decluttering what you hate. I think this is a good method, because as I sort through all of my clothes, I don't feel like I hate any of them. After all I did buy them...so I probably at least LIKE them. But if I went by those feelings, I wouldn't declutter anything. So that's why I love the idea of building your wardrobe on your bed.

Take out only your favorite clothes. What are your go to faves? Choose clothes that fit good and that you feel good in. Choose the clothes that you reach for, time and time again. Build a wardrobe that you would look forward to wearing!

Dare to declutter what doesn't make the cut.

Take inventory to at some point purchase items to fill any gaps in your wardrobe, now that you have a vision for what it will look like.

Remove all trash and broken items from the closet. Remove anything that doesn't belong in the closet and bring it to its correct home right away.

My advice is to avoid decluttering anyone else's closet without their involvement. If your older kids or your spouse is struggling to declutter, maybe set up a system for them to declutter only 3 items at a time, on a regular basis, to make decluttering less overwhelming for them.

#### Area 9: Bonus Rooms

This is the time to declutter any bonus rooms you may have, whether it's your home office, sewing room, exercise room, or laundry room. These rooms tend to be high clutter areas and can even become storage rooms/drop zones when life gets busy.

Take your time decluttering these rooms as thoroughly as possible and take some extra time when organizing these spaces. It will make life so much easier!

Remember to be patient with yourself! If you have multiple bonus rooms, this area may take several weeks or months to complete. Break the room up into sub areas if that helps, and tackle one sub area each week. Progress over perfection!

#### Area 10: Garage/Storage

The garage can be one of the most intimidating spaces to tackle! But we can divide and conquer here, by breaking it up into sub areas, and only tackling one sub area at a time. If you have a large garage, or multiple storage areas, this is a must.

Remember to look through each zone, and keep only what is currently useful to you or brings you joy. Remember, it's okay to make a mistake while decluttering. In most cases, an item that you decluttered but now regret, can be replaced for just a few dollars. The stakes are low here... It's worth your peace of mind and the freed up space to act boldly and dare to declutter!

After you've decluttered each zone, start to map out where everything will go. I'm a visual person, so I like to sketch my plan out in a notebook. After you have a game plan, make sure you have the supplies you need to carry out your plan. Are your bins in good working order? How about your shelving? You don't have to replace everything all at once, but start to plan out how you will develop this space over time. A well decluttered and well organized storage space can reduce so much stress in your mind! The extra effort you put in will always be worth it.

Congratulations! You have now completed the Dare to Declutter challenge in your entire home! Please leave a comment on one of my videos on my Cleaning Therapy YouTube channel, so I can celebrate with you! Your home is now clean and calm and ready to enjoy!