

lesson 1: organizing roadblocks

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ORGANIZED?

So you're here because you want to be more organized, right? That's terrific! I truly applaud you for deciding to embark on this amazing journey.



But before we begin organizing, I have to ask you a question: Have you stopped to think about what “organized” really means? Have you thought in vivid detail what “organized” will look like? What it will feel like? What it will be like for you when you arrive at “destination organization”?

Organization is a pretty amorphous thing. If there's one thing I've learned from walking through countless clients' homes and viewing hundreds and hundreds of “before” pictures, it's this: organized means something different to everyone. Just as there's no one-size-fits-all organizing solution, there's no one-size-fits-all organizing definition. Everyone has a different idea of what it means to be organized, how it feels to be organized and how it looks to be organized. I believe that getting organized is a journey and that everyone has a different destination.

For some, the destination is a space that looks like the pages of Real Simple magazine: simple, streamlined, clean, and sparse. For others, the destination is

a place where relaxation is possible: “things” are in order and there is time to pursue other interests like scrapbooking, hiking or playing games with the kids. For many, organized means knowing what's for dinner, actually having all the ingredients on hand, and having the time (and energy!) to prepare said dinner at the end of the day. For others it means paying the bills on time, showing up on time and basically just being calm and in control.

A search of www.dictionary.com gives many definitions for the word organized. My personal favorite is “methodical and efficient in arrangement or function.” And yet, I realize this definition may be a complete turn-off to a creative spirit who wants to become anything but “methodical.” Even if this definition were universally compelling and desirable, it would still fall short of carving out exactly how to get from your point A (less organized than desired) to your point B (more organized).

“Organized” is a personal destination. Only you know where your discomfort



Start getting a clear picture in your mind about what organized means to you. Look for images in magazines and think about the characteristics of the most organized people you know.

zone is (point A.) And only you can define where your comfort zone is (point B.) Only you can decide when you've arrived at "destination organization!"

As we embark on this journey...begin thinking about what being organized means to you. What does it feel like? What does it look like? How will your life be better when you're more organized?

In Organizing 101 you will learn a process for creating an organized space. The first step in the process is to clarify your goals, or in other words, define your vision about what you want your space to look and feel like. This vision is like your destination on your organizing journey. It is your comfort zone. Whatever terminology you want to use—goals, vision, comfort zone or destination—it's important to become very clear about what you want to accomplish with your organizing projects and the benefits you will experience as a result. Having this compelling vision will make it easier to navigate around the roadblocks you will encounter along the way.

Organizing roadblocks can rear their ugly heads at many points on the organizing journey—stopping you straight in your tracks. Some roadblocks can put your organizing plans to a halt before you even get started. While others trip-up midstream. By creating a compelling vision and anticipating these potential roadblocks, you'll be equipped with the road map you need to seamlessly navigate your way through the organizing process.

Take Action!

Repeat after me: action creates change. Action creates change. Action creates change.



It's true. There is just one way to create change in your home and life: you must take action! Regardless of how many episodes of "Mission Organization" you watch or how many organizing books you read, your home and life won't be any more organized until you take action on the information you learn.

Throughout Organizing 101, you'll see headings called "Take Action" with the little stop sign next to it. This is your cue to stop reading and take action!

These are the most important sections in the workshop. Follow these action steps and slowly but surely, by the end of the workshop you'll have everything you need—an organizing process and a plan for creating change in your home and life. And that is pretty exciting, wouldn't you say?

Before reading through the rest of the material in Lesson 1, stop and complete Questionnaire 1: Uncover Your Organizing Roadblocks. Then...come back here to learn about common roadblocks and what to do about them—your detour plan!

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROADBLOCKS

From where you are today, it may feel difficult to envision yourself or your home more organized. You may be looking around, wondering “How did I let it get this way? Where did all this stuff come from?” If you’re feeling overwhelmed or you’ve made attempts to get more organized in the past with results that left you less than happy, it’s important to understand some key factors that play a role in your long term success. These factors include understanding your relationship with stuff, and understanding your beliefs about getting and being organized—in essence understanding common organizing roadblocks. Let’s start by talking about the Pre-Journey Organizing Roadblocks—those obstacles that can get in your way before you even start the organizing process. As we talk about the various roadblocks you may encounter, I’ll provide you with a possible “detour” around the roadblock. Capture your thoughts and plans on your “Detour Plan” so you’re equipped with the tools you need to keep your pathway to organizing bliss clear and easy to navigate.

Pre-Journey Organizing Roadblocks

For many people who crave a more orderly existence, taking the first step is often the hardest. Roadblocks at this stage of the journey can be the result of deep rooted beliefs or simply due to the state of the physical environment: the place is so cluttered you’re overwhelmed and immobilized. Either way, once you understand what’s at play and why you’re feeling stuck, it’s much easier to take that important first step.



Here are some beliefs you may have about organizing that could be serving as roadblocks on your organizing journey.

ROADBLOCK

I’m overwhelmed and I don’t know where to begin.

DETOUR PLAN

Start small...start here...start now.

The good news is this: by taking Organizing 101 you’ve already taken that very challenging first step. From here on out it gets easier. During class you’ll do a small organizing project—a bookcase, junk drawer or linen closet—and create a pocket of calm in your home and life. More important, you’ll learn a process you can use to tackle the other projects in your home. By the end of class, in your organizer’s tool kit you’ll have confidence from a first project, an organizing process to follow on your next projects, and a master project list to serve as your plan going forward.



This is a sample of *Organizing 101*—a self-paced workshop from simplify 101. To continue on with this workshop, visit www.simplify101.com.