

Brain Dump and Discovery Exercise

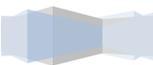
~ Opportunity hides in the clutter of your mind ~

Years ago I used to watch a television program on TLC called *Clean Sweep* featuring professional organizer Peter Walsh. You can still find full episodes to watch online.

No matter what the underlying causes might be that had caused the homeowners to become overwhelmed and dysfunctional by piles of clutter, Peter always started the cleaning process by completely emptying the rooms. No decisions about what to keep, toss, sell or give away were made until everything was lined up outside. Only then did Peter and his co-host help guide homeowners into identifying what had productive value in their current lives and what was no longer serving their needs and desires. One by one decisions were made to move each item onto the most appropriate mat: Keep. Toss. Sell/Give-away.

In the beginning, the desire for change fueled most homeowners. After a momentary gasp at the mountains of “stuff” they had accumulated, they gleefully jumped in, swiftly deciding what was precious and what was just junk. Eventually every homeowner hit a wall. Their commitment to change waivered and the entire process bogged down and ground to a halt. It became painful, emotionally and physically exhausting, often accompanied by tears and belligerence or obstinance as they fought with Peter and themselves over what “*had to stay*” even when they couldn’t explain *why*.

With Peter’s expert guidance, they faced their fears of letting go of what was holding them hostage in their own homes. While the process itself never became what anyone would call easy, it did become more manageable. Each step forward helped propel them to make the next decision more quickly and decisively. Their overwhelm melted away in



proportion to the stuff they released. They gained clarity of purpose plus a renewed commitment to changing what was possible. There was also the implied benefit that now they had gone through the exercise, and learned both the lessons it held and techniques used, each homeowner could repeat the steps as needed to keep clutter at bay.

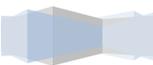
My Brain Dump and Discovery Exercise is a lot like *Clean Sweep*.

The process itself is simple ... but not necessarily easy. However, with commitment, perseverance and repetition, it does become more manageable. Even, dare I say, *enjoyable*. And the rewards are *HUGE*:

- Reduced overwhelm.
- Head space to think.
- Clarity of purpose.
- Better understanding of what best serves your needs and desires.
- Strength to say *Yes* or *No*.
- Renewed sense of self and personal power.

This is an exercise I do myself on a regular basis ... whenever I start feeling overwhelmed by thoughts of having too much to do. It's an exercise I walk my clients through, plus remind them it's time for another round whenever I sense a carousel of overwhelm and worry endlessly rotating in their minds. The relief of just completing Step 1 is immense. Once you can see the mountain of "stuff" you can also see the beginnings of a path and a way to pick your way through the clutter, gaining momentum to toss the junk, and renewing your commitment to keep only what's needed to move forward on your unique path to success and happiness. Opportunity hides in the clutter of your mind. But you must be willing to look for it, judge its value, and act accordingly.

"Out of clutter, find simplicity, from discord, find harmony, in the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." - Albert Einstein

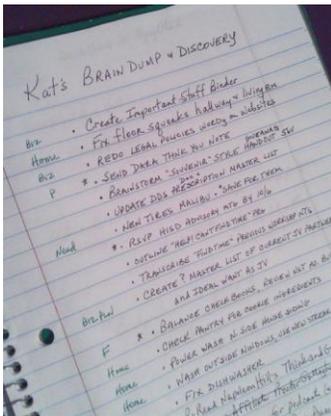


Brain Dump and Discovery Exercise

Step 1 – Corral the clutter with a clean sweep

Grab paper and pen and start dumping out everything cluttering your mind. Don't stop to judge the value of what you list or try to categorize it. Just pour it out as it comes.

Fragments of ideas. Incomplete sentences. Things you wish you could or have delegated. People and situations you're worried about. Upcoming appointments. Decisions that need to be made. Things you are waiting for other people to do. Things you should do. Things you could do. Things you shouldn't do. Things you might do. Things you might want to do. Things you did. Things you wish you hadn't done.



If it comes to you as a thought, put it down. Leave space on the left to add category notes later. I always date my notes.

Note, however, this is not a To-Do List. Neither is it a Bucket List or a Passion Quest. However, if things that belong on those lists are cluttering your mind *now*, write them down.

← Here's an example of one of my Brain Dumps.

Step 2 – Decide what mat each item belongs on

For now, keep it simple.

- Keep – items you really want and need to do
- Toss – items just taking up valuable space
- Sell/Giveaway – items to delegate to others

Step 3 – Take appropriate action steps

Enjoy the feeling of pride and power as overwhelm starts melting away. Renew your commitment to changing what is possible. Make decisions with clarity of purpose. Plan now to clutter-bust your mind on a regular basis. Discover your opportunities.

