

## Overwhelmed at Home?

When you enter the door to your home do you get stressed? Perhaps there is dirty laundry lying around while the clean laundry sits unfolded. Maybe dirty dishes crowd the kitchen countertop. Or there is an unknown smell lurking in the kitchen... is it the trash or something growing in the fridge? Beds lie unmade and who knows when they were made last. The doorbell is ringing and there is a threat on the life of anyone who opens the door... dare the visitors see this mess we call home?!?

Sound too familiar? One reason our homes overwhelm us is that we have more stuff than we can really use. I want to address two ways to combat this; counting the true cost of ownership and determining what we need versus what we want.

You may be stressed out by your stuff because your life has no room for upkeep or maintenance. I once heard a man say that he would not purchase something new unless he knew that he could afford the "cost" of the upkeep. By upkeep, I mean fixing it if it breaks, oiling the finish when it needs it, washing the item when it's dirty, taking that dog, "you just had to have," for its daily walk.

Sometimes we add things that we don't have room for. We buy a new piece of furniture and then have to rearrange all of our existing furniture to accommodate the new piece and end up with a crowded room or an extra piece of furniture. Or maybe we don't have the room in our schedules so the treadmill becomes a laundry rack instead of an exercise machine. The new, unread books pile up on our nightstands and clothes, with price tags still attached, hang in the closet waiting for us to wash and wear, etc.

Take a moment to look around your house. How many items have you purchased that now sit unused, un-kept, dusty, broken or buried under clutter? If each of us took the time to go through our homes and quickly grab items that we don't really need and donate them, our homes would take on a cleaner feel.

It may also be time to make a New Year's Resolution to quit purchasing items we don't really need. Or at least resolve to ask ourselves a few questions BEFORE we pick up an item and place it in our shopping baskets. Questions such as:

- "Do I really need this or is it just something that I want?"
- "Am I willing to pay the cost to upkeep this item and do I know what that cost really is?"
- "Where will I put it?"
- "What will leave the house to make room for it?"

This year, try to take on a new outlook when you are out shopping. Your home and your wallet will really appreciate it. You will find that you actually use items you have purchased and you will own your stuff instead of it owning you!

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**Address This Mess**  
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