

There's More to Life than Laundry

One common organization struggle that we all share is laundry. Dirty clothes just seem to constantly pile up, in the closet, overflowing the hamper and overwhelming our laundry area. Face it, we will always have dirty clothes, but the real problem comes when we no longer have clean clothes, right? Now everything else comes to a stop as we finally face the heap of clothes we have been ignoring.

I doubt that your calling in life is to do your laundry; it's not your highest priority. However, if we ignore or minimize our laundry struggles, we are eventually forced to set aside our higher priorities and goals to do laundry. This usually leads to further frustration and even less desire to mess with the laundry.

It's been my experience that an evaluation of our priorities can help us deal with the root issues responsible for our laundry struggles. Is the answer then to make laundry a higher priority? Yes, because it needs to be done, but that doesn't mean that it becomes your highest priority. One of my priorities is that I spend quality time with my spouse and children. It is hard for me to relax and spend time with them if the house is a mess and the laundry is piled up.

In evaluating my priorities, I realize that I have to give laundry some priority in order to support my higher priorities. This leads to me establishing a goal of doing laundry in a way that it does not get in the way of my family time. To accomplish this goal, I make a plan that enables our family to gather, sort and accomplish laundry in an orderly and efficient manner. If you want the same thing in your household, I encourage you to take the same approach. Ask yourself, "How can I proactively deal with my laundry and minimize the negative impacts it has on my life?"

Here are a couple of examples to help meet your goals of not letting laundry get in the way of your priorities. For those of you who work full time or travel a lot for work, but are home on the weekends, you may have to plan on doing your laundry on the weekend. Alternatively, I know people who do their laundry on the road so that they don't have to worry about it when they get home.

On the other end of the spectrum, let's say that you don't have a day to devote to laundry. An effective strategy could be to divide and conquer. To do this, use a series of baskets to sort your clothes in as you undress. Perhaps you have one basket for whites, a second for darks, a third for reds, a fourth for jeans and a fifth basket for towels. Every day when you get home from work, grab a basket of clothes, dump it into the washer, then after dinner, move the clothes to the dryer and hang or fold them when they are dry. With this method, you minimize the chance of being overwhelmed because you are constantly making progress. This way the piles of laundry stay in their bins until you are ready to wash them and not on the floor where everyone is tripping on them or having to look at the mess all the time.

These are just some examples to get you started. Consider what will work for you, your schedule, your priorities and your goals. By arranging your life around your priorities, you can focus on what is most important and minimize your distractions. I see this as organizing the small stuff to keep the big stuff most important.

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