

Organizing Step #5 - Maintain

You've followed the steps of my SPASM™ acronym

- **SORTED** - Putting like with like
- **PURGED** - Concentrating on keeping **ONLY** the things you love, use and that enhance your life on a regular basis
- **ASSIGNED** homes - Thinking logically, using zones
- **SET LIMITS** - Using bins, baskets, shelves, dividers, etc. to contain and set natural limits!

You can make it! One more step! You **CAN** do anything! Now, for the final step...drum roll, please... M = **MAINTAIN**

There is a house that we drive past on the way out of our neighborhood. The owners had a spectacular garden, immaculate lawn and even built this raised bed of a mix of varying plants that was just extraordinary. It obviously took a lot of maintenance. They had to weed and water and plant and harvest and prune.

(By the way, that is why **WE** do not have any raised beds and are not even planting our small garden this year! Would I love to enjoy an immaculate garden? Yes! But it is too much maintenance for us at this stage in our lives. We just mow!)

Then...the owners moved. A sad day!

The new owners have lived there a year now and guess what? The place is a wreck. We walked by it this morning. The garden is a weed jungle mowed down and the raised bed is a tangle clump of dried up ugliness.

This is true with:

- Weight loss - If you go back to eating too much and you will gain your weight back.
- Relationships - Go back to not intentionally focusing on the other person and your relationships will be unfulfilling.
- Running a house - Stop for a **moment** and it is out of control, dusty, mountains of laundry and piles of stuff form.

The moral to this story is: It takes maintenance to stay organized.

That is why you need to tie the maintenance to something that happens naturally or to a habit that you already have established. For example,

- Filing taxes - Every year as you prepare for taxes clean out your files.
- Dishes or dinner- Every time you do dishes or while you are cooking dinner wipe out and purge a shelf/drawer.
- Email - Before you check your email process your inbox.

- Brushing your teeth - Every Sunday night when you brush your teeth find 3 things to purge in your closet or bathroom.
- While you do laundry - Take 3 minutes and go find the matches to your lost socks.

There are two key elements to maintaining.

FIRST, the less you have the easier it is to maintain. Think about this! Less stress. Less work. Less cleaning. Less mess. Less telling others to pick things up! If your area is not staying maintained there is a good chance that you have TOO much stuff! Go back to step two and purge - only keeping the things you love, USE and enhance your life regularly!

SECOND, you must establish some new habits. Alan Weiss, the millionaire consultant, says "...Change our habits, reach new levels!" Maintaining clearly requires some old habits to change or new habits to be established.

For example, if you used to drop clothes on the floor, NO MORE. Hang them. If you used to let your mail and paper pile up, NO MORE. Process a small amount of paper EVERY day.

Step 5 when organizing is to **MAINTAIN**. The **secret** to maintaining is to **KEEP** less stuff and **CHANGE** your habits by tying **regular maintenance to something that already happens!**

ACTION: Choose one thing to maintain and focus on this habit for the next 7 days. Be proud of the new habit you are forming that will help you maintain your organized space!



About the author: Tracy Hoth has a contagious passion to share with women how organization and asking the right questions can help move thoughts into actions... dreams into reality! Through her hands-on-organizing, coaching and speaking she inspires women to become who they are meant to be!

Visit www.SimplySquaredAway.com and receive her eBook "Organized...From the Car to the Bedroom" as her FREE gift to you.