



# Be Present, It's Summer!

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Summer is such a wonderful time—lighter clothing, barbecues, bright colors, and longer days. What do you need to do to be fully present and take in all that is summer? For many of us, the secret to being present is clearing our space—emotional and physical—of clutter so that we aren't distracted and can truly enjoy the here and now.

Think about how you feel when you take a walk in a beautiful place or enter a peaceful-by-design space like a yoga center or spa. Can you breathe easier? Do you have a spontaneous smile on your face? Perhaps you begin to fully experience your surroundings with all of your senses, noticing smells and beautiful things that have been there all along but

that you have not previously experienced. What is different now about this particular space? Why is all of this available to you now?

For the answer think about the important commonality that both a walk in the country and a peaceful space share: both are uncluttered. If you're interested in bringing some peace and clarity to your own life, consider clearing your clutter. As a starting point, try these three steps:

**1 CLEAR OR SIMPLIFY A PHYSICAL PLACE THAT IS IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE.**

Will it be your living space, your office, your closet? Select a place. Once you have chosen, close your eyes and visualize that space the way you would like it to be, with as many

details as possible. Now that you have a mental picture, hold on to it. And while you're at it, take a photograph of the space in its current state so that you can offer yourself the satisfaction of a before-and-after comparison when you've completed the project.

Now get your calendar and make a daily 30- to 45-minute appointment with that space. Putting it in writing, as you would any other important appointment, is essential; you are committing to doing something for yourself, and writing it down strengthens that commitment.

Every day before you begin to work on the space, close your eyes and remind yourself of your vision of the end result. Use that positive



energy to propel you through the next 30 to 45 minutes. Take a few photos along the way, as you did at the beginning, to chart your progress. Once you have transformed the space, pat yourself on the back—you've cleared some considerable clutter! Did breaking a large task into small, manageable pieces help the process?

**2 REFOCUS YOUR THOUGHTS.** This will help declutter your mental space. Remember, thoughts are things, and you want lots of positive things in your life. Although we cannot control what happens to us, we can control how we react to life's challenges. One way to focus on the positive is to keep a daily journal. Each day write down at least one thing that you are thankful for—and remember, no repeats! Make a note to buy that blank book today and start writing!

**3 MAKE ROOM FOR WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU.** Often in our busy lives we get so caught up in doing the silly little things that we don't focus on what is really essential. If someone told you that you had only a week to live, what are the first 10 things you would do? Spend some time on this exercise. It will help you refocus your priorities and values. Are the things that you listed incorporated into your life now? If not, make it a priority to make them a part of your life as frequently as possible.

Decluttering your spaces and your mind gives you room to be in the present and enjoy what life has to offer. In a bad mood? Find something small that is beautiful or amusing and focus on it. It is in your life this moment, and when you are focused on something positive, it is difficult to remain in a bad mood. Make it a great day! ❀

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