

November 2011

Hello again! I hope everybody's holiday season is going well. As we move into a time of year well known for shopping and gift-giving, I feel like this is the time to also think about uncluttering your rooms, your homes, and your minds. Not only will this give you the space for family (and presents!), but it can also help you "unstuff" your house, and hopefully provide items for those who cannot otherwise afford/access them this gifting season.



Perhaps the best reason to downsize and declutter comes from Senior Move Manager Marilyn Allen, who says, "people spend the first 40 years of life eagerly accumulating stuff and then they spend the next 40 years trying to figure out what to do with it."

This time of year is perfect for you to take some of your loved but unused items and donate them to hospices, Salvation Army and Goodwills, or any local thrift store. Not only is this a way for those who can't afford basic life items to get them, but it is also a way for people to recycle holiday gifts for that 'green' touch.

Why Declutter?

In April 2011, at a Move Manager conference in Pennsylvania, experts listed their top five (5) reasons to downsize possessions:

1. Safety
2. Control
3. Move Preparation
4. Minimizing Costs
5. Ease of Sale

Not only is a clean and decluttered home safer for children and the elderly, but the process of downsizing allows you distribute your things before family squabbles come into play. Not only will this eliminate or reduce family pressure at a later time, but it also allows you to relay the stories contained by items you bequeath to friends and family.

Starting your downsize now allows for a much easier process when it comes time to move to a smaller home and sell your current house. Not only will the process go more smoothly, but it allows you to help minimize the cost of moving and ensure that your house goes on the market as quickly as possible.

Easier said than done for most people, however...

Why it's hard to downsize:

"It is so easy to get overwhelmed by sorting through the emotions and memories that are associated with all of the stuff," says Allen. 40 years of stuff is 40 years of memories, good and bad. For some people, those memories are what make decluttering hard. A book is not just a book, it's a present from a long-lost friend or deceased family member.

In 2010, more than 50,000 families hired certified move managers to assist them or their relatives, according to the National Association of Senior Move Managers (NASMM). Not only do Senior Move Managers help with the logistics of the downsize, giving the family back time to do other necessary things, but the Move Managers can also act as surrogate family or friends.

Senior Move Manager Marlene Stocks says, "it's daunting for them to look around their home and know what to do...And here's their life, writ in their kids' artwork, a thousand old photos, or even a dusty nosegay from a prom...worse for the letting go factor, many were raised in tougher times. So they'll say 'I might need that ball of twine someday,' or 'I should probably save that button, just in case.'"

But a favorite quote of many Move Managers comes from Joseph Campbell. "Treasure your relationships, not your possessions."

What to do:

So as we move further into this holiday season, take stock of your possessions. Find out what you can live without and don't need. Send tools to Habitat for Humanity, linens to animal shelters, clothes to hospices and Goodwills. Other people will find them and use them, and you can feel great not only about your own home and living situation, but also that you helped others get what they needed.

Keep this in mind as you look around your house, and if you or anyone in your family needs help figuring out what to do with things you no longer need, feel free to contact me at any time.

Thanks,

Marilyn Leek,
Owner, [Chesapeake Transitions](http://ChesapeakeTransitions.com)
410-897-0050 (Home)
410-533-8971 (Cell)
marilyn@chesapeaketractions.com

