

equivalent time, energy, and space. We do not add anything that will reduce our time cushions or speed up our comfortable pace. Though choices increase, there are still only 24 hours in a day. Overchoice, instead of offering more freedom, diverts us from our focus.

10. Emptying: At day's end, we empty our pockets, purse, and car and process our input. After an upsetting experience, we ask: "Am I spending \$1,000 of emotion on 10¢ worth of annoyance?" We unwind, debrief, write our feelings, and release them. We do not carry today's load into tomorrow.

11. Pacing: We do not let machines be our master. We turn them off when not needed. We do not insert a task while waiting. We welcome delays as breathers, time outs to digest events.

12. Underoccupation: Tasks such as folding laundry do not require full attention. Instead of dismissing them as boring and adding distractions, we can regard them as opportunities to reflect and relax.

As we declutter our piles, we can think: "Will I be remembered for my collections or my kindness?" We keep only what we give away. As we sort through our souvenirs, we can ask: "I have my memories; why do I need this dust-catcher?"

As we discard items we think we might need someday, we can say: "I trust that when I need a fact or

an item, it will be available to me. I would rather need it and not have it than waste energy by keeping it. I trust my Higher Power and my resourcefulness to supply me."

13. Silence: We learn to enjoy silence, not merely as a respite from talk, but as a calming, healing force. Silence allows time for deep thoughts to emerge.

14. Closure: One reason we often feel empty is that we do not take time to experience completion. When we release objects, activities, and toxic relationships, we can give thanks for their lessons. When we have a setback, we can grow from it. When we have a victory, no matter how small, we can celebrate it. The more we acknowledge our victories, the more we will progress.

15. Evaluation: Better is enough. We let enjoyment, rather than perfection or quantity of output, be our criterion. A useful guideline: "If you are not having fun, you are not doing it right."

By taking action, unnecessary possessions, activities, relationships, negative emotions, and useless thoughts will disappear. Our good comes through us because we have cleared mental, physical, and emotional space for it. We hope these suggestions will bring you the mental freedom that we have experienced: effortless energy; vivid memories and impressions; breakthrough ideas; opportunities; healthier relationships; greater decisiveness, awareness, and inner peace. We wish you the joy of an uncluttered mind.

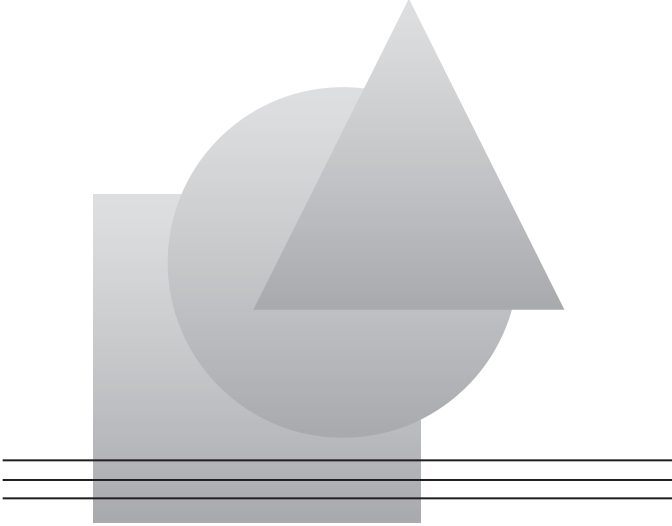
Responsibility Pledge
I pledge to stretch out my hand and heart to those seeking help from our compulsion. Together we will ensure that CLA is here for us and all those who follow in our footsteps. And for this I am responsible.

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Declutter Your Mind



Mind Clutter

Often we look at our space and wonder how it “grew” so messy. Or we check our crowded schedule and overloaded to-do list and moan about the lack of time. We always seem to be behind. And why are there demanding, difficult, and codependent people in our lives? Blocked by our space, time, and relationship clutter, stuck in memories, worries, daydreams, we hardly notice our lives ebbing away.

Often our minds are filled with trivia; we fail to recognize what is really important. We cannot find serenity because our thought processes are clogged with self-defeating, irrelevant ideas. Or we are overwhelmed by endless distractions.

Our minds, which should be attuned to inner guidance, are diverted by maintenance chores or sorting through too many choices. If we are disorganized, even more time is lost. No matter whether our clutter is orderly or not, it means we are wasting precious thought power.

Because of our cluttered minds, we leave items out. We fear that we will forget where they are if we put them away. Ironically, with every surface piled high, we cannot find anything.

Toward Healing

By attending CLA meetings and talking to members, by writing a Fourth Step inventory, we eliminate what we do not need, use, or want. We let go of resentments and identify attitudes that keep us prisoners of our clutter. We substitute: First Things First, One Day at a Time, Let Go and Let God, Progress Not Perfection, Easy Does It. We write about our hearts’ desires: supportive spaces, leisurely schedules, win-win relationships, and work we love.

As we move toward these goals, our minds clear because there is less detail to remember. Here is how we heal:

- 1. **Strong support system:** CLA program, understanding family and friends—whatever gives us the love, strength, and encouragement to tackle this difficult task.
- 2. **Self-nurture:** Restful sleep, breaks, exercise, meditation, relaxation and fun activities, and a nutritious diet. We rest before we get tired. We become the most loving boss we ever had. We remember that we cannot help others if we are hurting ourselves.
- 3. **Underscheduling:** We allow more time than we think we need for a task or trip, keeping a comfortable margin for the unexpected. By arriving early, we allow for traffic, parking, processing enroute thoughts,

and adjusting to new surroundings. We arrive relaxed and receptive to fresh ideas. Instead of rushing through blurry days, we enjoy time to reflect, to savor life, to appreciate beauty, to notice coincidences, to find meaning, to remember dreams; time for humor, creativity, spontaneity, and surprises; time to putter and be lazy. The more we take it easy, the more we accomplish.

- 4. **Overspace:** We leave empty spaces for access, eye rest, and objects in transition. We give ourselves and our possessions breathing space.
- 5. **Prioritizing:** We prioritize our goals. We work in priority order, while remaining open to inner guidance and taking breathers. We do our top priority at our optimum time. If a priority is scary, we bookend with a CLA buddy. Discipline is remembering what we want.

By working this way, if the unexpected happens, we complete what is most important. Low priority items become unnecessary to do. Today’s urgency is often tomorrow’s trivia. We have more energy because the guilt of procrastination or the tyranny of indecision does not sap us. The more we plan before we begin, the easier the work goes.

At times, we are overwhelmed. We need to acknowledge overload. Especially when tasks seem urgent, the most useful thing we can do is to rest, be silent, breathe deeply, and become calm. When we regain our serenity, then we reprioritize, refusing new commitments until our schedule and pace return to normal. Our first priority is always our well-being. We do not have time to be busy.

- 6. **Structure:** A plan keeps us on track. Our routine can include designated chore days, standardized shopping lists—whatever reduces remembering and deciding. Another method is linking tasks: after we wash the dinner dishes, we pack tomorrow’s lunch. A tickler file helps us to schedule chores and appointments, decluttering our minds of due dates and to-do items. Earmarking homes for our possessions and returning them there keeps them out of sight and thus out of mind.
- 7. **Subdividing:** We divide big tasks into doable segments and take breaks after completing each one. Example, writing an article: Research, outline, first draft, revise, etc. This prevents overwhelm. For space organizing, we use dividers and group similar items.
- 8. **Selectivity:** We are more effective by being more selective. The more carefully we choose what we do and own and what people we allow into our lives, the more satisfaction we have. Quality replaces the need for unsatisfying quantity. We act from abundance, not scarcity. “No, thanks” is our often-used, self-caring response. Just because we can do something does not mean we should.

Even with quality, we need to monitor input. Too much of a good thing is too much. A useful expression to avoid pleasure turning into pain is: “I’ve enjoyed as much of this as I can stand.”
- 9. **Substitution:** Before accepting a new activity or item, we release one of