

Measuring Progress on Our Journey in Recovery

(Salmon)

Clutterers Anonymous

This is the document formerly titled “Abstinence Model,” which has been changed to address the controversy surrounding the term abstinence because Clutterers Anonymous is not a substance-based program.

The purpose of this leaflet is to address the physical, emotional, and spiritual clutter and hoarding. We do this by seeking guidance from a power greater than ourselves and, with the help of others, determining individual guidelines for our recovery.

Some new to the program may be able to take only small steps, but as they achieve success are able to widen their definition to suit their needs. It is important that individual clutterers define some level of progress in decluttering, but they can always add to, delete from, or refine their short- and long-term goals.

We are all clutterers, but we come in with our own specific issues. So the approach taken needs to be very individualized. With the help of our Higher Power, we are responsible for our own recovery. We recover in direct relationship to the level of our surrender. Approaching things willingly and seeking out what works best for us at our present stages of recovery—and also being flexible and able to make changes—are essential for our growth.

We cannot compare ourselves with other programs or their issues since CLA embraces several issues unique to clutterers. We can’t just say, “Our goal is ‘no more clutter,’” because things and people will keep coming into our lives. What is clutter for one person may be a necessity for others.

We all have the dignity of choice. Where we are today and what we can sustain internally and externally for today is always our personal decision after submitting our will to our Higher Power.

It is suggested that each member’s goals be worked out individually, with a sponsor or buddy. If you do not have a sponsor or buddy to work with, it shouldn’t deter you from taking steps on your own.

Below is one model that members can use to determine what defines their desired progress in decluttering.

- 1. Those behaviors and habits that are blocking my recovery
- 2. Those behaviors and habits that are enhancing my recovery
- 3. Those behaviors and habits that are gray areas or depend upon circumstances

It may be helpful for some people to consider areas of clutter that create problems for them, both physical and nonphysical. You may wish to ask yourself: “Is this contributing to my recovery?”

We work the CLA Steps and Traditions with the help of our Higher Power, so that we can achieve beauty, joy, and serenity.

Decluttering Progress Guide

List your own choices in each of these categories.

1. Behaviors and habits that are blocking my recovery.	2. Behaviors and habits that are enhancing my recovery.
3. Behaviors and habits that are gray areas or depend upon circumstances.	

Sample Progress Guide

These are possible examples that you can adapt for your own path to progress in decluttering. On the blank chart, list your own choices in each of these categories.

1. Behaviors and habits that are blocking my recovery. • dropping everything I bring in as soon as I enter my home, rather than putting it away immediately • impulse buying • taking discarded items, for example: street shopping & Dumpster diving • overscheduling • thinking I need to read every magazine, listen to every newscast, and keep every newspaper • not making an effort to talk with and listen to other recovering clutterers • not making time daily for prayer and meditation	2. Behaviors and habits that are enhancing my recovery. • putting things away as soon as I finish using them • going through the mail every day and tossing junk mail in the trash as soon as it arrives • earmarking a place for everything and putting everything in its place • bookending difficult tasks with a CLA buddy • making an effort to note the amount of time each task takes so that I may appropriately prioritize my tasks • contacting my sponsor or buddy regularly, working the 12 Steps, and applying the principles of recovery • setting apart a daily time for connection with my Higher Power
3. Behaviors and habits that are gray areas or depend upon circumstances. • keeping only a reasonable and meaningful quantity of mementoes or inherited treasures • limiting my collection of photographs to those that are currently relevant to me • utilizing technology as a means to decrease clutter while being careful to avoid computer file clutter. • disciplining myself in acquiring and releasing books, newspapers, and magazines	

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