

## EVALUATING VALUE

When we invest in an object, seeing its true value becomes difficult. Our perceptions become confused by many factors that challenge our clarity and objectivity. Check off those that seem to apply to your clutter:

\_\_\_ admitting error

Admitting mistakes is hard, particularly in an area that creates so much difficulty like clutter or hoarding. Telling ourselves that things that we purchased have value keeps us from having to admit to having spent good money, perhaps money we could ill afford to misuse, on something that is not worthwhile.

The solution to this type of error is to recognize that errors cannot be escaped indefinitely. At some point it will be necessary to recognize that an error has been made and it needs correction. Clearly, the sooner one changes course, the better. Errors do not improve with age.

Things that I am holding onto because I do not want to admit error \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

\_\_\_ wishful thinking

We want to believe our things have value, because if they did not, we would be living with junk and that does not feel good. We would rather think that our items are special, worthwhile, useful or at least potentially so, and that we have them for good reasons.

To fix this form of erroneous thinking, we need to recognize that whatever value these clutter objects may once have had, they no longer do, and at this point, our interests are better served by owning fewer things.

Things that I am holding onto because of wishful thinking \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

\_\_\_ cognitive dissonance

We are biased to believe that our choices are correct and for the best despite all evidence to the contrary. Thus, if we live with clutter for long enough, we come to accept it as normal, and discount the importance of having clear, uncluttered spaces.

One way to overcome the role of cognitive dissonance in clutter or hoarding is to adopt the perspective that the space itself has as much value than its contents.

Things that I am holding onto because of 'sour grapes' \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

\_\_\_ social acceptance or expectations

If others believe a thing is valuable, it is very difficult for us to not think so also. Many studies have shown the near-impossibility of going against social expectations,

regardless of the effect that these expectations on our lives. This notion contributes to clutter by making us think that we need to own every whats-it that gets manufactured, that if everyone else has something, we need one too.

Social acceptance can be a useful tool for ending clutter by inviting people to visit and using their reactions to the clutter as incentive for clearing things out.

Things that I have been holding onto because of social expectations \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

\_\_\_ sentimental attachment

We all fall into the trap of equating warm, fuzzy emotions (the good kind) with objects. We do this in part because we fear forgetting the events that triggered those wonderful feelings and thus losing something precious. We also do this because we do not trust our future to bring us other opportunities to experience such good feelings, so holding onto sentimental objects becomes an attempt to stop time.

One solution to keeping items to hold onto the memories they bring might be to write out the story behind the object, then discard the object. Better still would be to trust that changing your orientation from the past to the present will lead to a treasure trove of new wonderful memories.

Things that I have been holding onto because of sentimental attachment \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

\_\_\_ aspirations

We often accumulate clutter that consists of objects that we hope to use when so plan for a different way of life or activity comes to pass. These objects are giving us useful messages about what we want in life, what we hope will happen. Sometimes these hopes are achievable, and other times they are not.

The solution to aspirational clutter is to evaluate the ambition, how much we really want it, what we would have to do to achieve it, and whether we are really willing to do what is required.

Things that I have been holding onto because of aspirations \_\_\_\_\_

---

---