



The Challenge: Throw away 50 things, physical and mental, in 30 days. Keep a list of the items as you throw them away. Multiples of the same items such as books go on one line and count as one item.

The Premise: Many of the physical things we hold on to are related to mental messages or negative emotions; throw away all of it. Decluttering your physical space also declutters your mental space.

The End Goal: A clean house is the least of what you'll get when you're finish. While you will focus on the *giving*, the other side of the same coin is the *getting*. By removing unrealized distractions and by letting go of mental messages, you will be in a far better position to receive what God wants to do with and/or for you. This is just one step to your spiritual make over.

Rules of Engagement according to Gail Blanke

#1. If it—the thing, the belief or conviction, the memory, the job, even the person—weighs you down, clogs you up, or just plain makes you feel bad about yourself, throw it out, give it away, sell it, let it go, move on.

#2. If it (see above!) just sits there, taking up room and contributing nothing positive to your life, throw it out, give it away, sell it, let it go, move on. Throwing out what's negative helps you rediscover what's positive.

#3. Don't make the decision—whether to toss or keep it—a hard one. If you have to weigh the pros and cons for too long or agonize about the right thing to do, throw it out.

How or where do I start?

You will need a few boxes or bags to sort your items and a piece of paper for you list of your purged items. Add the item to your list when you physically (or mentally) throw it away.

How do I count paper?

Most of us have some type of paper in nearly every room in our houses. Count it based on the location. If you clean 3 drawers in the nightstand, it can be counted as one nightstand (3 drawers) or drawers (3). The same is true for your file cabinet drawers which go on a separate line. Don't stress about how you count it; the goal is to declutter the area. And by all means, don't invest time in counting pages.

Does my family's stuff count?

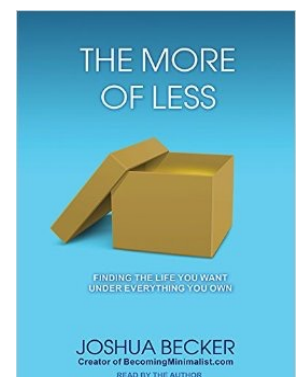
Yes. Because this process is about you, try to focus on your stuff. However, if it's *your* decision to toss it and your husband agrees, count it. You could save kids' stuff for Christmas time. It could be a great teachable moment for kids to decide which of their things to pass along to another family.

What about clothes and make-up?

It's up to you. You could list it as "clothes" and keep count of the number of items next to it, or list it as categories (suits, dresses, pants, shirts, etc). Either way, keep a count. The same is true for make-up. List it as make-up (16) or by categories (lipstick-6, eye shadow-10, etc).

Does food count?

Absolutely. List it by locations on separate lines, pantry- 18, freezer chest-7, refrigerator-13. Just how long has that jar of whatever been in the door of your frig?



Attacking the mental mess

What unhealthy beliefs do you hold about yourself or others? What regrets and mistakes still have a hold on you? Decide today to free yourself from the unnecessary weight. Press passed your past! What do you need to forget, and who do you need to forgive? During this process, take a few steps to heal the holes in your heart. Your spiritual life may depend on it. Does your competitiveness show up in your constant need to win and always be right? Is it time to let go of repeated feelings of inadequacy? Consider how holding on hinders your ability to receive God's promises of peace that surpasses understanding and joy unspeakable.

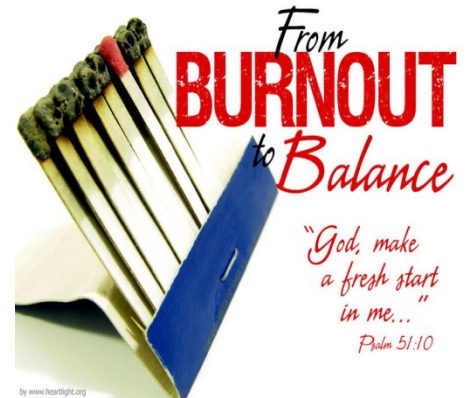
Philippians 4:7,9-- And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Whatever you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, put these things into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Psalms 51:10-- Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalms 46:10-11-- Let go of your concerns! Then you will know that I am God. I rule the nations. I rule the earth. The LORD of Armies is with us. The God of Jacob is our stronghold.

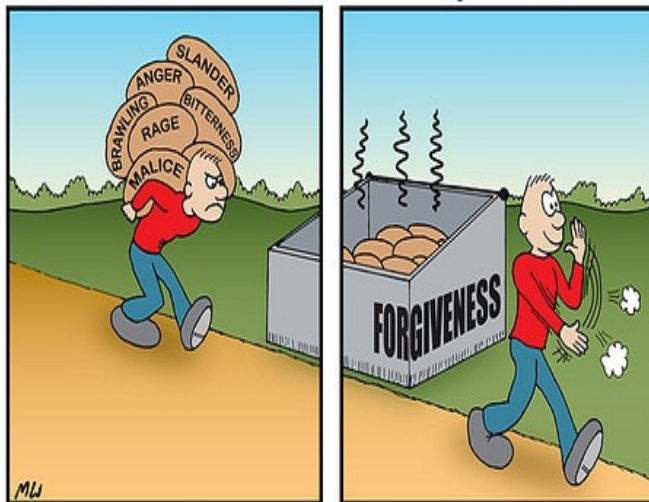
Isaiah 43:18-- But forget all that-- it is nothing compared to what I am going to do.

Philippians 3:13--14 Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.



DUMPSTER

A Joyful Toon by Mike Waters



Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
— EPHESIANS 4:31-32 NIV

1 Peter 2:1-3-- Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Colossians 3:8-- But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

Hebrews 8:12-- For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.
(Even God has thrown away a few things.)