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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Realistic Decluttering

There's decluttering by the book, and then there's realistic decluttering. Too often we follow the experts' advice and end up unhappy with the result.

Clothing styles run in cycles. Pant legs go from wide to skin tight, and shirt hems go up and down. While it's likely that your fairly new pair of wide leg pants might come back in style soon, the 2-foot wide bell bottoms of the '70s probably won't make a reappearance.

You thought you would like that magazine subscription you got two years ago. You read three issues and the other nine are in a stack that keep sliding off the coffee table. Out they go.

And what about that coffee table that you threatened to take to Goodwill ages ago because it's just too big for the room? Is it time to let it go? Or the spare end table your daughter said she wanted? Give her one opportunity to come get it now. Otherwise, out it goes.

Those treasured mementos your mother passed down to you (that you never really liked) have been taking up shelf space for many years. Is it time to let them go? Put them in a box in the closet and leave them there for a month. If you don't miss them, you don't need to keep them.

Have you collected dozens of coffee cups over the years and kept them all just in case you have a party with 27 people? Choose six to keep.

The idea is to make room. Over the course of one month, spend a little time every day gathering a few things to put in bags in a closet. If you're feeling especially brave, don't wait until the month is over. Take them to Goodwill right away. Eventually you'll come to enjoy the extra space you have.

It's being more realistic.

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