

In the last few years I have had the urgency to let go of stuff. I didn't know how much I held on to until I moved for the second time in one year and unpacked the same memorabilia twice. Being a Feng Shui proponent, I thought I had physically and emotionally let go of my extra baggage, but as I was putting away the boxes, I came across parts of my past which I had unknowingly buried!

I know how important it is to lighten your load as we move forward into the next few years, and to be in touch with what really matters - not the stuff you see but the stuff you can feel. As I picked up objects while unpacking, I asked myself how each object felt. I kept some of the mementos because they made my heart open and lifted my spirits. You know, the stuff your kids made for your birthday, like a ceramic purple frog, the handmade frame with our family picture in it, or my favorite hotplate holder my son made with a shark dripping blood from its teeth that reads, "My Mom- Love Mikey."

Most of the other stuff I went through made me sad and I felt my energy drop, but it was hard to get rid of some of the items all the same. I began to cry a little and then a lot as I looked over many of the items: my father's belongings given to me after he passed away when no one else in the family was sentimental enough to keep them, my photo albums with my kids and ex-husband, and birthday cards from so many years ago. Many of these items represented friends and family who I no longer see, after having grown out of those old relationships and moved on. I sorted the collection into the boxes: one for trash, one to keep and the other to pass onto someone else. When I had the items categorized and distributed them to the appropriate places, I felt free, as if a weight had lifted off my shoulders.

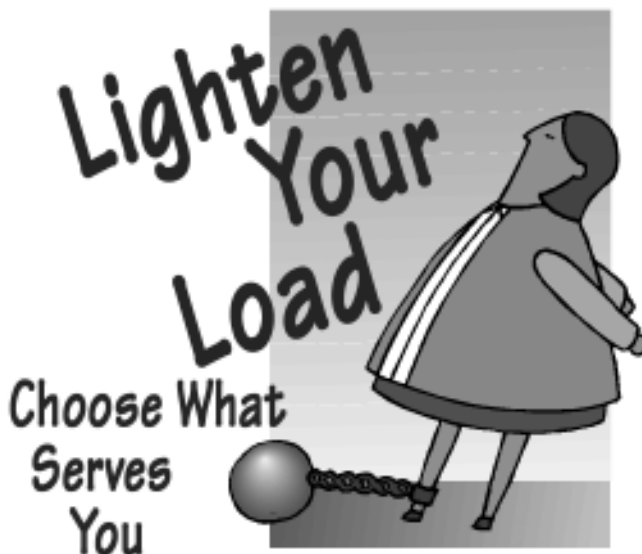
Years ago, I had a sign in my office that read "Simplify," a young man who was a client of mine said "the sign says simplify but you have so much stuff!" That statement got my attention! I really thought I had already arrived at simplicity. I then realized I still had a long way to go. I remember when I first met my husband, nine years ago. He asked me why I had kept all my court papers from my long and drawn out divorce. Without thinking I said, "In case I go back to court." As soon as I said that, I knew I was unintentionally predicting my own future, and that I was doomed to go back to court. That day, he helped me rid my desk and home of the past. After going 45 times to court in the years before, I never did see a 46th time. It is amazing what we will hold on to simply out of habit.

Have you noticed lately how many storage units are out there? If their contents represent our extra baggage, we may be holding on to the past and blocking our path to freedom by retaining all of that junk. I have had a few clients who did their homework by tossing away their extra stuff who overtime began to lose physical weight off their bodies. Maybe we will always have extra baggage because life is a journey, and if we are living our life to its fullest we will run into plenty of things to hang onto. However, living consciously tells us when to let them go.

Even our relationships can become a habit - good or bad. I do the same exercise with my relationships as I do my stuff. Years ago, it was hard to open my eyes in the same way with people as I did with objects. After talking with a friend or going to a family function, I would ask myself how I felt before, during, and after the encounter. Half the time I felt guilty about not wanting to go before I even got there. While I was there, I monitored what conversations we would have or remained silent with nothing to say, so I wouldn't rock the boat. Afterwards, I had a sore throat and felt drained.

In order to avoid going through this viscous cycle over and over, I learned to use the feelings in my stomach as my barometer. When I would receive a phone message from someone wanting to get together, I would tune into the way I felt as I was listening to their voice. If my energy dropped, or if the main emotion I felt was guilt, I didn't call them back. If I was delighted to hear their voice, I would return the call... because it felt good! Now I rarely get calls from people I don't want to be with.

Our homes and our precious moments are too valuable to be filled



Dena-Marie

with things that weigh us down. Remember, you can always have things that lift your spirits... if only you make enough room for them. My new exercise is to listen closely to visitors in my house. If they happen to say they like something, I offer it to them. This strategy has gone smoothly so far, since no one has asked for my husband, dog or car...

Dena Marie is the author of Our Energy Matters and owner of Lift Your Spirits. She is described by one of her clients, is "a personal trainer for your spirit." www.Dena-Marie.com 425 350-5448

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