

Vitality-Meter to the Rescue

I've always been a pack rat. I love stuff. I love projects and collections and hats and souvenirs and books and greeting cards and my son's baby clothes.

I started collecting/keeping things when I was a kid. It was never a problem because when I went away to college, I just left everything at my mom's house. (She was kind enough to let me keep the room intact — and full of my stuff.) When I moved out West, I left all that stuff there and started saving things from my "new" life. That was all fine until twenty years passed and I suddenly realized that my apartment was FULL of things. All the collections and papers and books and projects were now in piles everywhere and I realized there was no space anymore for anything new to come into my life —actually or metaphorically.

Now, if any of you are pack rats, you might understand how difficult it is to get rid of stuff. So even though I began to long for a cleaner, less cluttered space, it was really hard to let go of anything. Every item represented a part of me. Every item represented something I was or wanted to be.

Then I read a book by Julie Morgenstern called *SHED Your Stuff, Change Your Life*. One of the things that really stood out for me in this book is Julie's suggestion that when we want to make a change in our lives, it is important to move "toward" something specific. In the case of clutter-clearing, she suggests that we focus on a theme for the next chapter of our lives and that every item is measured by whether it fits into that new theme.

It didn't take me long to realize that the theme I want for the next chapter of my life is "Vitality Salon" — a term I snagged directly from the Simply Celebrate website navigation bar. In my mind, "Vitality Salon" connotes a way of living that is full of color and energy and delight. It is full of juice and joy. It is alive with connection to myself and other.

To me, "Vitality Salon" is lacy fingerless gloves from Venice Beach, my bright orange boa, striped cats in a spot of sun, a field of bold sunflowers, or a room full of women dancing to the theme song from *A Chorus Line*.



So, in taking Julie Morgenstern's advice, I started examining everything I owned in terms of "Vitality Salon." Would this old faded sweatshirt fit into my idea of "Vitality Salon?" Does this book? Does this project folder? I tried to get an energetic sense about each item. If it felt "dead" or "heavy" I realized it was something that no longer fit in my life. If the item made me feel energized and alive, I knew it was a keeper. I really "got it" how helpful this tool was when I was looking at all my shoes. I picked up a pair of brown boots that were really practical, but which I had seldom worn, even though I'd had them for years. The virtual vitality-meter in my head weighed them in at a solid "0." When I picked up the fun pair of red Flu-evog boots I gotten for a steal on E-Bay, that vitality-meter sprang quickly to a "10." As my 8-year-old son would say, "Easy-peasy lemon squeezy!"



There are two reasons I'm telling you all of this. One is, even if you're not a pack rat, I think it is a fun exercise to think about what "theme" you might choose for the next chapter of your life and to measure the ways in which you are bringing/keeping things in order to consciously create that life. Do the things you choose and the ways you spend your time help that vision thrive or weigh it down?

The other reason I'm telling you this is that my business partner, Tricia, and I are busy behind the scenes creating some new content for the actual "Vitality Salon" part of our website. We've got a great collection of simple tools and practices that help us quickly and easily reconnect to the "juice" of our life. To what gives makes us feel spontaneous and alive and connected. Stay tuned ... we'll let you know when this launches 'cuz we hope it'll be a really helpful place for you to visit when you need a boost of energy or passion.

Gotta go! There's still lots of stuff that needs weighed in on my "vitality-meter"!