



Downsizing CRAP: Start Sooner and Take Control

Downsizing C.R.A.P. (Clutter that Robs Anyone of Pleasure) can be emotional and difficult, so the sooner you start the better. The best time to begin is in your 60's since you'll have more energy and the power to choose where your items go. Let's break it down:

1. Even if you are "aging in place", you still need to reduce the clutter, clear walkways, and lessen the burden on your family.
2. Discuss your downsizing plans with family members/friends and have them tell you if they want any of your items. If they don't want anything (even if you saved them), don't take it personally. When you pass down family heirlooms, attach the history to the item.
3. Downsizing items isn't a once and done project. You may have to do a few passes, so if you build it into your life, you can take your time and let go slowly. As you downsize with your partner, go down memory lane, not memory "blame".

Possible C.R.A.P. (aka Clutter):

- Items you don't like or need or haven't used for 2 years
- Ongoing projects that are unfinished, incomplete, or broken for at least 2 years
- Supplies/books from projects or hobbies that no longer interest you
- Memorabilia that has no value or meaning now or for your future
- Items that make you feel bad about yourself (e.g. clothes that don't fit)
- Collections not displayed or packed away
- Family items you don't like or that have unpleasant memories that were passed down to you

Uncluttering—One Room at a Time:

1. The Big Sort
 - a. Stay focused and sort first; try not to struggle or read everything
 - b. Start on the left side of the room and stick with one area at a time

- c. Sort things into categories: Keep, Sell, Give to family, Donate, Recycle, Trash
 - d. If you're not sure, put it in the "keep" pile and move on quickly.
 - e. Try to have fun!
 2. Purge the "Keep" Pile
 - a. What is your goal: to simplify, to make a first pass, downsize to move?
 - b. Go through things one by one. Some will be harder to let go of than others.
 - c. If the item isn't part of your future, let it go. Be stingy and selective on what you keep.
 - d. Invite an objective "body double" to help (someone to help make decisions, but not judge you).
 3. Donations: Take to thrift stores, people and animal shelters. Value items at thrift shop value, get a receipt for taxes and talk to your accountant. See *Recycle Your CRAP 101* on thecluttercrew.com for more detail.
 4. Recycling: Recycle when you can, don't trash: metal, hazardous waste, tires, glass, electronics, cardboard, all paper, plastic, TV's, electronics. See *Recycle Your CRAP 101* on thecluttercrew.com for more detail.
 5. Auctioneers: To let go of a large quantity of items all at once, contact auctioneers in your area. Compare their costs and see how much money your items are worth in today's market. Google Auctioneers in your area and determine availability.

Finally, designate one location for important documents and tell your family:

- Current will(s)—should be with executor
- Power of Attorney (regular & healthcare)
- DNR (do not resuscitate) orders and other end-of-life directives.
- Organ donor directives
- Military discharge papers
- Insurance policies, bank accounts, and key to safe deposit box
- Location of money/valuables

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