



DreamLift

a monthly newsletter from

Carol McKay, Certified Life Coach

helping people create a happier, more passionate life!

January 2008

What's Your Desk Made Of?

Oh goodness...what sort of a crazy question is Carol asking me now? If you guessed that I'm asking some sort of esoteric question, wanting to know how you perceive your relationship with your furniture, you'd be wrong. I'm not asking any sort of abstract question here.

I mean, of what material is your desk made? How about your table? Your countertops? Your dresser?

Do you know...or are your desk, table, countertop and dresser so overrun by papers, notes, bills, books, pens, utensils and knick-knacks, you can't really be sure **WHAT** they're made of?

What happened to the paperless office?

Remember what was supposed to happen to our offices when we computerized? No more paper, right? I have found the opposite to be true. In fact, because of the myriad information on the internet, I find myself printing out **MORE** than ever before! I know...I'm supposed to bookmark those things so I can quickly go back to them. But, I have to say...I don't always like to read every word staring at my computer screen. Sometimes I want to read that 26-page-PDF curled up on the sofa.

Sticky Note Overwhelm

The sticky note may be one of the greatest inventions of the 20th century, but some people's lives seem ruled by these innocuous little slips of paper. Do you have any sticky notes in front of you right now? Does the message really register? Are you going to do something about the message on that note? When?

Cluttered desk, cluttered mind

I think I'm like most people, in that when I'm experiencing too much clutter in my environment, it's really hard to be focused. Clutter makes my marketing sluggish, stops my flow of ideas, and makes me feel anxious and unsuccessful. Clutter even sends me running to the fridge for comfort food!

Even more than the overwhelm, I find that the clutter brings up feelings of guilt for me. It makes me feel "bad" - I feel guilty when the clutter takes over. I wonder what I've ignored, what I've forgotten. And, I feel angry at myself for "letting it get like this"!

Playtime

January feels like a great time for "clearing". I've been happily delivering The Passion Test and I'm feeling hooked on "clarity". The Passion Test is all about getting clear about what's most important in your life.

Ask yourself to let go of the emotions attached to the clutter, and see what you can do to actually clear some of it away.

My suggestions are not "the right ways" to get rid of clutter. They are just "my ways". If any of my tips work for you, great. If not, maybe they will spark you to find what works for you. Use whatever tips seem supportive and discard the rest!

- **Touch items one time** -- "I'll deal with this later" is the first step toward clutter for me. That's how things pile up. Whenever possible, I touch items one time. *Example: Open the junk mail, sort pieces for recycling, shred any information I want to protect - Done.*
- **Create an idea file** -- This is how I've rid myself of most of my sticky notes. When I get a "bright idea", I write it down and toss it in my idea file. At the beginning of each month, I review what's in the file. If there's anything that I want to actively use in the coming month, I take out the note and transfer the idea into whatever I'm working on. *Example: I have a brilliant idea for marketing The Passion Test in schools, and I'm not ready to work on that right now. Next month, if I'm ready to work on it, I transfer the idea into the marketing flyer I'm creating.*
- **Ask, "What am I waiting for?"**-- When I see the pile of papers, the sticky notes, the unopened or wayward envelopes, I have to ask myself why I haven't dealt with it yet. It can be a matter of timing, and perhaps it's something that can't be resolved until a future time - *I really can't do anything about that until next week.* It can be a matter of priorities, where that thing doesn't have enough pull for me to complete it now - *there are so many other things I need to do...that can wait.* Or, it can be fear - *I don't want to call that person because I'm afraid of what may happen.* No matter what the reason, it's the **waiting** that's causing the feeling of overwhelm!

So, here's my best advice. Look, honestly and frankly, at the items strewn about and creating your overwhelm. Ask:

- Do I really need this page, paper or note?

- Can I take care of this right now?

- If this can't be taken care of right now, what can I do to eliminate the need for the note or paper?

- What does keeping this note or paper where it is do FOR me?

- How does keeping this note or paper where it is work AGAINST me?

And, for god's sake, don't print this newsletter! :)