

Maximize Productivity **and** Profits

CLEAR **THE** **CHAOS**

“A must have for your online business” – WebPM.pro

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY CHAOS	02
DECLUTTER THE CHAOS IN YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT	04
DECLUTTER THE CHAOS IN YOUR DIGITAL LIFE	07
DECLUTTER THE CHAOS IN YOUR MIND	09
WHAT TO DO INSTEAD – BENEFITS OF GETTING ORGANIZED	13
WHO IS YVONNE A JONES?	15



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CHAPTER ONE

THE CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY CHAOS

You may have a strong desire to be more productive and accomplish more with less effort so that you have more time freedom. Yet, something is standing in the way.

Is clutter standing in the way of your productivity?

Clutter or chaos is one of the biggest obstacles to accomplishing goals. When you're unable to find what you need, you waste time. When your focus is diverted because of incomplete tasks around you, you automatically decrease your level of productivity.

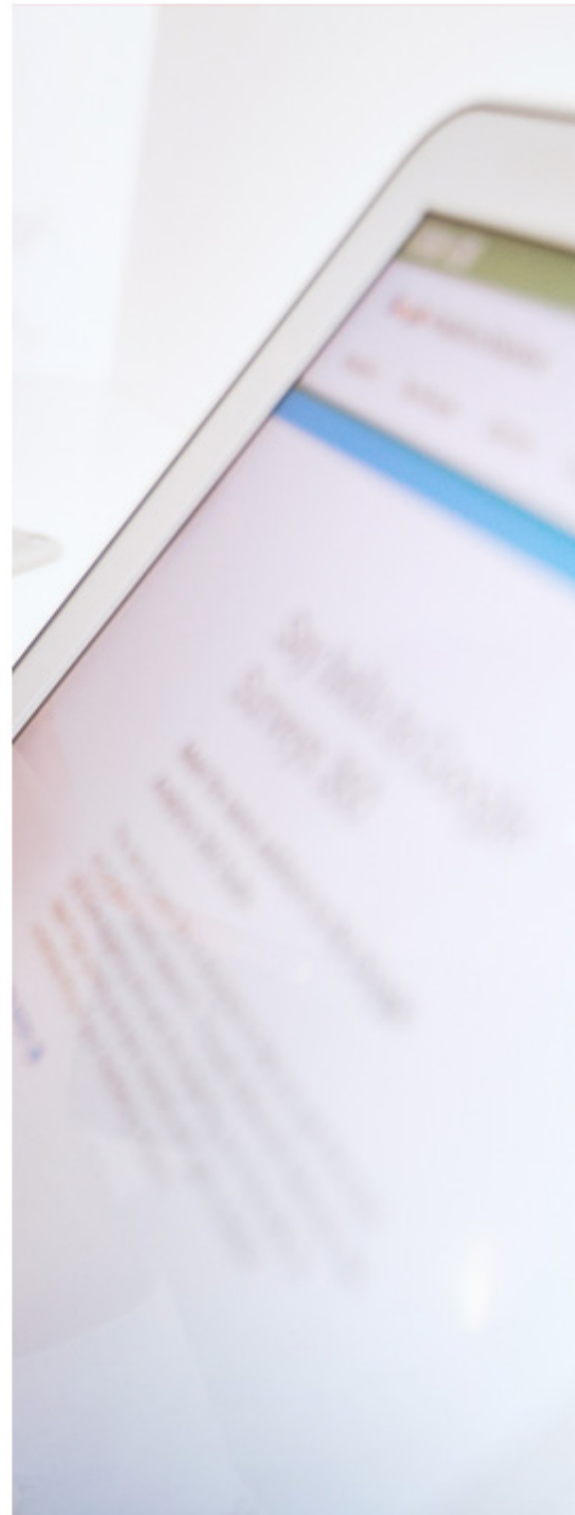
CLUTTER TAKES ON A VARIETY OF FORMS.

Physical or environmental clutter is, by far, the most common and obvious type of clutter. You can see it. It takes up physical space. It can make it impossible to work or, if extreme, it creates chaos in your ability to move around in your environment with ease.

Digital Clutter. Our lives are being transformed by bits and bytes. You now have to deal with digital clutter. An example is when you work with a dozen tabs open on your computer browser. Too many open tabs will create more distractions and decrease your productivity.

Additional examples include a disorganized hard drive or cloud space, a messy computer desktop, or passwords that are scattered in various locations.

Mental clutter can take the form of thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes. They act as filters through which you interpret everything in life. These may be habitual ways of thinking which are not serving you well in your own health and relationships.



Definition of 'Clutter'

"Clutter is a lot of things in an untidy state, especially things that are not useful or necessary."

~ CollinsDictionary.com ~

HOW DOES CLUTTER MAKE YOU FEEL?

Imagine walking around in a clean, simple garden or entering a spotlessly clean room or office. Even if the space is small, it feels freeing, uplifting, and, most of all, inspiring. The environment feels spacious and calm, even if it's a small space.

The opposite is true when you walk into a messy, cluttered home or office, it feels stressful, constricted, and can sometimes trigger feelings of anxiety. Our eyes take in a lot of visual stimuli which triggers our brain to try to make sense of it all.

Think about how your own clutter makes you feel. Do you feel like sitting at your desk? Are you excited to dive into your work to accomplish the tasks at hand? Do you feel calm, focused, and ready to make things happen?

If you have clutter in your midst, it's challenging to relax. Clutter feels chaotic, heavy and burdensome. It pulls you in many directions as you try to find your focus. It's like a visual To Do list.

The good news is that you can clear the clutter. Whether you're clearing physical, digital, or mental clutter, you're in control. You can take daily actions to design an environment that feels good for you.



CHAPTER TWO

DECLUTTER THE CHAOS IN YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

Does your work environment feel Inspiring? Energizing?
Or Calming?

Are you surrounded by positive things? Some of these could include –

- Listening to empowering music
- Watching movies that make you smile and feel good
- Reading uplifting books
- Putting positive and inspirational quotes in front of you
- Browsing motivational websites
- Surrounding yourself with inspirational artwork



All of us are influenced by our environment, and the ideas mentioned above are intended to lay the foundation for an environment in which you can maximize your productivity when you work from home.

Let's take a look at your home office. While your space might be limited, if at all possible, you should design a home office that is separate from the rest of your home.

You may have the luxury of an entire room in your home that's free to use as your office or it could simply be a section of your kitchen, dining room, or living room that's divided by a barrier. Sometimes it may simply be a desk you can roll out of the way when not in use.

This is important, because it will allow you to step in and out of your "work mode." One of the worst things you can do, is to work in the room you sleep in. This will make it much harder to separate your working life from your downtime, and this, in turn, will have an impact on your sleep.

Photos and Plants

A simple strategy to put you in a more productive and positive mindset is to place photos of loved ones on your desk or on the wall facing you.

Likewise, adding a plant to your desk can be a very effective way to boost your mood. This works because it brings a bit of the outdoors in, which once again has an impact on our mental state. We associate plants and greenery with areas of natural abundance. Thus, they stimulate the production of serotonin and other feel-good hormones, which have actually been shown to combat stress and even make us more productive!

Become Organized

One of the most important things to do if you want to make your office as productive as possible is to keep it organized and tidy. Your office space is an outward reflection of your mental state, and if it becomes disorganized and untidy, it will make it harder for you to focus on work.

Adopting a minimal décor is one excellent way to this. The fewer items you have, the less dusting and organization there is to do. At the same time, this will automatically increase the average quality and value of the items you do keep on display!

Keep your desktop free of clutter

At the end of office time for the day put everything in its place, which can be a combination of drawers, shelves, wall files, filing cabinets and any other organizing elements you are using. Clutter in your environment clutters your mind and can lead to inefficient practices from disorganization. Keep this saying in mind: *“Everything has its place and there’s a place for everything.”* If there’s not a place for it then you don’t need it!

Create a space to put papers that you need to deal with eventually

This may be a box (sized slightly larger than standard letter sized paper and 3-4 inches in height) on your desk, a set of stackable organizer inboxes, or a multi-pocket/single pocket wall file (great for freeing up desktop space.)

Unless you feel that you need the separation, don’t create one space for work and one for home. Consider this a one-stop drop for anything you can deal with later and schedule a regular time that you attend to these papers. Don’t let it pile too high so that you feel daunted by the effort to go through it.

Create Systems for Your Business

Create systems for keeping things organized.

The most efficiently run businesses are made up of a regulated and unique group of tasks that are created once and repeated again and again. If you’ve been in business for any length of time, you probably have a few systems in place, even if you don’t realize it.

Make the time to write down a step-by-step guide to the mechanics of your business. This is a list with steps of what you do in your home office that affects your business. This process will not only help you in defining and organizing the tasks you do (or should do) as an entrepreneur, but will also allow you to have someone else keep your business running if you’re unavailable for various reasons.

This is something I recommend to my clients when we start working together and the reaction is generally the same. ‘Why do I need to create a manual with Standard Operating Procedures and I’m a Solopreneur?’ My answer is always the same..

I’ve found that by writing or typing out the steps of what I do to be helpful to me, especially if it’s not something I do very often. In addition, once I have it in writing, and I need assistance or need to collaborate with someone on a project, I can hand that document to them instead of taking time to personally go over everything.

Getting Dressed

Many people who work from home will often mention that one of the things they enjoy about working from home is the “pajama lifestyle.” They don’t have to get dressed up. They can remain in their pajamas all day long.

You may agree or disagree with that philosophy. The following is my personal opinion, which has made a difference in my business.

Treat your desk, your work area, your home office, as if it were an office you had to drive 10 or 20 miles to get to.

Decide on your work hours. Yes, you should include some flexibility. But if you decide you want to work from 9:00am – 2:00pm daily or however many days per week, try to stick to that.

Get up and engage in your morning routine then get dressed. If you’re someone who wears makeup, put a little on. Remember, you’re going to your office. I’m not suggesting that you should get dressed in suits or anything formal. Just get out of your night clothes.

Getting dressed has a psychological effect on you as it puts you in a frame of mind for work.

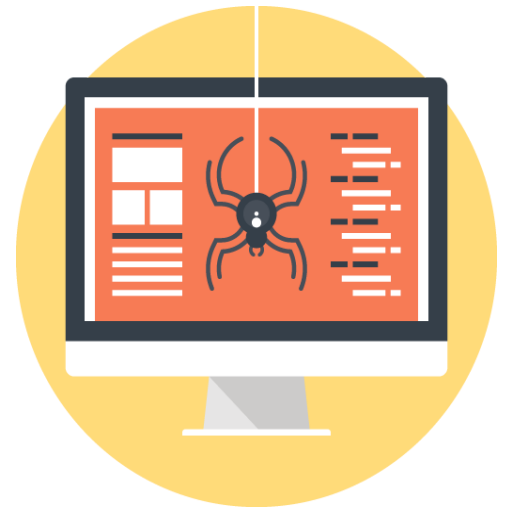


CHAPTER THREE

DECLUTTER THE CHAOS IN YOUR DIGITAL LIFE

We need to be online, so we're connected with our industry news and social contacts. Yet being online seems to diminish our attention span and, if we allow it, can take over our private lives.

You may simply start with determining how you can use your time online more effectively and what habits can you create to shift the results from your online activities.



Part of good personal development in regard to your business life and personal life includes creating better online habits, so that you can achieve more focus throughout your day.

The more you can focus on business during your selected daytime business hours, the more time you'll leave to focus on the important people in your life during the evening hours.

These tips will help you achieve better focus and help you enjoy some de-cluttering during your time online, so that you have a day that's more productive.

1. Have a plan

Having a plan for your day – even if it's just a simple bullet list of to-do items – will help you be more productive.

An essential part of achieving better productivity is to plan your day ahead. I like to plan my day the evening before or shortly before I go to bed. This way I can hit the ground running as soon as I awaken in the morning. No wasting time wondering what I'm going to do today.

Separate your business tasks from your personal errands.

2. Time Blocking: Schedule how much time you will allot for your online activities.

Try using the time block method, which entails blocking off a certain number of hours to work with coaching clients, writing your next book or course, or to reconnect with your list by scheduling a month's worth of emails. Simply follow the plan and you'll see your productivity increase because you know exactly what has to happen next.

3. Reduce Your Online To-Do List: When you are looking for a workday that results in more focus and more productivity, it is best to create a realistic list. This means you should trim some items off your list that can wait until another day or that can be delegated to a Virtual Assistant. Try not to do everything in one day because you will naturally run out of time. Prioritize and do the most pressing online tasks that cannot be put off. When you are not frazzled by thinking you have so many things to do online, you will produce better quality work.

What to do instead: Instead of creating a To-Do list with 10 items you know it's almost impossible to achieve, create a Priority List of the two or three things you must do that day which will make a difference in your business. Once you've accomplished those, it frees you up to do any other necessary tasks in your business.

4. Take a Few Breaks.

When you are online for a long time, your mind can start to wander. You get distracted and strive to engage in less meaningful activities, which reduce your focus and your productivity. Rather than sitting at your desk for hours on end, take some breaks throughout the day; your body and your brain will thank you. You'll gain mental clarity about what you need to accomplish and be able to recognize when you are veering into less productive activities.

5. Do the More Difficult Tasks Earlier In the Day

It is highly advised to do your more challenging items before you head off to lunch. This is because your mind has more vitality in the morning and will be able to make it through the difficult tasks more quickly than if they were left to be completed in the later part of the day.

This technique is sometimes called "eating the frog" and you'll have an immediate sense of accomplishment when this one task is complete. Another way to determine what your most important tasks are for the day is to decide which tasks are going to make the most difference in your business or in your life.

Avoiding distractions throughout the workday is paramount to your success, especially if you work in a home office. Start off with these five tips and you might surprise yourself with your increased productivity.



CHAPTER FOUR

DECLUTTER THE CHAOS IN YOUR MIND

You may not believe this, or even want to hear it, but the clutter in your mind is often reflected by the level of chaos in your physical work environment. If you find yourself holding on to things that you have no intention of using, or are not serving you, you have a problem letting go. It's possible that you're also hanging onto negative feelings, ill-founded assumptions, old grievances and future worries.

Many times people will take action to declutter their work area or even their home. It often involves a great deal of work, but the end results are definitely positive. The same is true when you take the time to declutter your mind.

Before you start working on your most important tasks, I highly encourage you to intentionally clear your mind so that you're open to thoughts and ideas that will make you more efficient and productive. Some of the ways you can clear your mind include:

- Prayer
- Meditation
- Take time to be quiet, sit still, and allow your mind to quietly process what you'll be working on.
- Do simple breathing exercises that fill your lungs with oxygen.

Following are some useful expert tips to remove mental clutter and give you the freedom to achieve the results that will bring you more time freedom, create a bigger impact on the lives of more people, and increase your profit.

1. Write it down

When you have a lot of projects running at the same time, it can be very easy for your mind to get cluttered with different ideas you want to implement.

Instead of becoming overwhelmed, you should have a process to get all of those ideas out of your head so that you can focus on whatever you're doing at that time. Many people find that writing their ideas out is the most helpful way to clear out their mind.

One of the things I encourage my clients to do is a brain dump. This involves taking some quiet time with pen and paper. Do a brain dump, which means you write everything you can think of that's going on in your mind related to every area of your life...without filters and without question. These include things you're tolerating, things to do, and intentions you may have and have been putting off.

Once all those worries and concerns are down on paper, you can prioritize them and work out a plan to deal with them. You can also assess them to identify what's essential and what isn't. You do this by placing those items into three buckets or categories: Goals, Projects, and Actions.

In addition to the above, two ways to reduce mental clutter is to start journaling, which encourages keeping, not just a one-time note, but an ongoing record of your thoughts and ideas, as well as feelings. The other way is to share your thoughts by blogging. Of course, you'd need to make sure that your blog is alignment with your values and your goals.

Journaling has proven to be a stress-relieving method of organization and prioritization. Why not give it a try?

When you can see what's important, you can focus your energy and free up some of that mental space!

2. Stay in the present

Brooding over the past and worrying about the future take up a lot of space in your mind and achieve very little. Let go of regret over past mistakes or resentment of past slights and move on. Keep your focus on what you can influence right here, right now.

3. Do one thing at a time

Multitasking is not only overrated and inefficient, it also leads to greater anxiety. You never do any one thing properly. Focus on doing things methodically and thoroughly. Once you've finished one task, move onto the next.

4. Control all incoming data

We talk about being available 24/7 and the 24-hour news cycle, but you can control that. You can choose to switch off your computer, smartphone, and television so you control the amount of data your brain is trying to process.

Decluttering your mind will pay off in all sorts of ways you hadn't imagined. You will be more productive, less stressed and more motivated.



HOW TO MOTIVATE YOURSELF TO CLEAR THE CHAOS

We have touched on three critical areas of clutter when you work from home which can severely affect your productivity and profits.

You may have heard many of these tips and strategies before, yet sitting down and doing the hardest and biggest thing first, isn't always easy. It is one thing to set yourself rules for working, but it's quite another to stick to them!

With so much to do, how can you make sure that you stay on-course and actually do it? Especially when it would be so easy to grab a good book and a hot drink, and then retire into the armchair that's right there in the corner of the room!

The following are what I call **productivity hacks**. Use the ones that appeal to you and that are in harmony with your goals and intentions. Decide now that you'll do everything to stay motivated and increase productivity.

This is a tip from the book "How to Save an Hour A Day" by Michael Heppell. He says that you should set yourself smaller goals within a project, and then reward yourself for completing them.

For example, if you normally start your day by going to make yourself a coffee, followed by browsing through emails and then Facebook, that needs to change.

It may already be 9:30 and so far you've achieved nothing! That's not an inspirational way to start your day.

Instead, he recommends that you sit down, eat the frog (work on the most challenging task first). Start on that massive writing project, or work on completing the big data entry task... but then set a target for the first chunk of work. At this point, you can go and have your coffee.

And then when you complete another chunk of work that you set as a goal, you can go and answer those emails.

With this system, you will have already completed a huge chunk of your work by 9:30 am and you'll feel better about yourself. What's more, you'll often push yourself even further and go beyond your initial goal.



LEAVING WORK UNFINISHED

Another way you can encourage yourself to dive straight into your biggest task is to leave a project incomplete the day before.

Now, this might sound counterintuitive! Most of us assume we should try to polish everything off when we finish for the day.

In fact, when you know that you've got 3,000 words to write tomorrow, you should try to write 400 words of it before you finish your day. This way you're not leaving work incomplete that you were meant to complete today – you're not completing less work. All you're doing is making a start on tomorrow's project.

Firstly, that means you don't have to start a project fresh first thing in the morning. Looking at a blank screen is the most difficult part of completing any task for many people!

Second, this now means that you will have an emotional urge to complete that task. Our brains dislikes leaving work unfinished. The fact that there is an open, unfinished task, sitting there on your desktop, means that you're far more likely to just get started and complete the task.



CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD – BENEFITS OF GETTING ORGANIZED



Getting organized is not just a good idea, but there are many benefits to being in control and developing a clutter-free lifestyle.

1. Less stress

When you're organized you are automatically less stressed, you know where your keys, wallet, important papers, phone charger and phone are. Similarly, if your projects are up to date they eliminate a significant amount of stress.

2. More time

Planning your time and keeping up-to-date means you can allocate time for everything in your life, including downtime. Being organized means, you won't get sidetracked or panicked by not being able to find important items. You'll be punctual and more productive.

3. Ready for the unexpected

You can be prepared for last-minute requests or deadlines because you're not distracted by untidiness or the mental cloud of not being quite sure where things stand. That is true for everything from planning your personal life events to the work you do for yourself and your clients.

4. Better health

Studies have shown that being organized has demonstrable health benefits. Lower stress levels mean lower blood pressure and less body inflammation. Also, your immune system is stronger, and you're less likely to be at risk of depression. You set up a positive feedback loop that spills over into other areas of your life. Better organization habits lead to better eating, exercise and sleep habits.

5. Nothing feels overwhelming

Having your life running smoothly, means you're much calmer and in a better mental position to deal with situations that arise. You can look at your to-do list without panicking because you know you can do it. You know that you can tackle the list task-by-task without feeling overwhelmed.

6. More energy

It might seem counter-intuitive but putting effort into planning and organizing your life gives you more energy. You're less stressed because your mind isn't obsessing about all the stuff you have to do. When you have a plan, you're in control and know you can get it all done. If your papers, ideas, and tasks are in order, you can see a way through.

Finally, being organized signals trust and reliability. If you are on time, follow through on your commitments and are ready for whatever comes at you, you will project an image of professionalism and responsibility.

This engenders respect from our family, our network, and clients.

What has been your biggest takeaway? What are you determined to apply in your life and business as you work from home?

My simple reminder is that although this was written especially for those persons who work from home, the basic principles and guidelines can be applied even if you work for someone else in an office.

Thank you for reading.



WHO IS YVONNE A JONES?

Yvonne A Jones is a Personal Business Coach | Relationship Marketing Strategist | Best-Selling Author | International Speaker.

She is the Founder of My Success Circle Marketing – an umbrella company for various businesses, including Small Business Consulting, Coaching & Mentoring, Legal and Identity Theft protection, and an online Health & Wellness Shopping Club.

She specializes in working with highly motivated female entrepreneurs 50 and Wiser and businesses with 10 or more employees to help them develop systems to identify their ideal clients and customers and then WOW them by creating memorable experiences for increased loyalty and profit.

Yvonne was mentioned on HuffingtonPost.com as one of the "Top 100 Most Social Customer Service Pros on Twitter to Follow" and on GetApp.com as: "One of the Top 15 Most Influential Customer Service Experts to Follow on Twitter." She is Alignable's 2018 Small Business Person of the Year for Stuart, Florida.

She's grateful for her Florida Lifestyle, which allows her to play in her garden and enjoy the beauty and variety of flowers and shrubbery we're blessed with.

Her mantra is "Focus on relationships; the money will follow."

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THANK YOU

I WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK.

FEEL FREE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ME FOR
ANY FEEDBACK OR QUESTIONS.