



ORGANIZING FOR A BETTER YOU

WE WENT DEEP WITH FIVE HOLISTIC ORGANIZERS WHO HELP PEOPLE LOOK BEYOND THEIR PHYSICAL CLUTTER TO DEAL WITH NEGATIVE THINKING, CHAOTIC CALENDERS, AND JUMBLED EMOTIONS. GET READY TO BEGIN YOUR TRULY TRANSFORMATIONAL ORGANIZING JOURNEY.

BY RENEE FREEMON MULVIHILL

ORGANIZING IS... *intentional*



AMBER BLANDFORD is the founder of Joyful Spaces, an Atlanta-based organizing company. She offers in-person and virtual organizing and coaching services. Before becoming a professional organizer and coach, she worked as a hospital and hospice chaplain.

What does “holistic organizing” mean to you?

It's about tending to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of my clients. It's about looking beyond their physical clutter to better understand all that the client is facing.

You start your sessions with a moment of mindfulness. What does this look like?

Mindfulness is simply awareness. It might be a deep breathing practice, guided meditation, or an inspiring reading. After a couple moments of deep breathing, I might say, *Imagine yourself in your living room and see how you want it to be transformed. Notice how you are feeling.* Then it's time to get off the couch and actually do something.

You can't see inner clutter. So what does it feel like?

It's draining, embarrassing, and overwhelming. It creates a noisy, negative place to live inside your brain, but if you can identify your thoughts without labeling them as wrong, you can replace them with more positive thoughts. This will help motivate you to change your outer world as well.

How does the Amber 10-10-10 decluttering method work?

Set a timer for 10 minutes, remove 10 things from a room of your choice, and repeat the practice for the next 10 days. Once you start practicing day after day, you are forming a new, healthy simplifying habit.

Is there anything else you wish people knew about holistic organizing?

A life crisis often kicks us into hiring an organizer, a therapist, or a coach. But really everyone can benefit from having an organizer set up preventive and supportive systems so that when a crisis comes, it's not a big deal. Think proactive rather than reactive: You've already taken care of yourself. You already have self-care practices in place. You already know what you need.

ORGANIZING IS... *mindful*

What does “holistic organizing” mean to you?

Looking at all the major sources of clutter in your life and taking actions to declutter them so you can live your most desired life.

How do you motivate your clients?

I like to introduce the Focused15 early on. It's about selecting a task you need to get done, setting a timer for 15 minutes, and focusing your mind and body on getting it done. It works well for tasks that you're not really in the mood to do, such as emptying the dishwasher or tidying before you leave for work. I hear from people time and time again that they feel like they can do anything for 15 minutes—and usually they get the task done in fewer than 15 minutes.

You see organizing and decluttering as two distinct processes. How so?

Organizing is about creating systems for physical items, such as putting dividers in a kitchen drawer so you know where the forks go. But decluttering actually needs to happen first. You need to assess why you have these things and if they are still serving you. When you remove the items that no longer serve you, you create simplicity in your life. That way, you're organizing your life rather than just your stuff.

In your book, you talk about “owning your time.” What does that mean?

You are the owner of your time. You can decide what to do with your time. I push for people to be clear about what they want their lives to look like. Without that vision, time can go by very quickly, and they aren't working toward their goals.



MICHELE VIG is the owner of Neat Little Nest, a Minneapolis-based professional organizing service, and author of *The Holistic Guide to Decluttering*. She is a certified KonMari consultant and helps clients declutter their homes and offices and improve their time-management skills.