

Special First Chapter Preview & Table of Contents

The Clutter Diet®



The Skinny
on Organizing
Your Home and
Taking Control
of Your Life

Lorie Marrero

Certified Professional Organizer® and Creator of ClutterDiet.com

“What an exciting book! Getting organized has never been so easy. Lorie provides great real-life tips and advice that anyone can implement. You’ll walk away with everything you need to know to get and stay organized.” — Jim Deitzel, Rubbermaid, eMarketing Manager



*“As a successful organizing coach, I immediately related with Lorie’s motivational concepts in *The Clutter Diet*. Applying these principles can change your life!”*

—**Dorothy Breininger**

President of Delphi Center for Organization, Dr. Phil Show expert and author of *Chicken Soup for the Soul - Life Lessons for Organizing and Balancing Your World*

*“Finally! A diet that’s guaranteed to work! Bite by bite, *The Clutter Diet* will move you closer to your goals. It’s a recipe for success – a smart, sensible plan that makes it possible for anyone to get organized once and for all.”*

—**Donna Smallin**

Author of *The One-Minute Organizer* and *A to Z Storage Solutions*

“I can’t think of anyone who wouldn’t benefit from this book. Even the most organized people are looking for ways to be less cluttered and more effective, and those of us who struggle to get and stay organized need the kind of real-life information that Lorie Marrero offers. Mark Twain once said, ‘Progress starts with the truth.’ This book offers the truth about your clutter and how you can eliminate it forever!”

—**Barbara Hemphill**

CPO®, Author, *Taming the Paper Tiger* book series

“Lorie is the absolute best at simplifying what might otherwise appear complex. She has given me proven tools, resources and ideas that have helped me organize every part of my life, saving me time, money and energy.”

—**Lance Blanks**

Cleveland Cavaliers Assistant General Manager

*“*The Clutter Diet* is a must-read for anyone wanting to get and stay organized. Lorie’s real-life examples and step-by-step strategies will have you thinking like an organized person in no time. Get ready to accomplish great things!”*

—**Audrey Thomas**

CPO®, author of *50 Ways to Leave Your Clutter* and *The Road Called Chaos*

“Lorie is an industry pioneer who tells it like it is and reveals all her secrets to ensure your success. If you’re serious about getting rid of the clutter in your life once and for all, this book is the one you’ve been waiting for.”

—**Barry J. Izsak**

CPO®, CRTS, Author of *Organize Your Garage in No Time*
Immediate Past President, National Association of Professional Organizers

Special First Chapter Preview- Purchase printed book at www.clutterdiet.com



*To Pete, the most supportive husband possible, and Susan,
my longtime Motivation Partner and friend who gets all credit
for starting me down this path in 2005.*

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Reason
Press
Austin, Texas

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Edited by Lorraine Fisher

Cover and book design by Donna Coffelt (www.coffeltdesign.com)

First Edition

Library of Congress Control Number: 2008942726

ISBN 9780615266480

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Getting Started

- The seven ways that getting organized is like losing weight
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- How to get the most from this book and its companion resources

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Imagine... as you wake up in the morning in your warm bed, you rub your eyes and look around you. You have a lovely bedroom with the sun shining in that seems to welcome you to the new day. You walk to your closet, open the door, and sigh pleasantly at your beautifully arranged clothes and shoes. You easily choose an outfit because you can see exactly what you have. You walk into your clean kitchen (after making your bed!) and you quickly prepare a healthy meal for yourself and clean it up right away without thinking twice. Later that morning, the doorbell rings. It's your next-door neighbor stopping by... for a moment you panic! But then you realize there is nothing to fear. You spontaneously invite your neighbor in for coffee and enjoy a conversation free from worry about what she thinks about the condition of your house. When your neighbor leaves, you return to your personal projects and reflect in appreciation on the streamlined and comfortable environment you have achieved—one that motivates and supports you in your personal and professional goals.



Does this feel like an impossible dream?

Why does this all seem so hard? Well, it's not just you! Almost everyone is struggling with organization in this modern world. Simply stated, we have too much data, too much stuff, and not enough time to manage it all. Every day, we are flooded with a fire hose of information from e-mail messages, radio, television, the web, and even ads on the back of restroom doors.

Did you know that Americans can choose from more than 45,000 super-market items¹, 386 kinds of cereal² and 22,652 magazines³? And you should see the array of salsa choices if you live in Texas! Even at times when we perceive our economy as down, we have an almost embarrassing abundance of riches. We have 24-hour stores, and when we buy something we are urged to “supersize” and “collect all four.” We have, on average, much larger homes than ever before, but one out of 11 of us still rents a self-storage unit to hold our overflow of stuff. We need calendars for family activities, a task list, a soccer chair, a shopping list... and a nap. It's no wonder so many of us are struggling to keep up.

So how is getting organized like losing weight?

My team and I have told clients for years that the process of getting organized is very much like adopting a weight loss program. Why do we say this? There are many parallels and analogies—here are seven of the most compelling:

1. Have you ever heard the expression, “A moment on the lips, a lifetime on the hips”? Excess calories obviously result in an accumulation of fat on the body. The excess must be managed with exercise and reductions of caloric intake (eat less and move more). Clutter must be managed by preventing its entrance into



the home whenever possible and by regularly processing items and getting rid of what is not needed. Both weight loss and organization require a program of prevention, reduction, and regular maintenance.

2. **Crash dieting doesn't work, and neither does "crash organizing."** It's great if you tackle a few huge projects one weekend and get some areas really organized, but unless you change the habits that got you disorganized in the first place, you will soon find the space a mess again. Both weight loss and organization require working toward permanent changes in your habits and routines.
3. **Nobody else can make you go on a diet.** As Professional Organizers, we are asked all the time if we can "fix" our clients' spouses. Sometimes we are requested to organize a spouse's area when he or she is out of town. We don't do this for many reasons, but primarily because we cannot successfully organize a space for someone long term unless that person wants to make real changes for him or herself. Both weight loss and organization require a willingness to change on a personal level.
4. **Being overweight feels embarrassing and brings with it feelings of guilt, shame, and low self-esteem.** When you are disorganized, you feel out of control. You feel you can't have friends over, and you may get embarrassed by not showing up on time to appointments or keeping your promises to others. When people call us for help, we hear so many of the same feelings of frustration, stress, and guilt. Both weight loss and organization relieve embarrassment, reduce stress, and increase confidence.
5. **Support from a friend goes a long way.** Weight Watchers® figured it out a long time ago with their program that includes meetings. Having expectations to check in with your progress provides the accountability and support to keep you going. Both weight loss and organization are greatly improved with support and encouragement.
6. **Support from a trainer goes an even longer way.** For those who want more accountability and personal advice, hiring a personal



trainer is the sure-fire way to lose weight and get in shape quickly. Hiring a Professional Organizer in person is also the best way to get organized quickly and efficiently. Both weight loss and organization progress most rapidly with personal advice and accountability.

7. **People can have disorders related to clutter just like people can have eating disorders.** Some people may require assistance from trained professionals if they have hoarding disorders or other conditions causing a severe level of disorganization. Symptoms can include sanitation and infestation issues and a lack of basic functions of the home. If you need to learn more about severe clutter problems, visit www.nsgcd.org or call a mental health provider. Someone in this situation needs much more support to be successful.

Isn't it true that diets don't work?

When people say that diets don't work, they are usually talking about crash diets. Crash diets mean doing something drastic like fasting or drinking only carrot juice or special shakes, and then enjoying temporary results while you permanently mess up your body's metabolism. Crash diets are typical of our society's instant gratification mentality. Unless you change the habits that got you where you are today, you'll be right back where you started in no time. Diet programs that promote changes in your overall lifestyle are successful. Our Clutter Diet is not a crash diet, it's a permanent change in the way you see your time, your information and your "stuff." It works because it's not a temporary fix.

You may have tried to get organized many times before. Similar to weight loss, you may be a "yo-yo organizer." You may be burned out from trying, from "crash organizing" attempts that reverted back to chaos immediately. Why is this book different? Can this book really help you? Absolutely! First let me tell you a little about my background and how this book came about.



When I was ten years old, I saved up my allowance to buy a label maker, and I stayed in from recess to help other kids organize their desks. I have always had a passion for helping people save time so they can get more done! After college, I worked for a little while in Corporate America, and then my husband and I moved eleven times in about ten years. I definitely learned how to set up a household the most efficient way possible with two kids in tow. Along the way, we built four homes, and I learned many nuances about managing large projects and how a home is put together. We built some of our homes from scratch, starting only with some ideas and a drawing, and we brought those ideas into reality. We had to choose everything from the height of the doors to the color and type of the switch plates.



Since 2000 I have been organizing professionally, organizing everything from chemistry labs to backstage tour cases to ordinary closets. I have created massive filing systems with retention requirements lasting thirty years, and I have helped hundreds of people make their homes and lives work better.

As the owner of a service company with a team of Professional Organizers in Austin and San Antonio, Texas, I was bothered that so many people could not afford our hourly rates in person. I grew up in a family of school teachers, and we certainly could not have afforded to have someone come in to organize our closets. How could I reach people to help them affordably, from anywhere?

Eureka!

In January 2006 I had a “eureka” moment sitting on an airplane after attending an internet marketing seminar in Arizona. The whole weekend I had been saying to my friend, “I’ve got to figure out what the weight loss industry is doing. We’re always saying that getting organized is a lot like



losing weight! How could I help people the way they do?” I was staring out at the desert from the airplane window, and suddenly, it hit me! The Clutter Diet! I took out my notebook and feverishly wrote about 20 pages of how it would all work.

I jumped off the plane to catch the last leg of my flight home, and I whipped out my laptop to buy the domain for ClutterDiet.com. I knew this was the answer!

About a year later, our site launched, where we offer an affordable membership program that provides anyone access, from anywhere, to our team of organizing experts. We now have members from all over the world and an encouraging and supportive member community.

I realized that successful weight loss programs have figured out that it takes these *three key factors* to make personal change:

- **Motivation**—the “why” behind your goals and the tools to keep you on track
- **Education**—the “how” that provides good information, plans and advice
- **Support**—the help you need to get answers and encouragement

Our program helps people get organized by providing all three of these things for a low price, and we have a lot of fun with the diet metaphor. Members lose “Clutter-PoundsSM” from their homes, and they “weigh in” to get our weekly “menu” plan of projects.



Why don't books always work?

I resisted writing a book for a long time, because I wanted to make sure that I had something important to say to people that was different. Also, our clients have often had a huge number of organizing books that we then, ironically, have to organize for them.

Sometimes people are quite successful at reading organizing or weight loss books and getting great results. But why don't books always work? Of the three key factors necessary to make change, books can educate and motivate, but books don't provide support. When is the last time one of your books jumped off the shelf and asked you how you were coming along?

Many organizing (and weight loss) books also do not provide enough coverage of motivational concepts. They spend a lot of time on the “how to do it” part, with great tips or recipes, and not enough time on “why.” So I finally realized that I could write a book that would emphasize all three key factors.

You see, I believe that organizing itself is not difficult if you understand some basic concepts. Almost every single dieting book really boils down to “Eat Less, Move More.” And almost every single organizing book boils down to “Keep and Do Less, Live More.” These are not difficult ideas, but what makes success difficult for people is the psychology around doing it.

The root of all disorganization is truly delayed decisions and actions. Look around you—every bit of clutter on your kitchen countertop, your desk, or your coffee table is something that has not been decided yet or something that has not been done yet. In other words, *procrastination is the cause of almost all clutter.*



In summary, what people really need is to get unstuck. Once they get a little expert advice on HOW to do it, then what is really needed is the motivation and support for getting it done.

How This Book Works

One thing that makes this book different from others is our free companion workbook, downloadable at www.clutterdiet.com/book. There are no roadblocks set up to receive this download—no registrations or personal information are required. You can print this workbook out and use it as you read this book to make your own personal goals and plans. There is a Clutter Fitness Exercise section at the end of each chapter that makes this book interactive, brings the concepts to life in your own situation, and helps the concepts to stick.

We have divided the book into sections for **Getting Motivated, Prevention, Reduction, and Maintenance**. And just like a diet book, we're going to put all of the good recipes for the plan in the back of the book together in our “*Room by Room Recipes*” section, giving you our specific approach for the most commonly disorganized areas.

Here's how our easy plan is going to make your organizing journey successful:

Motivation:

- *Section One: Getting Motivated* contains information on getting the right mindset, and on procrastination, common barriers, and ways to break through them
- Helps you outline and identify your compelling “WHY” for getting organized
- Helps you outline and identify your own roadblocks getting in the way
- Helps you set up your support system to be successful



Education:

- *Section Two: Prevention* contains information on the three ways clutter enters your life and how to cut those “Clutter Calories”
- *Section Three: Reduction* contains instructions on how to lose accumulated Clutter-PoundsSM, how to create your own disposal plan, and how to approach your organizing projects with our SpaceScaping[®] method
- *Section Four: Maintenance* tells you how to set up your basic household systems and keep them functioning
- *Section Five: Room by Room Recipes* covers specific areas like closets, bedrooms, and basements

Support:

- Our workbook’s Clutter Fitness Exercises will help you set up your own personal support system for success
- If you like, you can sign up for our Clutter Diet program to get advice and support from our experts and our encouraging member community

Your First Clutter Fitness Exercise



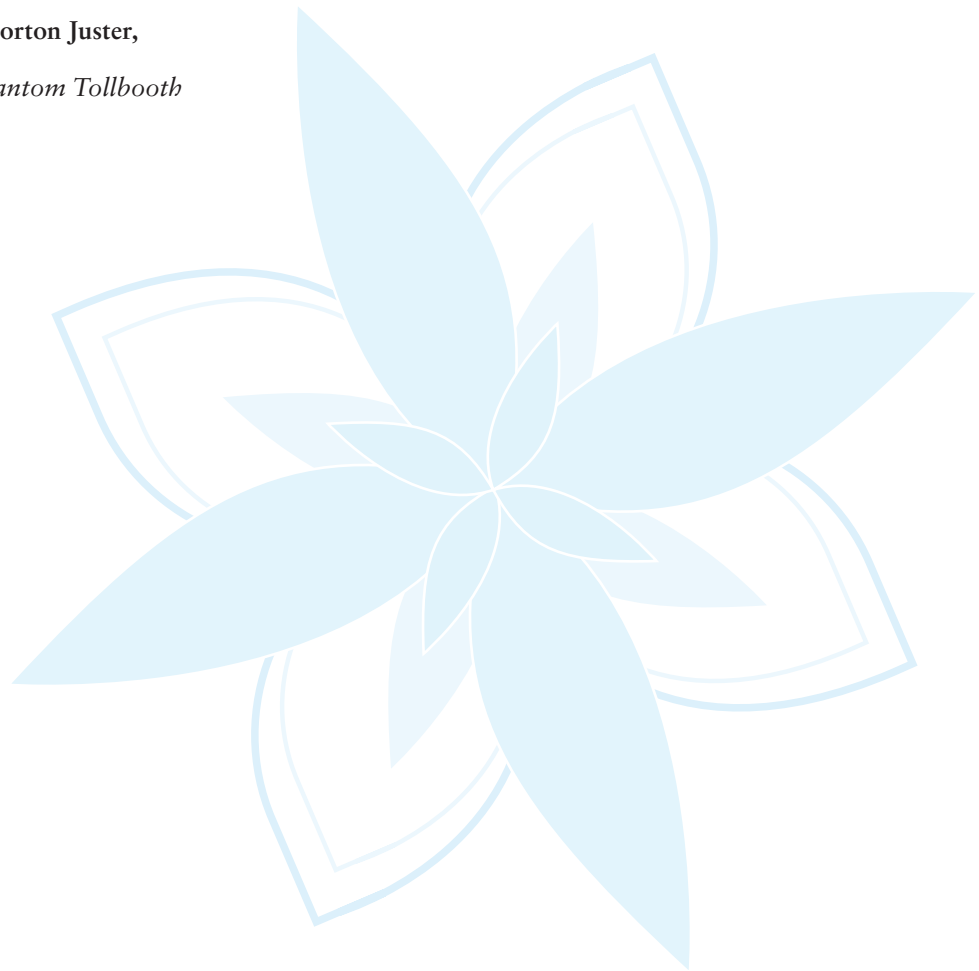
Download the free companion Clutter Fitness Workbook at www.clutterdiet.com/book, print it out, and staple or clip it together. Again, no registration or personal information is required for the download. (The workbook is in Adobe PDF format. Get the free reader at Adobe.com if needed.) If you are really motivated and have a three-ring binder, you can punch holes in the pages and put it in the binder. Gather a highlighter and a pen to have with this book while you read it.





What you can do
is often simply a matter
of what you will do.

– Norton Juster,
The Phantom Tollbooth



What People Are Saying About The Clutter Diet's Online Coaching Program

"I have DOZENS of books on cleaning, decluttering, and organizing, and this site is the best thing that I have ever seen! The quick feedback is very rewarding to me and I also get inspired about the efforts others are making. I am not ALONE in my clutter problem!"

–“Catfife,” Member

"The Clutter Diet is just what you need to jumpstart organizing your life. It's the next best thing to having an organizer standing next to you!"

– Linda Rothschild, Cross It Off Your List, New York, NY

"This is exactly what I've been needing to get myself more organized and have better habits so I'll have more precious time. Thanks a lot, it's a great website!"

– Melodie, Alberta, Canada



Get affordable, personal help from our team of Professional Organizers... online!

Our innovative program includes:

- Access to as much help as you need from our team of experienced Professional Organizers via our message board support.
- A weekly plan of action to keep your house and life organized in about 2 hours per week. Each week there is a Main Dish (the main project for the week), 2 Side Dishes (your two smaller projects), a Sensible Snack (a quick task or tip) and a Dessert (the fun reward!).
- Access to your own personalized e-mail reminder system, customized for your needs. You can remind yourself of birthdays, regular home maintenance, or other recurring tasks or events! This feature is a tremendous value alone!
- Access to over 2 hours of easy multimedia tutorials to help you learn organizing concepts and methods at your own pace.
- Personal tracking of your progress. Each week you can “weigh in” to see how many “Clutter-PoundsSM” you have lost so far.
- Automatic 10% member discount in our online store, along with member specials, surprises, and advanced notice of new offerings.

www.clutterdiet.com

