

# Organizing Round-Up

Volume 4, June - August 2004

A Little Something For Everyone

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## Nurturing the Nurturer

By Susie Glennan

One day I was with a friend of mine whose job is to counsel others and help them figure out what they want to do in life. As we visited, I took one look at her and asked, "Is anyone nurturing you?" I explained to her that she counsels and "nurtures" others all day long. She's raised daughters and "nurtured" them for at least their first 20 years. I'm sure her husband gets "nurtured" by her as well. So WHO is nurturing this nurturer? Her answer was an "ah ha" moment when she sighed and said, "No one and I'm so tired."

I've written many articles about women needing to get back to sewing or tea circles, relationship building, nurturing time, etc. Because of this I coined the phrase, FREE TIME/ME TIME. In my seminar entitled, "Conquering Burnout Through Proper Time Management," I talk about scheduling FREE TIME/ME TIME to help you regenerate your spirit.

I guess there's just not enough time in today's busy world for most women to be nurtured, or is there? There are many articles out there that talk about the problem and give women something they can relate to. However, I can't recall seeing any that give actual solutions to "how to" take that time away, how to nurture yourself, yet alone have time with a spouse, significant other, or family member. Many of these articles tell the over exhausted moms to hire a baby sitter, or the dads to take time off to be with the moms. I've also read about joining playgroups or clubs. But most of the moms I know can't afford to hire a sitter often enough to make a difference. After all, they are home so they can be with their children. That means that they're giving up that second income most need to enable them to hire a babysitter for date night.

Then there are the women who don't have children at home. So they end up working day and night, taking care of other family members, etc.

You are allowed to take time out for YOU, whether you're a mom or not! So here are some **Solutions:**

1. Swap children with another family once per month. You're children will love the company of other kids.

*Nurturing the Nurturer - Continued on page 7*

## Decluttering Your Kid's Schoolwork - The Final Frontier

By Mike Nelson

*"We teachers, especially of young children, have to spend a lot of time teaching them organizational skills. If the parents could do that at home, they'd give their kids a head start in their schooling."* - Karen Wiggins, PhD., school counselor.

### KEY POINTS

1. **Make a space for studying.**
2. **Declare that space sacred and it will keep itself neat (almost).**
3. **Prioritizing and making decisions are part of the learning and the not-cluttering process.**
4. **Breaking things into manageable components makes them easier.**
5. **Keeping notes together makes it easier to stay organized.**

Being messy is a habit. Learning to not clutter is a habit. Help your kids break the first and embrace the second.

Learning to prioritize, make decisions, determine what's relevant and what's not are the basic building blocks of staying organized and learning in school. These are practical applications of what psychologists call convergent thinking, the most commonly used method for learning most subjects. It's the logical cognitive style of thinking that enables us to learn to read, do math and make decisions. If your children can learn to break large tasks into smaller components, they can do anything.

### MAKE A PLACE TO STUDY

One reason children clutter is because they haven't learned to differentiate between space and place. If they have their own room to study in, it can only be their space if they make it so. But within that space, there is a place that's meant solely for studying. What they need to absorb is that the study area is different than the rest of the room. If they have a desk, that desk is only for study materials and probably a computer. If your children like to study in the family room, or at the kitchen table, that's just fine. The important thing is to declare one area as a study area and then stick with it.

Learning this habit of making a place sacred is the

biggest not-cluttering lesson there is. A sacred space  
*Decluttering Your Kids... - Continued on page 3*

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## My "Little Brown Gem"

By Eileen Brown

Wow. Spring has sprung and is almost over where I live in Kansas. Wondrous storms with thunder and lightening fill the skies every few days. "Thunder dunderd" my Mom used to call them. When I was small and could not say, "lightening" I substituted "lighting." This of course led to my older brother coming into our bedroom and flipping the light off and on and shouting "lighting - ooohhh, aaahhhh" and "scarryyy." Ah yes, the older brother. Every little girl should have one since we do learn to cherish them, as we grow older.

I went out onto the back deck this morning thinking about the storm last night and my brother's antics when we were children. In one hand I had a great mug of vanilla coffee and in my other hand a nifty little book that I call "My Little Brown Gem." Sipping my coffee I was reminded of how I used to buy those expensive flavored coffee beans and grind them and all that when it was "trendy." Back about ten years ago. Now that everyone does it, it does not seem so trendy to me and besides, I figured out that about 1/2 teaspoon of vanilla flavoring in a cup of good old Folgers works just as well without the extra appliance and the time it takes to grind the beans (fresh each morning of course!), clean the grinder, clean the counter, sweep up the wayward grinds from the kitchen floor and then begin to actually make the coffee.

The book, my little brown gem, I carried out with me is the one I am admiring, looking through and updating again this evening. It is one of the custom "gathered" section books from The Busy Woman, Inc. at [www.thebusywoman.com](http://www.thebusywoman.com). The first few times I looked at Susie's site I was confused as to what I actually wanted and needed. Being a perfectly organized person I was surprised by my own lack of understanding. Before, when I have bought organizers or bought new pages for an organizer I knew what I needed.

Didn't I? I always thought I did. So I would go back to Susie's site and look again. Gosh, how could one book hold all that stuff? Do I need everything? Yes, I would decide I needed those pages and *those* pages and some of *those too!*

By now you are wondering what in the devil I am talking about. Simple, so very simple that it boggles the mind! Well, um... I am embarrassed to say it but it did boggle *my* mind. Susie has so much to offer that I simply could not figure out what were the most important pages to have in my book.

Once that light bulb went off in my brain I realized that having it all in one book was impossible (for me anyway) and that relevance is the key to the system. So to start out simple and to fill a need I did not know I had, Susie sent me these items to start:

- Compact Binder, Plain, Brown
- Compact Address Tabs
- Compact Internet Info Pages
- Compact Contact/Follow Up Pages
- Credit Card Page, Compact 3 per pack

*My Little Brown Gem - Continued on page 5*



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## Testimonials

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I wouldn't think of purchasing from anyone without checking with you first!

Blessings,  
Tammy Pope

~~~~~  
Susie,

Thank you so much! I am really enjoying my new day planner, it goes with me everywhere. What a tremendous idea to be able to build your own. Thanks so much for putting it into action. I am a stay at home mom and have different needs than that of a business woman. Thanks! I will pass on the word!

Sincerely,  
Tatum McKenzie

~~~~~  
*You are working the principle and ministering and being there for women all over the planet!! You are making a difference one step at a time and one planner at a time. You my friend are one of my Daffodil principle people.... I am so glad to be part of your garden!*

*Have a super day and know you are making a difference in bunches of us!!! Happy hugs cynD*

*Testimonials - Continued on page 6*

## ARE YOU A BUSY MOM?

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## Back To School – Fun or Blues

By Susie Glennan

Do you look forward to your children going back to school? Do you dread getting them ready? There's so much to do such as purchase new school clothes and office supplies and then get it all organized.

Make it a fun time for all of you. Use this time to teach your children how to organize. Encourage them with the excitement of having neat, new, and clean things. It really does make a difference!

Setting up a new notebook with each child will help them have a place for everything and everything in its place. This lessens the chance of lost papers and lower grades. If you let your child choose how they want to set up their binder, but oversee the process, chances are they'll be able to find what they're looking for when they need it throughout the year. This includes that all-important homework! Our schools have binder checks at least once per month. Sadly however, they don't have the time to teach organization skills.

I feel the most important aspect of back to school time is organization of their school supplies, primarily their notebook/binder. Children who aren't taught how to set up their binder usually have trouble in school because of missing papers. We had a child come to our home one day in absolute tears. When we got to the root of the problem, we started by going through her notebook with her and found it an absolute wreck! Everything was out of order, mixed together, and she was unable to find any papers on any one subject. There were way too many papers from at least six months prior. When I asked her if she could find her spelling words, she could not.

My daughter and I sat with her for almost 2 hours taking all of the old papers out, organizing the papers she needed to keep, and putting together an almost brand new binder, neat, clean, and in order. After that she was able to find her papers. Unfortunately it was a little too late because the school year was almost over.

And something else we've encountered with teachers of all three of our children is grading a paper and somehow not getting the grade into the grade book. In California our children have as many as 40 children per class. But because my children are organized they were able to pull out the paper in question and show the grade to the teacher. This has happened more times than I can count on both hands.

I know this only touches the surface so check the website for more back to school tips.

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**BIO:** Susie Glennan has been happily married since 1982, is mom to 3 teenagers, and is a Home Maker, Nurturer, Teacher, ToastMaster, Author and owner of The Busy Woman's Daily Planner®. She teaches time management seminars, offers FREE consultations with your order, and will help you set up a schedule that's right for YOU. You can reach Susie at <mailto:susie@thebusywoman.com> or 800-848-7715.

is used only for the designated purpose, and only items related to that purpose go on it. Without sacred spaces, what happens with adults happens with kids. Unless an area is designated sacred, it becomes miscellaneous. We all know how well "Miscellaneous" files work for adults. Their relevancy is just behind "to do TODAY!!!" folder. {smile}

### THINGS GOTTA HAVE A HOME

Keep your children's learning modalities (visual, kinesthetic, verbal or logical) in mind. Let them create their study area so it's easy to find the materials they need. If they feel like they're creating their own space, they're more likely to keep it neat. Sure, it would be much easier and faster if you just went in and created it and declared everything sacred from on high. That'll have about as much chance of succeeding as decluttering for them and then nagging them to keep it neat. If they understand that the "system" of organizing is of their own devising, they'll be more likely to follow it.

### PRIORITIZING AND MAKING DECISIONS

Some kids respond well to making charts on differently colored poster paper for different subjects. Red could be history; blue could be math (we don't want them to get into the habit of using red ink for math, do we?) and so on. Make the poster large enough to encompass a month, for long-term projects. Write the due dates of the long-term projects in a few days before they're actually due.

### BREAKING THINGS DOWN

If they've got ten chapters to read in history, a paper to write for English and twelve problems to solve in math, it'll seem overwhelming. Piece by piece, it can all get done. But just like decluttering, if they lump it all into the category of "homework I'll never get done," they'll just get overwhelmed.

You'll probably have to teach them how to break project down. Those ten intimidating chapters are just so many paragraphs or pages. Explain that if they read "X" number of pages each day, they can do it.

### KEEPING NOTES TOGETHER

*"I've found that the kids who have one notebook, with*

*Decluttering Your Kids... - Continued on page 4*

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## Yummy Chicken

2 cans of 10 3/4 oz cream of chicken soup  
6 frozen skinless chicken breast (halves), YES frozen!!

1 can of sliced mushroom, drained  
3/4 tsp salt (optional)  
1/4 tsp pepper (optional)

Place frozen breasts in a slow cooker. Mix soup, mushrooms, salt and pepper; pour over chicken. Cover and cook on low 10-12 hours. Serve over rice. Serves 6

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## Saucy Pork Chops

4-6 Pork Chops  
Can of Condensed Mushroom Soup  
milk  
ketchup  
Worcestershire sauce  
medium onion, sliced thin  
olive oil

In a large frying pan with a lid, add 2 Tbs. of olive oil and brown both sides of the pork chops. Lay the onion slices on top of pork chops. In a bowl - mix mushroom soup, 1/2 can of milk, big squirt of ketchup and a couple of squirts of Worcestershire Sauce. Stir and pour on top of onions and pork chops. Reduce heat and simmer with the lid on for 20-30 minutes.

This goes really well with the boxed rice mixes.

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## Broccoli Spinach Casserole

1 (10 ounce) packages frozen chopped spinach, cooked  
1 (10 ounce) packages frozen chopped broccoli, cooked  
1 (1 ounce) package dry onion soup mix  
1.5 cups sour cream  
1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease a 2-quart casserole dish. Drain spinach. In a medium, mixing bowl combine spinach, broccoli, soup mix and sour cream. Spoon into greased casserole dish and top with cheese. Bake in preheated oven about 25 minutes, or until heated through.

**Brought to you by: Tina Sprigg**  
The Beadin' Beagle <http://www.beadin-beagle.com>

several dividers, do better with less stress than those who have five different notebooks to carry around." - David, an elementary school teacher.

Kids lose things. Clutterers can't find things. With kid clutterers, several notebooks are a recipe for disaster for kid clutterers. With so much done on the computer, it's a good idea to have a three-ring binder for the notebook, so they can add printouts. That keeps like things with like.

Show them how to use it. You might use your own Busy Woman Organizer as an example. If it's held together with overworked rubber bands straining to contain unruly papers trying to make a break for it, you might want to neaten it up, even if only temporarily, before using it for show and tell.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

How well your children do in school depends on a lot of factors and cluttering or being disorganized isn't the only one. If they do well in one or two subjects and not in others, it could be that they just have a natural affinity for those subjects, and are willing to put in the effort to be organized enough to do what it takes to excel in them. You may be able to help them apply those techniques to other subjects, but if they don't want to, they don't want to. That's got nothing to do with their cluttering. All I can say is that organization can only do so much. If they can use it when they want, they've got the skills. Desire is more important than skill.

(More of Mike's decluttering concepts are in his most recent book, *Stop Clutter From Wrecking Your Family* at bookstores or [www.clutterless.org](http://www.clutterless.org).)

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*Mike Nelson is the founder of Clutterless Recovery Groups, a nonprofit support network of nationwide meetings. He is also the author of three books on decluttering from an emotional/psychological perspective. The most recent is Stop Clutter From Wrecking Your Family. Learn more at [www.clutterless.org](http://www.clutterless.org).*

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*My Little Brown Gem – Continued from page 2*

I have to back up a bit and tell you that I have always used an index card file for my Internet interactions and just about everything else too. I have always sworn by it and recommended it to everyone. I would not be able to live without it. Get the picture? Susie published an article of mine about my love of my index card file in her April-June 2004 "Organizing Round-Up" newsletter and the dialogue began there. I was to "rethink" my attachment to my beloved index card file and review a new way to keep track. For me this would be a new way of thinking. You have no idea how attached I am to my index card file. My *life* is in there.

I put the little book together, promised Susie I would start using it and went on my merry way. I placed it just to the left of my computer keyboard and as I started listing URLs, user names, passwords, notes and the like I was very happy that those items were being recorded in a place of their own. After one week I moved it to the right side of my keyboard. The relevance of this all-important move might escape you but I can tell you it is the biggest step for me to take, as that is where I keep my "most important tools." The ones I use a lot each day.

My index card file has cards for this purpose but it also has address cards, customer profiles, phone number cards, calling cards and any myriad of things that fit on a little card. If I am not mistaken there is a recipe or two that got filed there a while back when I was in a rush to straighten things up a bit for an appointment. The problem I was having with my index card file is it served too many purposes. When I need a user name and password I have to go through a bunch of cards in one section, at least 50 and if anything gets misfiled, I am in very big trouble. The whole file is one big alphabetized thing catching way too many diverse areas of information. My much used, much loved index card file was suddenly not keeping me organized.

My little brown gem holds only Internet information, URLs, user names, passwords and notes regarding sites I visit. I cannot misfile anything in it when clearing up in a hurry or

*My Little Brown Gem – Continued on page 8*



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## Uncommon Advice for Planning a New Business

**By Tony Novak, MBA, MT**

If you are thinking about leaving your current job to start a new business, there are obviously many issues you need to consider. This article lists nine "trouble spots" that tend to be inadequately addressed by other business planning resources. The quality of the planning you invest in these nine issues can easily make or break your new business venture.

1. Seek out tough advice. Our natural human tendency to look for compassionate and supportive comments on our plans can undermine a businesses success. How many times have you noticed an obvious business blunder and wondered how the business manager could have ignored an issue that was so evident to almost everyone else? Look for tough advice and criticism of your business plan. Hire an experienced adviser to give a list of "what could go wrong". You want to find someone as fearless as Simon Cowell in "American Idol" to critique your business plan. Do not undercut the time or budget you allocate to this step.
2. Consider the price/value relationship of the help you seek in starting your business. In business planning, free advice is usually worth what you paid for it. The local SBA offices and Small Business Development Centers have their place, but they do not warrant the trust of your future livelihood. It is amazing how many small business owners accept advice on important business issues from sources advertised in unsolicited e-mail advertisements or flyers posted in phone booths or telephone poles. Entire scams industries have been built that prey on self-employed people who do not seek a "second opinion" before making purchase decisions. Online business support groups provide excellent advice at very little cost. The collective wisdom of your peer group is often more valuable than any single professional resource.
3. Do not overload on legal issues. Too many new businesses spend too much upfront on copyrights, patents, corporate formations, etc. when they do not really have any product of real value to protect. The money is usually better-spent marketing efforts in these early stages to build real value in your business. Consider how you can differentiate the business so that it would not be possible for another firm to steal your livelihood. Marketers call these "barriers to entry". Strategic barriers to entry are far more effective than legal barriers for protecting a small business. This might require some "outside the box" thinking that can be enormously profitable in the long run and might be the biggest single factor that affects your success as a new business.
4. Do no believe what you read about the advantages corporations and limited liability companies. In most cases these legal forms will not provide any significant financial or legal protection to a small start-up business but they do add to the start-up and operating costs.

*Uncommon Advice For... - Continued on page 6*

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5. Look for alternatives to COBRA health insurance. This will save you thousands of dollars each year if you qualify for the best programs. Surveys of small business owners consistently point to finding affordable health insurance as being one of their most troublesome ongoing issues. Many corporate employees underestimate the difficulties they will face in this area. Understand clearly that the cost of health coverage will be both one of your largest business expenses as well as the most rapidly rising cost of operating your business. Expect health care costs to rise at least twice as fast as any other cost of operating your business. COBRAplan.com provides answers to frequently asked questions.

6. Consider government assistance. Some states now provide unemployment compensation benefits to individuals who leave a company to start their own business, although there may be strings attached. Check with your local Unemployment Compensation office. A listing on a state-by-state basis is included at MedSave.com.

7. Have a clear picture of your tax situation. Most newly self-employed people allow themselves to be confused simply because they did not seek out the appropriate information or they were willing to accept mediocre professional help. This error directly translates to thousands of dollars wasted by many small businesses. Tax planning for new businesses should be a simple and concise issue. Do not accept anything less. Do not excuse yourself by taking the attitude "this stuff is too complicated for me". Demand that your tax adviser explain your tax situation in one or two sentences that you understand perfectly. If you have any level of discomfort or uncertainty, get a second opinion. This is not an area where you should allow anything but the best available support.

8. Buy in small increments. Test the waters and limit your risk by buying services in small quantities. You will be more successful hiring ten marketing services or advisers at \$500 each, for example, than hiring one marketing firm at \$5000. Sure, there are lots of arguments for taking "big bold steps" in business, but these are not suitable for most start-up ventures.

9. Adhere to the "acid test". Take the total amount of expected business start-up costs and double it. Take the total amount of time you expect until your business turns profitable and double it. Now look at the business plan again. Can you survive based on these new assumptions? If your business plan still looks attractive after you adopt these new assumptions, go for it! If not, go back to the drawing board and do not proceed until your business plan passes this acid test.

Editor's note: The author was formerly an adviser with the Small Business Development Center and now has a private interest in the other resources mentioned in this article.

About the Author: Tony Novak, MBA, MT, is a writer and financial adviser based in the Philadelphia area specializing in the area of compensation planning. He provides tax and financial planning consultations nationwide by telephone on an hourly basis in conjunction with accountants, attorneys, financial advisers and individuals not represented by another professional through OnlineAdviserTM service. Over the past 20 years he has responded to tens of thousands of questions posed by telephone, e-mail and on the radio. Hundreds of his columns and articles on financial planning topics are published in dozens of publications throughout the U. S. He serves as a volunteer discussion moderator on the popular national forum for financial advisers at <http://www.financial-planning.com/phorum/index.php>. He can be reached at (877) 529-7435 or through [www.tonynovak.com](http://www.tonynovak.com). For a free subscription to "Financial Tip of the Day", send an e-mail to: [financialtipoftheday-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:financialtipoftheday-subscribe@yahoo.com)

## You Can Have A Great Summer & Run Your Business

By Kelly McCausey

There is something so attractive about the idea of just dropping everything to do with business for the summer. It's beautiful outside! The children have a deep inner need to eat ice cream and be wet all day long. Your husband hears the call of the campground and you just throw up your hands and promise the home office that you'll be back as often as you can.

Summer is an important season for the family. You get in more bonding time with your kids than you can during the school year. So you should spend more time pursuing recreation and less time pursuing business, you just don't want to abandon your home based business completely.

### Momentum

Momentum is the forward motion of your business that you experience when you work it steadily. Regular promotion and networking is so important for online businesses especially.

You will definitely lose some of your momentum if you cut your business time dramatically during the summer. That's ok though, priorities are priorities and for work at home Moms, that means the kids and hubby comes first!

There are some simple ways that you can keep some momentum going and still enjoy summer with your family! Even if you travel to camp or visit relatives and amusement parks, you can prepare a little "Biz away from Biz Pack" to keep your finger on things back home.

### Your Planner

I never leave home without my planner and I do take it with me when I'm on vacation too! You never know when it will be needed! When I travel I can relax knowing that every single thing I need is with me. Web host contact info (have you ever been out of town and found your website is down?), client lists and phone numbers, supplier info, etc.

You also want to use your planner note pages to record all of the great ideas that you get while you are doing all that creative loafing by the pool!

*You Can Have A Great... - Continued on page 9*

*Testimonials - Continued from page 2*

I wanted to say how much I love my new Busy Woman Daily Planner that I won at the Celebrating Home Business Expo the other day! I have an old planner that I was keeping alive, but now I have a brand new planner and I just love it! I have wanted one for a long long time! Thank you, Susie!! It arrived today!

I just had to say how wonderful her planners are. They are not preprinted with the dates so you can use them beginning in the middle of the year if you need to! So there is no excuse to put off getting a new planner till January if you old one looks as raggedy as mine did! LOL

Thanks so much Susie!! Skipping happily to fill in my new goodies! I have so much to do each day so I am excited to have a wonderful tool to keep me on track! My old one was hard to find the dates so I would frequently find things too late to really plan well for them. Whoohooooo! :D

In Him, JoJo Tabares, - Art of Eloquence  
Effective Communication Skills for Your Success!  
Website: <http://www.artofeloquence.com>

2. Set up a schedule with grandparents once per month. If you don't have grandparents or ones who will oblige, adopt one. That's what we did.
3. Find a local home schooling group and see if you can get some of the teens to help out. Some might actually do it for free.
4. Get up when the kids are still sleeping or stay up after they're in bed, ASLEEP at night. Schedule your free time/me time during their sleeping hours. Just do it once per week to give you your regeneration time. You probably can't do it every morning or evening if you have active children.
5. How many activities are you children involved in? How many activities are YOU involved in? Cut them back. Your children will probably love you for it. Too much activity can damage relationships.
6. I used to set up a movie day with popcorn, sandwiches and drinks. This gave me 2 – 4 hours of "free time/me time". I was able to read a book or write letters during this time.
7. Invite a friend or relative to lunch or someplace that is relaxing.
8. Go to a movie alone! Have you ever gone to a movie alone? I did! And I am NOT a loner at ALL! But there was no one complaining that they didn't like the movie, or that I picked a boring one. There was no one else's hand in the popcorn when I went to get another mouthful. It was so peaceful!

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*Susie Glennan has been happily married since 1982, is mom to 3, and is a Home Maker, Nurturer, Teacher, Author, Professional Speaker, Toastmaster, President of The Busy Woman, Inc., DBA - The Busy Woman's Daily Planner®. She teaches time management seminars, offers FREE consultations with your order, and will help you set up a schedule that's right for YOU. You can reach Susie at <mailto:susie@thebusywoman.com> or 800-848-7715.*

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## Organizing Your Home

Note to homeschoolers: Our homes are havens for our homeschools. When home is in order schooling moves forward smoothly. We can make changes in this area in order to free time for homeschooling and for working toward other goals. If things aren't organized and accessible, we not only waste precious time searching, but our frustration at not finding the needed item(s) destroys the peace that should rule and reign.

Before starting our business, I organized everything in our house from files to sewing supplies. For years I kept my fabric in a large hinged box. Every time I would try to find something, I'd leave it in disorder. Then we purchased an old wardrobe at an auction, and my husband fitted it with shelves for fabric and notions. Shelves in a closet or even on a wall would work just as well. When you get organized, your frustrating moments will be fewer. We still have a few areas that get unorganized quickly but when I regularly clean and sort these, up keep is not overwhelming.

The golden rule for making order out of chaos is to throw away, give away, put away. In one word—eliminate! Get rid of as much as you can do without. I love to see order emerging in this process. But I must confess, I have gone overboard in my quest for order and have later wished I had kept certain things—like depression glass, pink floral china, antique linens and our children's toys!

1) Gather boxes for storage, and a broad-point marker for labeling. I like to use more boxes for trash so items can be easily tossed in. You could use paper grocery sacks or plastic trash bags. (Just make sure you do not accidentally trash valuables! Always check the bags and boxes before disposing of them.) We sometimes used large plastic garbage "cans" and industrial laundry bins on wheels! They did not have to be emptied as often so were especially helpful in cleaning the second story of our home.

2) Throw away all obvious trash including papers, old mail and catalogs. You will see the beginnings of order and be inspired to continue with your task.

3) Work on one room at a time. As you sort and organize, you will find that you have items too good to toss, but that you neither want nor need. Put these items in separate boxes to give away or to sell at a garage sale. Label accordingly.

4) Box excess items that you can't bear to part with and label.

5) It is very important to put these "treasures" under lock and key, especially if you have young children who love to explore. Your bright, inquisitive children can destroy weeks of organizing in minutes!

6) Go through all of your family's clothing, sorting as above. But this time have another pile for worn cotton garments. Cut these into one-foot squares for cleaning cloths. If you sew, you may wish to save the buttons from these clothes and reuse them. Use for cleaning, wiping up spills, washing cars, stripping woodwork and so forth. They not only save the cost of paper towels, they usually do a much better job!

7) My mother's maxim is a good one. "Have a place for everything and keep everything in its place." If you don't have a place, make a place.

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FREE copy work, articles, book chapters, step lists, and more!

*My Little Brown Gem – Continued from page 6*

lose it as I can a small index card. Each time I pull an index card out of the file there is the danger of misplacing it, loosing it, burying it in a basket and so forth. I have done all of these things and although the dog has never eaten one I have had them get blown off my desk when someone opened the back door to my office and the outer door was open too. Swoosh! And my organized little piles of "today's work and calls" were a big fat mess.

My little brown gem does not get misplaced. It cannot get buried, misfiled, hidden in a pile of papers and as with something as nice as this little book - I made a place for it and I keep it in that place. If I want it off my desk I can simply place it in a desk drawer. I must say that I have not done that even once. It's attractive and I like it, it looks nice and keeps information at hand without being obtrusive. I can take it with me to record URLs I see in magazines at the dentist or doctor's office. I am sure I am not the only person who does this, right?

I love every part of my book, the little brown gem. I cannot say that enough as it truly is a gem. The brown leather binder is that really soft and pliable leather that is so nice to the touch. The alphabetical index tabs serve two purposes. They make it easy to access (flip to) the URLs I record and they have a place for names and addresses. The names and addresses I record there are the folks I meet at different shops and in groups (networking) on the www and that I know I will contact again.

The Internet info pages have 8 listings per page, 4 on the front and 4 on the back. A place for the name of the site, date, url, username/login, password, email and notes. I usually put the product and/or service and name of the owner (if it is available) on the notes lines. It is perfect. Having all the items listed on the pages that I should record helps me to *not* forget to write them down the first time I decide I want to keep all the information at my fingertips. I use them to record login names and passwords yes, but also for more information. I consider these "must have" pages and they make up the most important information in my "little brown gem."

The contact follow up pages are probably my favorite pages though. When I find a site or product I want to revisit or schedule a time to really discuss (meeting like) I fill out this page and start making notes there. The notes section is on the back of the page, lined and helps keep me up on everything to do with the site, the owner, and our conversations. If you are like me, sometimes it is really inconvenient to have to go to a site when I am writing about, reading about, or even just thinking about a certain thing. During one of our storms I lost my Internet connection and having those names and numbers meant I could still communicate with folks and do business. I was not lost, well not completely anyway, I could still get a lot of business done by phone and by using my recorded information. These are "must have" pages.

And so we come to the last item in my little brown gem. Just because the name of the product is "Credit Card Pages" does not mean they are made only for credit cards. I use mine to put business cards (mine and others) in to hand out and if I receive a business card from someone I immediately have a place to put them. These are also great for appointment cards that you get at the dentist and doctors office. No more digging around to find those little cards so you can write them in your planner. Just place them in a little pocket and they will be there when you need them.

So here I am, just as I was this morning, with my cup of

*My Little Brown Gem – Continued on next column*



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*My Little Brown Gem – Continued from previous column*

"home-style" vanilla coffee, my little brown gem and some sticky notes that I am deciding whether or not they are "important enough" to be placed in my little brown gem.

Having such a nice place to record everything makes me think twice about just jotting notes on a card and maybe not finding it again for months. If it is important enough to get a "contacts page" written in my lovely book I know I will not forget, misplace or pass by truly important information. I will also peruse Susie's busy woman site again. Now that I know that I do not need it all in one book I can think organization by the category. Like in my filing cabinet. Why didn't I think of that before? Thank you Susie, you knew what I needed even if I did not. Now onward and upward to the next book I need.

Wow. Here it comes, another "thunder dunder." I hope my DSL modem makes it through this one and the electricity stays on too. I am about sick of resetting all the digital clocks. Sheesh, the "lighting" and "dunder" made me jump! My brother would be so pleased.

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*Eileen Brown is an entrepreneur who founded her own company, Brown Enterprises in 1993. Over the years there have been many and various companies both off and online held by Brown Enterprises. One such endeavor is online at [www.EileensEshop.com](http://www.EileensEshop.com). A commercial site specializing in fundraising and helping the small business owner expand and grow through wholesale sales. Ms. Brown is currently the manager of nine groups that support online business owners and affiliates. Her articles can be found in newsletters all across the web. This article and others in this series may be used in newsletters and groups only if this information is kept intact and unchanged.*

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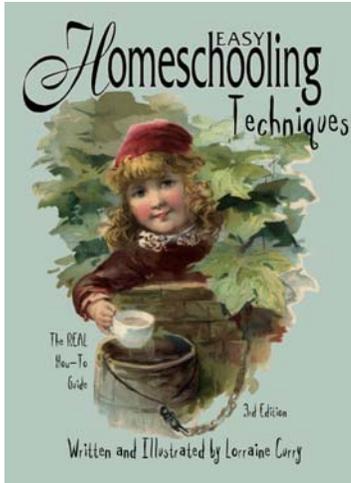


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**Tips for using Susie's Planner**

Buy more pages! Having more pages actually helped me get in the habit of using my planner more. When I added devotional pages, with prayer requests and answered prayer sections on each (plus a lot more), I found myself using the planner not only for my daily devotions but also more regularly for planning.

I also recommend the budget pages and the shopping/menu pages. I have found that I prefer monthly and weekly planning to daily planning. I also use the project pages often. I have a separate project page for each of my books, each book's marketing, landscaping (we recently moved our house to the country), and home remodeling. You could also use one for your organizing project. Your list would cover each major room or step, as above.

Organizing your Home is excerpted from 5-Star Easy Homeschooling Techniques.

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**Note Cards**

Have a supply of note cards and send all of your most important contacts a personal note during the summer. It lets them know you're thinking of them and keeps your name in their mind.

**Newsletters**

Consider preparing a Summer newsletter in advance of your down time, then you can take it out and mail it out the towards the end of your summer and make it look like you have really been on the ball when in fact you have been on the beach!

**Business Cards, Catalogs & Other Sales Materials**

Yes, you're on vacation but that doesn't mean that you stop networking! You never know who you might meet on vacation. If your business is internet based, everyone is potential lead! Be ready!

**Other Helpful Ideas...**

**Email Auto Responders**

Most web hosting provides a simple free auto responder to use to reply to emails while you are away. Update the message on your auto responder as often as you are able to let people know when they can expect you to answer emails.

If you are traveling you can always touch base with your email from a library or internet café.

**Virtual Assistants**

Summer is a great time to test drive a Virtual Assistant! Hire someone online to check email and attend to simple customer needs. If you are unable to access the internet on your vacation, this is a great option. Your VA can keep tabs on email and you can check in with her via telephone to collect urgent messages.

**When Business Won't Wait!**

Sometimes there are time sensitive tasks that just cannot be delegated or relegated to the back burner of your life. That is when it's time to have a family meeting and let everyone know what you're dealing with. Use the time to negotiate an acceptable schedule that will include a completion date and time.

Just keeping everyone informed will help them give you the time you need to focus on work.

**Don't feel guilty!**

A nagging sense of guilt might try to creep up while you are churning homemade ice cream for the kids. (Or while you're at the Dairy Queen drive through).

Ignore it! Every Mom in business is going to be struggling with a certain amount of balance anxiety but don't let it get the best of you this summer!

Remember, the memories you make with your family are far more valuable than the money you would make with your business! There is a well-known rule: What you sow is what you will reap! You will be glad that you sowed more time into your kids than into your clients!

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Author: Kelly McCausey hosts Work at Home Moms Talk Radio from her home in beautiful Gaylord, Michigan.

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