

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for February 24, 2020
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll talk about the connection between clutter and procrastination and some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

My college roommate had a poster hanging on our dorm wall that read, "Procrastination enhances the imagination." I discovered during college that procrastination may lead to last minute panic and creativity, but it certainly does not enhance the grade point average.

According to a recent study by Joseph Ferrari of DePaul University and Catherine Roster of the University of New Mexico, there are links between procrastination and clutter. Procrastination is defined as the "voluntary delay of an intended course of action despite negative consequences." It is a behavior that can lead to dysfunctional ways of being and reduced quality of life. Chronic procrastination affects up to 25 percent of adults.

One common result of procrastination is clutter. I recently read a definition of clutter as "a delayed decision." In all reality, as I glance around my office and my home, the things I see lying around or in piles are there because I couldn't decide where else to put them at the time. I would find the perfect place to put it "later." Or my bigger issue- all the photos, memorabilia, and unfinished projects that I just haven't got to yet, so they are hidden away in plastic totes stored in my basement.

As we get older, we keep accumulating stuff. I watched a fascinating video by some University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) anthropology researchers. They said that current US households have more possessions per household than any society in global history. They also stated that the US has 3.1% of the world's children but consumes 40% of the world's toys. Think about that the next time you buy a Christmas or birthday present for a grandchild. "The push to become consumers, to value stuff, starts at an early age."

I don't have research to back this part up, but I think that in a rural area like ours, we may struggle even more. I know a lot of you reading this have lived in your same home for decades. Maybe only moving once or twice in your life. Moving forces the decision process for keeping many of our possessions. I've moved six times since I graduated from college. I feel like I have too much stuff, but I can't imagine how much I would still have without purging every 3-5 years.

So how are you doing with clutter? I guess some people actually live like those photos in Better Homes and Gardens or on Pinterest. But the rest of us live with clutter. And for many of us, especially women, it affects our quality of life by increasing stress. Researchers at the University of Minnesota conducted a study and found that people who spent time in an unorganized room were twice as likely to eat a chocolate bar than an apple. An Indiana University study found that tidy homes are more of a predictor for physical health than neighborhood walkability.

There are many strategies out there to conquer clutter. At their basic level most have to do with minimizing and then organizing what we have. I enjoy researching this area of consumer sciences and would love to share some practical tips with you. I'll be teaching "Declutter Your Life" at the Coshocton Public Library on Monday, March 23 from 6:30-8:00 PM. It is free and open to the public.

Research has shown that cluttered environments limit your brain's ability to focus. Clearing the clutter can seem overwhelming but will reap health and wellness benefits that can improve your life. This workshop will help identify your organization preferences to provide lasting behavior change. If clutter is a struggle for you, don't put off gaining some tools for improving your quality of life.

I'm also teaching a second workshop the following week on Monday, March 30 called "Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?" Planning for the transfer of both titled and non-titled property is an important issue that can significantly impact family relations. This workshop will not focus on land or buildings or vehicles you own – but all those other important non-titled items that can carry a lot of meaning and significance to us. Come learn about strategies to jumpstart conversations about inheritance and some key decision-making factors in non-titled property transfer. Both of these programs are free and you are asked to RSVP to the Coshocton Public Library at 740-622-0956.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!