

Lesson 6: Ordering Clutter: The 10 Minute Tidy and TRAF (Video Transcript)

Hello and welcome to another Time to Change video by The Practical Disciple. I am John Arnold and today we are going to talk again about the topic of clutter. In another video I talked about clutter. Specifically, I talked about eliminating clutter by using forty bags...using forty grocery sacks and filling them up in forty days. That's the way I did it and I encouraged you to do at least 10 or 12 bags. No more or no less than one a day for a series of set days to eliminate things that are just taking up valuable space around you that you really don't use.

Now there are some items of clutter that you don't want to get rid of. You just need to organize them, so that you can productively find what you need when you need it. I have a creative tool I use for doing that and it came from a unique source of inspiration. My kid's use to watch a show called The Big Comfy Couch and on that show there was a clown called Loonette. At the end of each episode she would look into the camera and say, "Who made this big mess?" and there would be stuff laying all over the place. She would say, "Well, I guess I did. So, I had better pick it up. Time for a ten second tidy." Then a clock would start ticking for 10 seconds and Loonette would run around like mad, dashing about shoving things into her big comfy couch and putting things away. I looked at that and I thought, "You know what? I can adapt that and use that at home." I created what I call The Ten Minute Tidy. I don't shove things in my couch the way Loonette did, but what I do is set a timer. I'll set it on my phone or I'll set it on the stove in my kitchen depending on where I am tidying up and for ten minutes I just run around organizing and tidying what's out...putting things away.

I have two teenage kids, a sixteen year old daughter and a thirteen year old son and my wife and I are there in the house. it's just real easy for us to come in the door and your tired, you have been at school or you have been at work and you set a backpack down, may be you kick your shoes off and get a snack out and you forget to put things away. You set the mail on the counter or on the kitchen table and walk away. That **stuff adds up and it takes away from you**. It stresses you visually to be out all of the time and it takes energy away from you. **It takes energy away from you when you walk into a visually cluttered space and you think, "Aw, I should really clean up."** What the ten minute tidy does is **systematically reduce that stress**.

I'll do a ten minute tidy sometimes in the morning. Sometimes at the end of the day. When things are a real mess I may do two or three ten minute tidies, but

when I do...kind of like the bags of limiting myself to one at a time...when I do a ten minute tidy, when that timer goes off I stop. That's mainly because I am a very right brain dominate person and I could get totally lost...I could get into it and get totally lost in wanting to do it all. What I have found is that if I will resist that and I get in a discipline of doing a ten minute tidy daily or a couple of ten minute tidies during the day, it will eventually eliminate everything there and it won't be such an out and out effort and marathon to get it clean. **It feels almost effortless organizing ten minutes here and ten minutes there.**

Now I have a similar adaptation that I do for my office that I call the ten minute TRAF. That's T. R. A. F. I first came across that term from a productivity organizational guru. I think her name was Stephanie Winston and she talked about in your office taking time to Toss, Refer, Act and File. **In my office, almost always at the beginning of the day and sometimes at the end of the day I will do a ten minute TRAF.** Once again, I will set a timer on my phone and for ten minutes I will Toss, Refer, Act and File any, typically paper work, that is around my office. I find that when I regularly do this...I have a discipline of it on a regular basis, then it keeps my office at a really good functional level of order and cleanliness. **It is not unusual for me to walk out of my office and have nothing on my desk or nothing on my library table.** Now, if I have a project crunch and I get messy and I leave some things lying around, once the crunch is over, I will do two or three ten minute tidies strategically placed in my day at times when it won't interrupt other work that I have.

So that's the tip I use a ten minute tidy at home and a ten minute TRAF at work. I highly recommend that today you start implementing one or both depending whether you are working at home or office or both. I guarantee that if you apply those consistently the order of your space and the stress you feel because of disorder are going to radically change. So, that is your tip today from the Time to Change video series and once again I am John Arnold from The Practical Disciple. See you in the next video.