

Don's Home News

Brought to you by: Don Zahnle
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Want to Feel Good? Try De-cluttering Your Life

De-cluttering is in. A Google search on “de-cluttering your life” generated 1.16 million results in just a sixteenth of a second. Everyone from professional de-clutterers to Zen masters has something to say about it. Simply said, though, it boils down to this: De-clutter, feel good, and achieve more.

Following are some tips to help you de-clutter:

- Many experts recommend you start small. A post at www.zenhabs.net recommends spending five minutes a day on de-cluttering. Before you know it, that junk drawer or hall closet will be a thing of beauty.
- As you're going through that junk drawer or closet, ask yourself if you've used items in the past six months. If not, get rid of them.
- Delegate a box for the undecided - items you might want in the future. If you don't open the box in three months, get rid of the contents.
- Everyone has things that don't live anywhere. Consider the often-lost TV converter or recharger for your electronics. Make it a mission to find these things.
- How many knickknacks do you really need? Pick your favorites and take memory pictures of the rest. Then pass them on to charitable organizations.
- Are you buried under paper? One suggestion: Every paper that comes in the door lands in a single place. Sort through the pile every two days and discard or file every piece.
- Last, but not least, learn to love the de-cluttered look. You'll stay de-cluttered for life.

With the Lowest Mortgage Rates in History and a Great Choice of Homes from which to Choose, Are You Missing the Opportunity of a Lifetime?

Buying a home is a complex process with many factors to consider.

Prepare for the decisions you will need to make along the way by requesting my free report, “10 Easy Steps to Buying a Home.”

Just email me at donzahnle@gmail.com and I'll send it right out to you.

Nine Easy Ways to Make Your Home More Attractive

These days, staging your home involves more than de-cluttering and inexpensive fix-ups. You can spend big bucks. Or not.

The following tips can help you add value to your home:

1. Listen to your real estate agent. He or she views hundreds of houses a year and knows what works.
2. Watch the trends and incorporate them in simple, effective ways. In 2012, buyers will be looking for extra storage and great laundry rooms. De-clutter all your closets and add inexpensive but attractive storage in the laundry area. Fresh paint and attractive baskets can go a long way.
3. Position one of today's colors - any shade of blue from cobalt to turquoise, for example - against neutral walls, either by painting an accent wall or by adding hints of color with accessories.
4. For accessories, try light woods, brass and stone.
5. Switch down your lighting - dimmers create a warm, romantic mood in bedrooms and dining rooms.
6. Hardwood floors are still number one, but sisal and sea grass carpeting are becoming popular.
7. White or off-white kitchen cabinets are still in. Painting cabinets may be labor intensive, but you may avoid that “dated kitchen” label.
8. Stainless steel appliances remain popular, but building them in to match kitchen cabinets is very now.
9. Move out all but essential pieces of furniture. Buyers want to imagine their possessions in your home.

When Everything Old Is New Again

This February, Leonard Cohen, 1960s philosopher and guru to a generation of aging baby boomers, released his 12th album, titled *Old Ideas*. It was his first in eight years. Historic in its own way, the album also represents something new ... the rebirth of something old.

These days, everything old is new again. In Cohen's lyrics ("Show me the place where the world became a man; show me the place where the suffering began.") and in philosophical texts turned popular reading (such as *The Latest Answers to the Oldest Questions: A Philosophical Adventure with the World's Greatest Thinkers* by Nicholas Fearn) the world is rediscovering our debt to ancient thinkers.

Take Thales. This philosopher, who lived around 585 BC, was the father of the idea that everything is one.

Acknowledged as such by Nietzsche, Thales foreshadowed later Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, Socrates and Plato, who effectively shaped our ideas of the universe. In fact, our current notion of the holistic world had its origin with the ancient Greeks, whose worldview bound together philosophy and politics with culture and science.

Albert Einstein neatly summed up our debt to those who came before, stating, "We owe it to a few writers of antiquity (Plato, Aristotle, etc.) that the people in the Middle Ages could slowly extricate themselves from the superstitions and ignorance that had darkened life for more than half a millennium."

The distance from ancient Greece to the Middle Ages to our current iPad, the world is not as far as it seems.

Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Just email me at donzahnle@gmail.com for the answer.

What sport features strikers and sweepers?

Why Not Pass Me to a Friend?

If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found its information useful, please pass it to a neighbor, friend or co-worker.

In addition, if you have any comments about it give me a call or send me an email. I would love to hear your thoughts.

Are You Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

Do you want to know how the price of your home has changed in today's market? Do you want to know for how much other homes in your neighborhood are selling?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I can help.

Either call 404-939-1309 or [email](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) me for a no-obligation, professional evaluation.

I won't pressure you into listing with me or waste your time. [Read about how I feel about pressure!](#) I'll just give you the honest facts about your home and its value.

I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Call me at 404-939-1309 or email me at donzahnle@gmail.com and we will arrange a time to get together.

Worth Reading

Six Tips From Your Future Self By Dr. Karl Pillemer, *CNN Living*

What if you could do it all over again? Dr. Pillemer, professor of human development at Cornell University, asked older adults what advice they would give to the younger generation. Among the predictable responses, such as avoid excessive drinking and drugs and don't get into debt, were some surprises.

More: <http://tinyurl.com/7ebwjsd>

30 Things to Stop Doing to Yourself

By Marc, *Marc and Angel Hack Life*

Commenting on this well-created list of must-stops, reader Catherine points to #10: Stop exclusively looking to others for happiness. If you're not happy with who you are on the inside, you won't be happy in a long-term relationship with anyone else either. She comments, "I have done this time and time again and always ended up very disappointed." As Marc suggests, "When you stop chasing the wrong things, you give the right things a chance to catch you." It's worth a try.

More: <http://tinyurl.com/7xla2hn>

What If Einstein Is Wrong?

By Michio Kaku, *Big Think blog*

This video, featuring the physicist and popular radio host, is as accessible as any discussion of Einstein's Theory of Relativity can be. Its hot topic is a Swiss experiment that seemed to prove that particles could exceed the speed of light. As Kaku points out to physicists, this is a disaster, throwing their understanding of the universe into question. The response: According to some physicists, the Swiss goofed. The weak link was a miscalibrated GPS device.

More: <http://tinyurl.com/6mbnw8e>

No Granite? Don't Let That Be a Deal Breaker!

If you're looking for the perfect house, that huge wish list you're carrying around may be holding you back - and ultimately could cost you your dream home.

Even the casual HGTV watcher will be familiar with "granite obsession." Picture this: A real estate agent is showing a couple a house that has great curb appeal in their chosen neighborhood, and listed a price they can afford. It's perfect. Or is it?

"Hate that fixture," the husband says, as the couple check out the dining room.

They pause in the kitchen.

"This has to be completely redone," he says. "No granite countertops."

She agrees. The husband and wife nod knowingly at each other, and the real estate agent, who has heard it all before, says to himself, "Granite obsession."

Despite the home's obvious advantages, the couple can't see the forest for the trees ... or rather the house for its décor.

Instead of obsessing over paint colors, fixtures and granite countertops, the couple should be asking their real estate agent about the neighborhood; discussing recent energy-saving upgrades and the home's electrical system; checking for leaks or cracks that may signal a roof repair or foundation problem; and deciding if the floor plan and room sizes will meet their lifestyle needs.

The couple should ask if window coverings are included and if the appliances are in working order. In addition, even if these are not to their tastes, the couple will save a lot of money if they can live with the status quo and not have to buy new appliances, fixtures or drapes immediately.

Got questions?

Ask your real estate agent. I can recommend home inspectors, contractors, designers and others you might want to ask for a second opinion.

However, don't hold out for granite, hardwood or high-end appliances. You may never get a second chance at your dream home.

Can Certain Chemicals Lead to Obesity?

Obesity may start in the womb; according to some scientists who think that exposure to environmental chemicals is linked to weight gain.

Scientists in different U.S. labs were testing endocrine disrupting, or hormone system-disrupting chemicals for effects including toxicity when they started to notice that their lab animals were becoming fat. These substances, which include bisphenol A and pesticides and herbicides, can be found in products like plastics and flame-retardants.

The scientists, who were profiled in the documentary [Programmed to Be Fat](#), believe that infants exposed to such substances in the womb may be predisposed for obesity.

In an interview with The Toronto Star, Bruce Mohun, director of the documentary, said pregnant women should continue to take regular precautions against environmental chemicals.

Measures include avoiding the consumption of food and drink from cans and plastic bottles, not microwaving plastic food containers, and not handling store receipts that could contain bisphenol A.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

How can I use container plants to give my home curb appeal?

Here are four essential tips:

Use big containers: Don't be afraid of using big, bold containers. They will have more impact and will be easier to care for because they won't dry out so easily. Smaller containers tend to get lost in the landscaping, so you'll lose the visual impact you're trying to achieve.

Use quality containers: Avoid plastic containers, as these can look cheap. Terracotta, wrought iron, or zinc containers look great. Choose a container that complements your house and your landscaping.

Fill them with plants: For immediate results, fill your containers with more plants than you normally would. Otherwise, you will be forced to wait for the plants to grow before your container will look lush and healthy.

Feed your plants: Make sure you keep your containers well maintained by watering and feeding the plants regularly.

Some Tech Tips for Your Next Vacation

Here are some tech tips for those who are getting away this spring:

- Hitting the slopes? Visit [Liftopia.com](#) to score deals on lift tickets at hills across North America.
- If you have an iPhone, download the Flight Status app to view flight delays, arrival and departure terminals, and gate numbers for worldwide flights.
- Unless you've prepaid for a data-roaming package, limit cell use outside the country and be sure to turn off data roaming on your phone.
- For the best ocean-view photos on your Caribbean holiday, bring out your camera at sunrise and sunset.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

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Recipe: Buttermilk Pannacotta

Serves 4

- 1 cup heavy cream
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 package gelatin
- 1½ cups buttermilk
- 1 cup peeled, chopped mango
- 1-2 tablespoons brown sugar, or to taste
- Zest of one lemon

Directions

Gently heat cream and sugar until sugar is dissolved.

Add gelatin and stir until dissolved.

Add buttermilk to mixture, stir and pour into ramekins.

Place in the refrigerator to set (at least four hours or overnight).

Combine mango, sugar and lemon zest and leave at room temperature until sugar begins to melt.

To serve, remove from ramekin and place on a plate.

Pour mango mixture over the pannacotta.

Sudoku instructions: Complete the 9x9 grid so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

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