

# Simplifying Your Home Simply (WITH your children), Episode 83



**Power of Moms**  
A Gathering Place for Deliberate Mothers

With April Perry and Marilyn Debry

In this episode, April and Marilyn will discuss how to de-clutter, organize, and maintain a home AND involve children in the process. For more assistance with this topic please visit our [Clutter-Buster kit](http://www.powerofmoms.com) at Power of Moms (dot) com which provides additional podcasts, articles, and worksheets to help you bust the clutter for good.

Marilyn is the mother of eight children (16 years to 18 months) and began the process of de-cluttering her home about a year ago (when the podcast aired). De-junking came out of necessity of having too many things and constantly moving piles from one place to another in attempts at cleaning up. In January 2012, they began the process of de-junking, starting with their closets. Marilyn found that they all had so many clothes and that the bedrooms were practically chaotic. Throughout the process, many times they had bags full of garbage, not even usable stuff.

How to set up a schedule to de-clutter?

Marilyn does not like to be running around constantly thus dedicated her “extra time” to de-cluttering. Often all her children were at home and were involved in the process. But de-cluttering is not a quick fix. It’s an on-going process. Marilyn and her family have been at it for over a year and she states her philosophy as: “Do one thing a day”. Sometimes she spends 10 minutes, sometimes an hour, but focus on doing one thing each day whether it’s cleaning out a closet, a drawer, or a room.

Inspiration can be found in many sources. Reading minimalist blogs can help inspire to live more simply. Many of the blogs Marilyn found were based in Europe where simplicity at home was a matter of necessity because they just didn’t have the space. This teaches an alternate perspective to how we view our stuff. What can we reasonably do without? Culturally (in the USA), we think “bigger is better”, “more is better”, but that is not always the case and stuff tends to accumulate rather quickly.

In addition, April recommends reading the Fly Lady’s blog. She provides very simple steps but also recognizes that everyone will de-clutter differently. We each have different hobbies, likes and dislikes. If you love your shoes, it makes sense to keep them. If you love to cook and have dishes and kitchen-y gadgets, keep those. The focus should be to look at areas of our household (and life) where we can

simplify. You don't have to get rid of everything. Some toys will have sentimental value. If you love it or if it blesses your home, then keep it. But, if something has served its purpose, it is okay to get rid of it. Ask yourself: If your house has burnt down would you replace it?

Things don't always have to go to consignment stores either. See if friends or family members need something that you no longer need. Marilyn mentioned that it gives her joy to see a friend's daughter wearing the clothes her children used to wear.

April also discusses how the media trends tend to eliminate children during the cleaning (and cooking) process. During home makeover shows, the children are usually send on a vacation so of course the rooms look immaculate. The same can be said of cooking shows, there are no screaming toddlers sitting at the chef's feet and no picky eaters throwing spaghetti on the walls. How then can we involve our children in the de-cluttering process? To begin with, if you are cleaning a child's room, have them help you. Have them create piles of things to keep and things to discard. Typically, children want to see what is going on and giving them little errands, such as grab a trash bag, sorting piles, folding clothes, etc. get them involved. If you have multiple children, assign one to watch the littler children while focusing on one specific area. Tackle projects little by little and don't expect the process to be perfect.

De-junking takes emotional and physical energy. However, it's important to remember that energy put out is returned and the overall feeling in the house gets so much better.

Marilyn explains that her children have also invested themselves in the process by removing carpet and organizing movies, so they enjoy it more when they actively participate and can see the work they have accomplished.

Maintaining your newly de-cluttered space is a continual process. A huge effort was made to get rid of stuff making it easier and faster to clean. Some suggestions for keeping everyone involved in the upkeep is to have a Saturday power hour (See [Mind Organization for Moms](#) for suggestions to make this time work for you). Every Saturday, have the children sign up for a couple of jobs, and do a quick but thorough clean. Remember to adjust for your own family's needs; for example, Marilyn is more unstructured than April who likes lists and organization.

The reason for de-cluttering should be focused on how it makes you feel and the feeling that comes into your home by spending time together as a family. De-junking is not about creating the perfect house; it's about focusing on relationships.

In closing, tackle organization little by little, it doesn't have to be done all at once. Everyone will de-clutter a bit differently based on hobbies and family activities. Do it together! People are what matter and building lasting relationships happen when children are involved in the process.

*Transcribed by Rosie Liljenquist*