



Reflections

Reflections UPCI Podcast—March 1, 2025

Guest: Michelle Graham

Topic: Organize Your Home

Bio:

Michelle Graham has served in ministry in multiple capacities with her husband, Scott, for thirty-eight years. She is a mother to Jeremy, Jessica, and son-in-law Braxton. When she has a spare moment, she enjoys crafting, scrapbooking, painting, and treasure hunting at local thrift stores.

Where Do I Begin?

- Start with the area that is not functioning properly.
- Start small, like a drawer or a small closet. (Story of how I did it as a kid)

Getting Started

- Empty the contents of the drawer or closet completely.
- 3 boxes: give away/sell, put away, throw away
- Getting rid of items that are broken, too small, or never used
- Maybe some items are stored in the wrong place

Storage

- Measure the area for storage options (drawer organizers, spacers, baskets, clear boxes, hangers, etc.). When picking storage containers, remember that a square fills space better than a round. Measure the height, width, and length of the area. Remember that you should measure the inside space, not the outside.
- Storage options are available at many places, including Amazon, Home Goods, Big Lots, Hobby Lobby, Walmart, Target, the Dollar Store, and even your local thrift store.

(I searched my local thrift store last week looking for storage options and found over thirty pieces at one location)

- Watch for storage options in unlikely places:
 - Office letter sorter – great for storing cutting boards and cookie sheets
 - Silverware utensil organizer – storing watches, tie clips, cuff links, toothbrush, toothpaste, and floss.
 - Lazy Suzan – Top of a closet for small purses
 - Sock divider – scarves, ties, or baby onesies

Putting Everything Back

Hall Closet



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- Vacuum closet/drawer before putting anything back.
- Hang jackets from spring to winter.
- Put gloves, hats, and winter scarves in a basket under the coats.
- Handheld vacuum, hoses, and filters in another basket under the coats.
- Fold blankets and place them on the shelf above or store them in the basket below for easy access.

HINT: I put an emergency light in the closets that have no light. This helps to see when it is in use and provides a tucked-away light for when the electricity goes out.

Bedroom Drawer

- Fold clothing “think square or rectangle.” Fold in half on the long edge, then fold the sleeves in. Fold the ends halfway to the middle and then fold them together, forming a square. Smaller items may just need a few folds; just remember to make a square.
- File Folding—Store files upright instead of lying flat (like a file folder). This will make them more visible and accessible and save storage space.
- Sock organizers. If you roll or fold, there are options.
- Drawer dividers separate items and keep them in their own space.

Bedroom Closet

- Separate clothing by style: skirts, blouses, jackets, dresses
- Initially, place hangers backward, and then you will know what you have not worn at season's end.
- Consider what you will need access to the most often and put that in front.
- If you don't have a lot of closet space, store out-of-season clothing in air-tight containers.
- Get hangers that are alike. I like velvet hangers and skirt hangers. Wooden hangers are great for jackets but take up a little more room.
- Hang in color groups within each category.
- Hang all that you can if you have a large closet. (Maybe you have a large closet but not a lot of drawer space, hang slips, tank tops, scarves, etc.)
- Clear containers and baskets for shelf storage
- Label all containers
- Shoes: Behind the door, hanging organizers, clear shoe boxes, shoe caddies.
If you have shoes on a shelf, placing one forward and the other backward takes up less space.
- Access empty space – under hanging clothes with another bar to hang clothes, clear stackable drawers, or baskets
- Empty wall space – Hang hooks for hats, belts, etc.
- Consider under-the-bed storage bins for clothing that is less used.
- Storage bin marked “travel” – binoculars, rain poncho, adapters, compression socks, travel-sized toiletries.



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- Hang a towel bar or hooks on the back of a door for storing scarves,
- Tie racks can also be used for belts, slips, and tank tops

Kids Bedroom

- Store clothing at their level to teach responsibility.
- Use picture tags and have them spelled out on storage bins or baskets.
- Hang clothes in outfits (maybe for the week), and then they can choose clothing.
- Use adhesive hooks to anchor cords to keep up off the floor.
- Placing their books on a colored shelf will help them to get put back properly.
- Stacked clear containers are great for small toys and toy parts.
- Toys: Consider having a “Summer” and “Winter” toy bin. By switching them out each season, the toys will seem new.
- Back-of-the-door shoe pockets work great for toys as well. Again, you can put a picture label on each pocket to make cleaning up easy.
- Underbed rolling storage is great for kids' rooms. It is on their level and easy to access.

Linen Closet

- Fold pillowcases and sheets together or place the sheets inside of one pillowcase.
- Fold the washcloths inside their matching towel or place them in a basket file style. If there is not much room, consider rolling towels on the shelf.
- Clear stackable drawers work great for medicine and first aid supplies (As you clean, be sure to check the expiration dates).
- Blankets – folded in plastic zippered bags or in baskets.

Kitchen

- Place items closely to where they will be used – potholders and pans by the stove, mugs by the coffee pot, etc.
- Measuring spoons and cups in a basket in a drawer or consider hanging them with adhesive hooks just inside of a cabinet with your baking supplies. I have a fire blanket hanging inside the cabinet between my stove top and oven.
- Big open cabinets –
 - o Pull out drawers
 - o Stackable drawers
 - o Wire racks for stacking items
 - o Pull-out trash cans can also be used for tinfoil, parchment paper, etc.
- Pantry – placing items in clear, stackable containers with labels. This makes it much easier to make your grocery list. (When picking the size, I pick what will fill a new box of the item, such as oatmeal.)
- Snack bars or pop tarts in a clear, open container for easy access.
- Spices:



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- Spice racks
- In a shallow drawer with tags all facing upwards
- Clear containers alphabetized: A-C, D – F, etc.
- Pick a number and stick with it. You do not need twenty empty Cool Whip containers. Maybe five to send leftovers home with guests and throw away the others.
- Shallow drawers – roll washcloths and towels instead of folding

Laundry Room

- Placing liquid detergent in a clear dispenser makes it pretty, easy to use, and easy to see when you need to restock.
- Placing laundry sheets in a clear open container makes the room smell lovely and makes them easy to access.
- Place a tag with your child's picture on the end of a laundry basket (or cute basket), and they can pick up their clean laundry and put it away. If they are younger, this will help you with getting the clean items to the correct room.
- Having a place to hang clothes is always good for drying clothing and having a place to hang them fresh out of the dryer.
- If you have cabinets, consider containers with lids to go above them, storing items used less often (light bulbs, bug spray, suntan lotion, extension cords).
- Have a small trash can nearby for dryer lint.
- They make narrow shelves that fit perfectly on the back/top of the washer and dryer, making it less likely to drop items behind them.

Quotes:

“The war against clutter has two possible outcomes: either you own your stuff, or your stuff owns you.”

“Use it or lose it”. – Jeff Campbell in *Clutter Control*

“Clutter is caused by failure to return things to where they belong. Therefore, storage should reduce the effort needed to put things away, not the effort needed to get them out.” – Marie Kondo in *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*

“The key principle when organizing anything, from junk drawers to garages, is grouping.” – Deniece Schofield in *Confessions of An Organized Homemaker*

Books:

Confessions of an Organized Homemaker – Deniece Schofield

The 15-Minute Organizer – Emilie Barnes

How NOT to be a Messie – Sandra Felton

The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up – Marie Kondo



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(I do not support her spiritual practices, but she has some good cleaning ideas)

Clutter Control – Jeff Campbell of the Clean Team

The Family Manager Takes Charge – Kathy Peel