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Print this article back-to-back with The Garage Clutter Flow Chart for a fun, unique, inexpensive, educational handout.

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Is it **Garage** Clutter?

What is **Garage clutter?** When it comes to your garage, clutter is anything you don't *use, love, or need to keep*. For each item, ask yourself: **Do I use it?** Really? How often? Be honest. If you can't remember, there's probably something wrong with it. **Do I love it?** Consider this: If you love it so much, why is it out in the garage in a box where it may be deteriorating from dust and heat, and you can't even get to it, much less enjoy it? **Do I need to keep it?** OK, but can you find it when you need it? How *many* do you need to keep? **Is it in good condition?** If it needs repair, fix it! If it can't be saved, recycle or toss it! Don't store it broken. **Does it fit my current lifestyle?** Are you ever going to camp/garden/woodwork again? If not, that stuff is taking up valuable space! **Is my car parked outside** in the harsh elements simply because I am hanging on to all this stuff? **If you can answer yes to these questions (except parking your car outside), wonderful, it stays! Just be sure to store it in an organized manner, so you can find it quickly when you need it. Install shelving to maximize vertical storage space and label your bins!**

Why can't I part with my **Garage clutter?** Here are some reasons why this is difficult:

I might need it someday. Yes, you might. Let's think about this: What do you think is the likelihood (10%? 95%?) of your ever needing it? Would it be easy/difficult to replace? How much would it cost (\$5? \$500?) to replace it? Is there something else you'd rather use the space for NOW? **I'm saving it for the garage sale.** Really? When is it scheduled? Have you ever had one before? If you really have a sale, promise me you'll take the things that don't sell to charity directly afterwards, OK? **I'm saving it for my kids.** I hate to break it to you but they probably don't want it, especially after it's been languishing in the garage for 20 years. Ask them, if they are adults, and if they say yes, make them take it home. This goes double if the item is theirs to begin with. Don't let them use your home as their storage facility! **It reminds me of good times.** That's nice. Do you have photographs of those good times? If not, take a photo of the item before you purge it. Or just purge it anyway. You'll have other good times, I promise! **It was a gift, or I inherited it.** Great, so it's yours to do with what you want, right? **I paid good money for it.** So what? Don't clutter your present with past mistakes! **My favorite charity might want it.** OK, perfect – bag it up and take it there today! **My friend/neighbor/coworker might want it.** Ask them. Give it to them today. **The bottom line: If you don't use it, love it, or need to keep it, it's clutter.**

What should I do with my **Garage clutter?** Donate, Recycle, Sell, Gift, or Toss.

What if, despite my best intentions, I am still living with **Garage clutter?**

If a month (or other self-imposed deadline) has gone by since you decided to try to find the *perfect* home for it, or try to sell it, and you haven't managed to do so, ask yourself: Is it in good enough condition to donate to Goodwill, or another default (maybe not *perfect*) charity? If so, pack it up and take it there TODAY! If the answer is no, it isn't good enough, throw it in the trash NOW! If you need help, call a friend or a professional organizer.

Congratulations, you are on the road to becoming **Garage clutter-free!**