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Hazel Thornton
Organized For Life
(505) 242-6762
www.org4life.com

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

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Is it **Photo** Clutter?

What is **Photo clutter?** Clutter comes in many forms. In the case of photos, clutter can prevent you from finding, using, and sharing your precious memories. For any photo ask yourself:

Is it meaningful to me? If not, is it meaningful to someone else that you can give it to?

Do I love it? Consider this: If you love it so much, why is it lost among your thousands of other digital photos, so that you can't even find it, much less enjoy it? Or, stuck under the bed in a box that is getting dustier by the year?

Do I need to keep it? OK, but can you find it when you need it? How many similar photos do you have?

If the answer is yes – it's meaningful, you love it, or need to keep it -- wonderful, it stays!

Just be sure to display it, or store it in an organized manner. Tag digital photos for future use. Back them up properly. Print and get them framed nicely. Share them with others. Preserve and back up paper photos by scanning and restoring them. Display them in an album, or in a place of honor. Sort and store photos (in digital files or photo-safe boxes) according to people, places, and/or events.

Why can't I part with my **Photo clutter?** People are loath to part with their photos. Here are some reasons why it is difficult for them:

It was a gift. Great, so it's yours to do with what you want, right?

I inherited it. Is it a family heirloom? Or just a bunch of bad snapshots that happened to belong to a loved one?

I have good memories of this time/person/place. OK, great! Preserve and display it. Consider first, though: How many other photos do you have of the same thing? Pick the best ones and let the rest go.

I have bad memories of this time/person/place. All the more reason to get rid of it now!

I needed this for something, like making sure I bought the right thing at the store. OK...do you still need it?

The bottom line: If it's not meaningful, or you don't love it or need to keep it, it's clutter.

What should I do with my **Photo clutter?** This one's as easy as ABC: A = Put the best and most important ones in an ALBUM (paper or digital). B = Store the rest of the "keepers" in a photo-safe BOX, or organize them and BACK UP digitally. C = Toss everything else in the trash CAN (or delete them). Yes, you CAN get rid of duplicate, blurry, and excess photos! (Traditional prints are not recyclable.)

What if, despite my best intentions, I still have **Photo clutter?**

If a month (or other self-imposed deadline) has gone by since you decided to clear photo clutter, and you haven't managed to do so, ask yourself: Are they good enough to give to relatives? What about donating them to a historical society or a crafts club? If so, pack them up and take them TODAY! If the answer is no, they aren't good enough, throw them in the trash or delete them NOW! If you need help, call a professional organizer or a friend to help you identify which photos you value and need to keep, and help you store, share, and display them in an organized manner.

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

Less clutter. More life.

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