



# Breda Stack

We've all got physical, mental and emotional clutter in our lives and there's no better time than the present to clear it. Declutter Therapist, **Breda Stack**, tells us how...

## 1 Establish what "clutter" is to you

I would define clutter as anything in your life that doesn't serve you or make you feel good, whether that's physical, mental or emotional. It's impossible to make any great change or move forward in life if you're weighed down by too much "stuff".

## 2 Become aware of the benefits

Less really is more, and decluttering opens you up to benefits in all areas of life – family, home, social, health, finances and career. Regardless of age and personal circumstances, I've never yet met a person who decluttered in the right way and whose life didn't change for the better.

## 3 Prepare well

Set the scene for your decluttering so that everything is in your favour. It's too easy to get distracted so make sure you have no

unwanted disruptions or demands on your time. You'll feel a lot less overwhelmed if you plan well in advance.

## 4 Set realistic expectations

Physical decluttering can be time consuming and exhausting – not just on the body but mentally and emotionally too. Things like detailed paperwork, photographs and other sentimental items can especially be tough going. Setting realistic expectations helps avoid frustration and disappointment. Undertake a simple, step-by-step approach.

## 5 Learn the right way to do it

Decluttering without the correct information or frame of mind doesn't work – you need the practical elements like lifestyle, organisation, storage, interior decor and design, style and environment as well as the right mindset. For me, the focus is on teaching people the knowledge and skills because that's where you see real, long-term results..

## 6 Let go of guilt and shame

Physical clutter is a tangible reminder of the mistakes you've made or the money you feel you've wasted. Often we're too embarrassed to face the problem or ask for help. Guilt and shame don't tend to encourage positive action so self-forgiveness is really important.

## 7 Tell yourself you can

If you feel you're not naturally organised or you don't believe in your ability to change it can be difficult to imagine ever being good at decluttering. Just like learning to drive a car, you can learn to become clutter-free and systematic.

## 8 Unearth your blocks

With obstacles that are sometimes complex and deep-rooted, often we don't understand why we just can't let go. It's also common that those around us may not support us when we decide to declutter – their own fears

often come to the surface. Developing an understanding of what's holding you back is crucial if you want to make real progress.

## 9 Put your unwanted items to good use

Knowing your decluttering will benefit worthy causes always helps ease any pain. I founded National Declutter Day to encourage people to declutter so they can firstly enjoy the personal benefits and then donate their unwanted items to charity or reuse and recycle to benefit the environment.

## 10 Adopt a healthy attitude to change

Our thoughts and feelings about losses or traumas in the past can, very understandably, keep us from clearing out. Although at times difficult, it's important to develop a healthy, balanced relationship to change so we can declutter and let go in the best possible way.

\* *Breda Stack, The Declutter Therapist, [www.thedecluttertherapist.ie](http://www.thedecluttertherapist.ie)*