



TRANSCRIPT

Episode 34: Where to Start When You Want to Tackle it All with Taylor Flanery

TAYLOR FLANERY *from* HOME STORAGE SOLUTIONS 101

WELCOME TO THE PODCAST

Welcome to the Get Organized HQ podcast. I'm your host, Tasha Lorentz. Every week we share practical strategies for less stress and more peace as we dive into all topics life and home organization. I'm so glad you're here for this week's episode.

MEET TAYLOR FLANERY

Tasha: Well, today on the Get Organized HQ podcast, I am joined by Taylor Flanery. You might recognize her from her group Declutter365 that has over a million members working together to do a little bit of decluttering every single day. She's also the author of the blog Home Storage Solutions 101.

SNEAK PEEK AT HER SESSION

So you may have seen her over there, and she's going to be one of our speakers at this year's Get Organized HQ Virtual Conference. And in today's episode, she's going to give you a little sneak peek of what to expect in her session.

DON'T MISS OUT

But if you are signed up for Get Organized HQ Virtual 2025, you definitely want to listen in to today's episode because we are going to be talking about how to figure out where to start in your home.

SO MANY GOALS, WHERE TO BEGIN?

My guess is you have a lot of goals and visions and dreams for your home—things you want to declutter, things you want to organize, and systems that you want to set up and be able to maintain. And Taylor today is going to share how to juggle and sort through all of that so that you can make progress in your home.

SIGN UP IF YOU HAVEN'T YET

And if you're not signed up for Get Organized HQ Virtual 2025, definitely check out the link in the show notes and get your free ticket. It's totally free to join. You can hear Taylor's session and over 100 other speaker sessions on all things life and home organization. But that's enough about that for now.

LET'S DIVE IN

Let's dive into today's episode with Taylor. Well, Taylor, thank you so much for coming on to the Get Organized HQ podcast today. I know that you are one of our presenters for the upcoming Get Organized HQ Virtual Conference, so we definitely want a little sneak peek of what you'll be sharing about there.

But I also know you have some great tips to share for anyone who might be feeling a little overwhelmed going into this—that there are so many things that I think all of us want to fine-tune, let's say, in our homes: between systems

and organizing and decluttering and all of the options.

Taylor: And so I'm excited to dive into that with you today. Yes, thank you so much for having me. And I am really excited to be able to present at Get Organized HQ and also just to talk with you today.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Tasha: Yeah, absolutely. So I know that you share about a lot of different topics online. There's like a lot of homes that you have, I guess I would say—people can find you in your Facebook group and you have a few different websites.

And so I'm curious: is there one angle or aspect that started everything for you? Did you start talking about storage solutions and household management and all of this at the same time, or did it kind of grow and evolve? Like, what's the backstory there?

DECLUTTER365 AND ITS THREE LEGS

Taylor: Yeah, so I have a couple of different websites, like you mentioned. It has really evolved that I really talk the most about decluttering. So people know me through the Declutter365 program. But with that program, it really is about decluttering at its base, but it has a couple other components.

So there's really three kind of legs to the stool. And I think we're going to talk about all of them here today. So we're going to talk about decluttering, we're going to talk about organizing—because we're going to declutter what we don't need at all, get it out of the house. We're going to organize what's left so you have a home for it and can find it when you

need it.

And then the third leg of the stool, stool of this program that I have, is about maintaining your home afterward. Because, you know, if you do all this work to declutter and to organize, you don't want it to just kind of go back to afterwards, you know? So instead we want to—

And we don't also want to have like these big, huge cleaning sessions or decluttering sessions or organizing sessions where we just wear ourselves out. And then it's really nice for about a day, a week, something like that.

And then it's not fun anymore because it's all just gone back to heck. And instead, I want you on a regular basis to be enjoying your home. I want you to be doing things besides decluttering, cleaning, organizing. I want you to do whatever the heck you want to do in your house—whether that be sit down and watch TV, enjoy your family, do a hobby, go to sleep, sleep, whatever it is that you want to do.

THE POWER OF MAINTENANCE

So the maintaining is actually a really big part of it as well. So we were asking, how did this all work out? Yes, I have a couple of different websites that started them at different times, but like I said, now it's really evolved into this Declutter365 program with those three main components.

Tasha: Yeah, I like how you described it as three legs of a stool. And I think that's where it can be tricky, right? All three of those are important: decluttering, organizing, and setting up systems.

But I think we also all know that you can't do everything at once. You can't all in one day

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declutter everything, organize everything, set up a brand new system for keeping all of it organized, and expect it to be something that works for you. Expect yourself to not be completely worn out and on the verge of being sick from just the amount of energy that it takes to do that.

And also just time constraints, like it is physically not possible so many times to do all of that at once. And you can really get into a situation where you've unintentionally made yourself more stressed while trying to make yourself less stressed by trying to do everything at the same time.

THE TV MAKEOVER MYTH

And so, how do you approach deciding which aspect of that to work on to today?

Taylor: Okay, that's such a good question. Because basically what we liked, we wish we could do is we want it to be like one of those shows on TV where they come in and they, you just leave the house and they come and they just like declutter it and it becomes organized and decorated and you come back in and boom, it's done.

And like, that sounds amazing, but one, we don't have everybody to do that. And two, I would say that most of the time if, if that happens for someone, like, if someone does have somebody that declutters for them, if they don't have those systems in place, things are going to go back to the way they were anyways.

DON'T CHOKES ON YOUR HOME

So what we don't want to do is try to shove too much work on ourselves all at once. It's almost like choking on your home, you know, if you try

to do too much. So we've got to go in small enough bites that we can actually get it done. And so that's where people get into trouble.

And I understand it. I don't just mean like other people. This was actually one of the reasons I started my websites. I had three small children. My house was just becoming a disaster and I didn't know why. I was working full time as an attorney and then I had these three little kids and things were just going to heck and I could not figure out how to deal with it.

And so I started out thinking, how do I manage this household? And then it has evolved into all of this other stuff. But what I want to have everybody know is how we can figure out what are these small bites to take so we don't choke on our home.

We're not overwhelmed to the point that we feel like we are in paralysis about it or take on so much that it actually becomes worse instead of better, or make us feel like we've failed in some way, which can be very demotivating as well.

SMALL STEPS—AND WHAT TO AVOID

So I want us to talk about how, how we can take small steps and then what some of those good first steps could be, and also the ones that we should probably avoid so that we don't make it worse on accident.

Tasha: Right. And also trying to make sure that you get to all of those points, because I think probably anyone listening to this has heard that, like, okay, you have to declutter first.

You can't organize clutter. And we know that. And I agree. Like, you know, if you're going to organize or you're going to set up a system and

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there's a lot of stuff in your space that you're not using, you're not needing, then it's going to really put you in a difficult space for getting it to where you want it to be.

But we also don't want to only ever stay at the decluttering phase. I mean, I think a lot of us probably could declutter for the next five years. You know, like, oh, well, let me just keep decluttering. And something I've always said is that decluttering is an iterative process. Like, it's something you come back to, and the next time you go through this space, you're going to find something different.

And so trying to balance, like, yes, we need to declutter first. But I also, I would really like to also reach the point of organizing and setting up systems, and the decluttering doesn't have to be perfectly completed before we get there.

IS THERE A FORMULA?

So you mentioned taking these small bites. I love your analogy of not choking on your home. I think that's a really, a really good way to put it. And so is this something that, like, is. Is there a formula, would you say that someone can follow, or is it something that you kind of have to do a choose your own adventure?

Taylor: Well, I think there is a choose your own adventure portion to this, but then you're going to potentially do a formula that you're going to apply to your home. So the first thing is, like I said, you can. When you're overwhelmed, you can do one of two things. You can jump in head first and like, you will choke on all of the stuff you're trying to do, and that will demotivate you.

You will maybe make a huge mess and feel sad and exhaust and that will make you not happy

about the whole situation. Or you will look at it all and go, I don't know where to start. There's too much to do. I want it all to be perfect today. And then you will feel paralyzed.

So these small steps can be a choose your own adventure. If you don't know where to start. I always suggest with the kitchen, and the reason I suggest that is because it's a very practical place to start. It's going to be a place that most of us use on a daily basis.

PICK A PAIN POINT

Our whole family does. It's a very much of a family hub. And so it's often a pain point for a lot of people. Now, there's other places that are pain points for people, and that's probably where you should start. Now, when I mean a pain point—

We can think of all kinds of places that could be a pain point, but we're talking about things that are going to prac— that are practically making our life harder right now. So whatever you're the most frustrated with right now, that is impacting not your just brain, but like your actions on a daily basis, things are harder because this, of this particular pain point, those are the types of places you should focus on.

DON'T START WITH THE BASEMENT

So, like, if you're just really aggravated by the fact that you have a lot of stuff in the basement, but you only go in there about once a month, that's not a pain point that you're going to focus on first. You want to focus first on a pain point that's impacting your life on a daily, maybe hourly basis.

So that's why I often suggest the kitchen. Just because people are going in there all the

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time. So it's going to be a pain point for a lot of people. Maybe it's that your counters are full and so it's very difficult for you to cook food. Or maybe you can't find the bills that are piled up on the kitchen table.

Or, you know, the kids keep moving stuff so they can do their crafts on the kitchen table and then you can't find anything. I mean, whatever it is that's bugging you, there could be where I'm talking about choosing your own adventure. If you have. If you're like, my kitchen, all right, but my bedroom is driving me nuts.

CHOOSING PAIN POINTS

You know, I can't find clothes to wear or there's too much stuff in my closet or I keep tripping on stuff on the floor. Maybe it's your bedroom. So big pain points that are— are things that are helpful places to start are kitchen, bedroom and clothes or another very often used room of your house.

So it could be your bathroom if people are like, not able to get ready very easily in the morning. Or maybe it's your entryway because it doesn't— bugs you as you come in the door and you're tripping over shoes or something like that. So this is why I'm saying choose your own adventure in that you can just decide, hey, for me, there is this really big pain point, and if I fix it, things are not going to be perfect in my life

But it would save me 5, 10, 15 minutes every single day. And my goodness, if you can save 15 minutes every day for a month, that's like eight or nine hours of time that you've saved yourself.

So it really will repay you to work on those frequently problem pain points, very quickly. So that's why I say, you know, choose your own

adventure. But when I talk about small steps, people are like, oh, my gosh, I don't.

THE KITCHEN FEELS TOO BIG

Okay, you just told me I'm supposed to work on my kitchen. Well, that seems really big, right? And so I get that. So there's a couple of different things you can do for trying to figure out the small steps. And so one of them is to use a program like I have, or there's other ones out there too, but, like, Declutter365 breaks it down into, like, manageable steps.

And so we will work very, you know, methodically through the kitchen. And I'll be like, today we're going to work on this flat surface like the kitchen counter or the kitchen table. But we might also go, we're going to do one drawer, or we're going to do just the kitchen utensils or whatever, right?

WRITE IT DOWN

So you can look at lists like Checklists or the Declutter 365 calendar to help you with ideas of small steps. The other thing you can do if you're just like, I want to do this on my own, or I want it to be really personalized for me is I suggest people go through and they not write down, like to the point of perfection, but they just start writing down a lot of different small steps.

And the reason I suggest writing it down instead of just in your brain is because eventually you're going to want to do one of those steps. And so if you can just be like, okay, now I'm gonna look at there, and. And I know that my kitchen counters are driving me nuts.

Or the appliance closet is what is. You know, just. I keep opening it, everything's about to fall

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out. Or my pots and pans are just in disarray. Like, whatever it is, you can write those down. And then it's very. It's easier to just say, I'm going to ignore everything on this list except for this one thing, and you can start working on it.

Because it's much easier to focus on one small task than it is to be like, I got to do this entire kitchen, you know?

Tasha: Yes, for sure. I have definitely done the entire kitchen thing more than once.

And it is. I do not necessarily recommend it.

SMALL STEPS

Taylor: Well, that's. That's another really big point that I want to mention. So when I say a small step, I really mean a very small step. So your pots and pans might actually be too big of a step, for example, for you.

Just depends how many pots and pans you have and how much time you've got and how much energy. So one of the things that we talk about the most in Declutter365 is using 15 minute increments for this. Now, you could do. If you have an hour or two to do it, you can use.

THINK IN 15-MINUTE BLOCKS

You can put 15 minutes, then 15 minutes more than 15 minutes more. But I still want you to think in the small increments. And this is why the key is actually to sort and, like, do your actions for about 10 minutes, and then use the last five minutes to do what I call cleanup.

So instead of pulling everything out of every single drawer in your kitchen and every single thing out of every single cabinet in your kitchen

and having it laying, laying on the ground when you go, oh, I have done something very bad because now I ran out of time or I ran out of energy, and it's time to cook dinner.

And now everything's on the floor. We're going to just pull out just a little bit at a time. We're going to look at it. We're going to make decisions. And that can be, you know, deciding that you're going to get rid of it or you're going to move it to a different location, or it's perfectly fine where it is, and then you're going to do cleanup.

And the cleanup is really, I swear, it is the magical key to all of this. It's going to make it where every time you do a decluttering session, you're actually making progress. Instead of having this really large, messy middle, which can be very demotivating, or you could, like, run out of gas and not be able to finish.

WHAT CLEANUP LOOKS LIKE

So the cleanup step is where you just go, okay, I'm keeping these things. I'm putting them back in the drawer. Okay. There is this random toy that was in this kitchen cabinet or. And so I'm going to take it back into the room it was supposed to be in and put it away, or at least as close to away as I can.

Maybe if that room's cluttered up, you can't actually put it away, but you're going to put it as close to being away as you can. And then there was stuff that you were like, there's some trash. I'm throwing it in the trash can. And there was some stuff. There was like, I don't want it anymore, but it's perfectly good. Somebody else will want it. And I'm gonna stick it in a box for donation and take that to my car, to take the next time I go out.

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CLEANUP IS THE KEY TO PROGRESS

Now, the cleanup step is what makes it possible to not go insane. And it's part of the small steps. So you are just keeping things, like, with forward progress. It really is the key, I think, to it.

Now, after you've decluttered every single drawer and every single cabinet, you know, then you might do a little rearranging. But that's exactly what you said. It's an in. It's an iterative. I cannot say that word. But you know what I'm talking about. It's a step by step process.

And you might go back and redo some of the steps again. And that's perfectly fine. That's perfectly fine. In fact, that's pretty normal, so.

Tasha: Oh, definitely. And I have also found that in just different seasons of life, there were things I needed, and I don't need them now.

And I need to make room for new things that are coming and all of that for. I mean, things are always changing. And so to not view decluttering as something that you have to finish, to never do again. But you're setting yourself up to so that it will be easier to maintain in the future.

WHAT TO DO WITH RANDOM STUFF

And I like what you said about that cleanup step and, making sure that we're getting things all the way done, because that's what can leave those really frustrating messes. Because, honestly, like, the toy in the cabinet or the thing that goes in the office or the thing that. It's like, I think I need to keep this. But where do people keep this type of thing?

You know, like, where do I keep the extra chip

bag clips? I really don't know. Those are the things that can pile up and kind of, like, become additional clutter that, like, they sit on the countertop for the next two weeks because we weren't really sure what to do with it. But making some decision about it.

And then, like you said, if you're doing this in small steps, you can totally do more than one in a row. Like, if you have an afternoon and you really want to sit down and declutter, if you only do one drawer at a time, you can do seven drawers throughout the course of the afternoon.

And that's awesome, but it gives you permission to be, like, you know, 10 minutes away from stopping at any point in time without leaving yourself with that mess. And that is, like you said, what's going to keep you out of trouble for the long run of working on this.

DECISION FATIGUE IS REAL

Taylor: Yes.

I mean, I really. I really. I've. I've definitely done it where I've bit off more than I can chew. And I'm like, now I'm cleaning up for, like, three hours, and it's just not possible a lot of times because things happen, you know, or we just get. It's a lot more tiring, too, than we think it's going to be.

Making the decision decisions is not. I mean, there can be physical tiredness from decluttering because you're picking up stuff, you're moving it around, you're walking all around and you're carrying things that can be tiring. But the making decisions, even about stuff that you're like, oh, yeah, I'm clearly getting rid of that.

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It's not even, like, a hard decision, but just over and over and over again making those decisions. Your brain gets tired. So it's good to. To give yourself the ability to have an out without, having dug in too deep to be able to feel like, oh, I've just made this huge mess.

Because I. I know people will say that a lot. Like, especially, like, their closet. They'll pull everything out, they'll put it on their bed. They will run out of gas for whatever reason. Like, emotional, physical, they just have to go do another appointment, whatever, and then it's time for bed.

And all the stuff is laying on their bed, and they're like, what. What am I gonna do? I can't go to sleep. Yes. All in my bed. And then they end up, like, shoving it onto the floor, and it just makes it worse. And so I mean, I speak from experience.

It's not like I'm saying, oh, I've never done that. I'm like, I can describe it real well because I've lived it, you know?

Tasha: Yes. So as people are going through taking these small steps, is this decluttering only—is like, are we just focusing on decluttering or are you doing the process of organizing as you're putting things back?

START WITH DECLUTTERING FIRST

Taylor: Okay, so that's an excellent question. So I do suggest people focus on a pain point like I talked about. And so you're like, okay, I've decided it's my kitchen, or I've decided that it's my entryway or whatever.

What I want people to do in that situation is actually declutter first, because I do think that's important, because there's no way to be able to

figure out what you've got and where you want to put stuff until you get rid of the junk that you don't want anymore at all.

CLEANING DEPENDS ON THE SPACE

Then the next thing I suggest, and this is more dependent on the room you're talking about. If you're talking about the kitchen, you might even clean a little bit first, just because if there's stuff in the sink—like, I mean, the kitchen is like one of those animals that you do have to keep clean a lot.

Okay. But like, if you're talking about, like, decluttering your entryway, I mean, it might be dusty, don't get me wrong, but it's not like filthy the way that a kitchen can get.

Tasha: So there's not pizza sauce on the floor, most likely.

DECLUTTERING GETS YOU 80% THERE

Right. So cleaning is much more important in a kitchen just because you got to get it functional enough to be able to, like, start sorting through stuff. But like, in an entryway, the most important thing is decluttering. And then this is what I say. I mean, it's really interesting because I started out my whole journey thinking I needed to organize.

So when I first started, before I did the Declutter365 missions, I had something, and I still do it. It's called the 52 Week Organized Home Challenge. And it actually—they're incorporated now, and so they're very much together. So like, we do kitchen organization while we're decluttering the kitchen.

ORGANIZING IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN YOU THINK

But I realized later that the cluttering gets you about 80% of the way to getting organized. If you just get rid of all the stuff you don't need, it's so much easier to find what you need or want at a specific time.

Even if you haven't really organized it. If you only have stuff you need in the drawer—even if the drawer, like, stuff's rolling around in that drawer and so forth—there's not as much stuff, you can find it.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT

Now eventually you might want to put in some drawer organizers and you might want to, you know, separate out in your bathroom like the, you know, hair ties from the hairbrush, etc.

But you can have it all thrown in the drawer together and you're going to at least have it be functionally able for you to find stuff in the meantime. So while I love organizing and I love me a good organizer—like I want to buy a storage solution and I want to organize things—it's actually not as important.

It's like the least important part of the process, believe it or not, which is kind of crazy to me. It's not intuitive to me at all that that is true. But when you have enough decluttering, it really does make the difference.

So to the extent that you're, like, opening the drawer and it's still hard for you to find something, sure, go ahead and start thinking about how to organize that space. Because you're going to focus on your pain points and you're going to look at just the one room at a time or one area or, I like, type of item at a time.

Whatever your pain point is—you've decided kitchen, entryway, clothes, whatever it is—so you can declutter. You can do just enough organization to make it where it's easy for you to find stuff easily. If you can already find it easily, skip that step.

If you can skip the step of cleaning, skip the step of cleaning. It's not necessary to deep clean the space right then. I mean, if it's like a layer of dust, sure, because you're going to sneeze otherwise. But like just, you know, within reason, you don't need to clean a lot.

GET TO 80% FUNCTIONAL—THEN MOVE ON

The biggest thing to do is just to keep working on that space step, small step by small step until it's again—I like this 80% number—about 80% good and 80% functional. The reason I'm saying that is I bet you have more than one pain point.

Like if you feel overwhelmed and you're like, I need to do all the things, you're not feeling like you only need to do all the things in your kitchen. Like you're probably like, well, I'm trying to decide now, should I do the kitchen or the entryway or the clothes or the kids' bedroom or what, like, which is the biggest pain point for me.

SAVE TIME, THEN SHIFT FOCUS

So if you get it to be pretty functional and you've saved yourself now with more functionality and less clutter and slightly more organizing—about 15 minutes a day in that area of your life—then it's time to move on.

We're not going to decorate right now. We're not going to deep clean right now. We're not

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going to make it absolutely perfect or even organize it to Pinterest perfection yet, because you're still drowning in other areas of your house.

So after you get about 80% functional in your kitchen or wherever it is, that's the first pain point you've decided on—now it's time to move to that second pain point and do it all over again. Because eventually you're not going to have as many pain points. And that is how you can start to feel like things are starting to finally feel a little bit better.

And it's also when you can start this last part, which I know people are like, oh, no, there's something else I have to do, but it is to start a little bit of maintenance tasks so that all of the hard work that you've put in to get them to about 80% functional really sticks, because you don't want to have to do it all over again.

WHAT MAINTENANCE REALLY MEANS

And so the biggest ones for that are: if you're doing your kitchen, it is a daily cleaning of the kitchen just because it is a place that needs it for just functional reasons to be cleaned. Okay, so that's the other thing I want to define for you real quick, because I want to talk about maintenance here for a second.

So at least when I'm talking about it, when I say declutter, I mean to actually remove items that you no longer want in your home out of your home completely. Cleaning is things like removing dirt and filth and debris or like washing something.

TIDYING VS CLEANING VS DECLUTTERING

So it's the literal act of cleaning. And then I use

the word tidying not to mean the same thing as, like, Marie Kondo. I like the book. I'm not, like, dissing the book. I just—when I say the word tidying, to me that means to put things away.

Putting things away are things—obviously, if you've pulled something out, you're using it on a regular basis. It's not clutter, but it can look visually like clutter if it's sitting out on your kitchen counter or you're tripping on it or something. Right. So the big things for maintenance that I really want you to do—if nothing else—for the kitchen is to clean, because we have to like wash dishes and pots and pans and wipe up spills.

But any other place, basically in the house, you're going to want to tidy on a daily basis. If you just put the things back away that you pulled out during the last 24 hours—if you do it every single night, hopefully with your family also involved, and be like, we're going to tidy up for about 10 minutes.

And you put up 24 hours worth of stuff that is going to keep your home maintained enough that you can keep up with each section of the house that you're slowly making better without those sections that you already worked on going back to heck, basically.

And so you can finally start to feel like there's progress.

Tasha: Oh, definitely. And I think that that tidying step can sound or even visually look way more overwhelming than it is. Or even the cleaning. There are times I look at the dishes and I am like, oh, there's no way this is going to be like an hour worth of washing dishes.

THE 15-MINUTE TIDY UP

And if I actually like set a timer, I probably did them in like 10 to 15 minutes tops. Even though there were all these dishes there and tidying the same way. It's amazing how quickly stuff can look like it's a really big mess, but if you know where it's going, there's room for it to go there because you've decluttered. And so when you go to put something back in that drawer, you're not having to like, shuffle things around and not able to open the drawer and all of that.

And really like, that 15 minute tidy up can make a huge difference. And there are times, like, if I'm really tired, not feeling it, like, set that timer and give yourself honest, like, you will follow through permission that if you want to stop at the end of 15 minutes, you'll let yourself, even if you haven't tidied every last inch of your house.

And I think you'll be amazed, you're probably getting things done that you didn't even put on the initial tidying list. You're like, well, I still have three minutes. Might as well, you know, go do this other thing that's kind of been waiting for me for a while. And yeah, I totally agree. It's. That is tidying every day is what's going to make a huge difference in you every day waking up in a home that you can feel at peace in.

WHY DAILY TIDYING WORKS

Taylor: Yes. And I mean, that's a lot of people will be like, it's going to take me more time to tidy than that. And I, I mean, if you haven't tidied for three, four, five days, that's actually true because you've got, you've pulled out a lot of stuff over the course of all of that time.

If, on the other hand, you are tidying at least every 24 hours, and if you can even have the bonus of, you know, don't put it down, put it

away as another little habit that you do, then I promise it really won't take as long because you really can't pull out that much stuff within 24 hours.

Now, kids can, but that's why kids also need to be involved. Right. And I will say that in the summertime, especially when my kids were little, we did more than one tidy in a day just because kids can pull out a lot of stuff. So I mean, but we still were able to keep on track with it because we, like, I would just be like, okay, it's, it's time to tidy again.

Yeah, before we start pulling out even more stuff. But, that is the biggest maintenance thing you can do. I think everything else, maintenance wise, that you're going to do, systems, habits, I mean, they're all amazing, but they all ultimately kind of at least touch on the circle of tidying somehow.

So if you start with that tidy up habit, then that will help you just to keep enough maintenance going to just feel like you're making that progress. And so that's why I don't want you to start. So I said, I said places to start and we talked about what those priorities were.

WHERE NOT TO START

So this is why I don't want you to start. If you're like, okay, everything's a mess in this house and I feel overwhelmed and I need to do all the things right now. I want you to go through all of those like daily pain points first before you start doing something like storage areas. And I don't mean like storage areas in your kitchen where you're needing to put stuff away, but there's junk in the kitchen cabinets that doesn't need to be there. I'm talking about like your attic where you never go up there, you know, like, yes, eventually you're going to need to deal

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with your attic.

Maybe you're going to need to deal with that basement, the garage that has just a bunch of stuff shoved in it. And so you can't even park your car in there. Yes, eventually you want to deal with those areas, but if they are not functionally bothering you on a daily basis and making you lose time and patience and causing you frustration on a daily basis other than knowing they're there, they are not the place to start.

DON'T START WITH SENTIMENTAL OR PAPER

Another place not to start is with sentimental items. That is the quickest way to just run into a brick wall. You want to practice with some other stuff first, you know, some easier, more functional stuff first before you start dealing with sentimental things because, man, that may not be physically tiring, although it could be, depending on what it is, but it's going to be emotionally tiring. And so you. You want to give yourself enough grace in the rest of your house first to have time to be able to do that.

The other one that I really don't suggest you start with is paper. Now, there's a caveat for that. If you're dealing with the paper that you've accumulated in the last maybe three months, that's going to be the most actionable paper. Like, where it might be a bill that you need to deal with or, you know, something you need to call about, or you're going to be able to just readily identify it as junk, current junk mail, fine.

But if you're talking about, like, boxes of paper or the filing cabinet that's got, like, cobwebs on it because you haven't even opened it in, like, six months, a year, five years, that's not the kind of paper that you want to start with. I mean,

because it's just its own rabbit hole. That's - If the paper sat there that long, it can sit there a little bit longer before, you know, you deal with it, just so you can deal with all those other pain points first. So those are my suggestions of what to start with versus what to.

I would suggest not starting with so that you don't overwhelm yourself.

Tasha: Yeah, for sure. And when it comes to organizing your spaces, when you were talking about decluttering, so if you're the type of person and you're like, okay, like, I get it. I get that decluttering is the most important, and I understand that, like, tidying up is how we're going to keep it there.

DECLUTTERING ENABLES ORGANIZING

But, like, I really want this space that looks organized. Like, that's what I want in my home. Decluttering is going to help you have the ability to visualize how you want the space organized.

And so you really are taking that first step towards, like, if you're the person, you want your spices decanted in spice jars, or you want the, I don't know, like, modular Oxo containers, like that's just your aesthetic, it's almost crossing into home decor at some point, which is totally fine if that is what you want in your home and that makes you happy and that's something that you want to maintain and put the work into creating. Like, I am all for it. But realize that decluttering is going to help you be able to see what you actually need. If, for instance, you want to decant your pantry into those acrylic containers, whenever you get it down to these are the things we actually have and use and it's not the last 15 years of accumulated things, some of which I haven't opened because

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they've been shoved to the back of the pantry for the last 10 of those 15 years. Like you don't need the container to decant that. That thing is probably not something you're going to use. And so just realize that a lot of this kind of goes together.

The decluttering is going to set you up to know what you want to do with the organizing. And when you've decluttered and you've put things back and you're starting to use it, it's easier and also more motivating to tidy it up because you know what it's going to look like when it's all decluttered. And so I really feel like going back to that analogy you mentioned at the beginning.

They kind of all tie together like it's. It's three legs of the same stool.

Tasha: It really is. And I think the other thing about it is, I mean, I am totally with you. I love a beautiful pantry, you know, etc. But if you feel like you're like, oh my gosh, I don't know that I have the time to put into that.

I feel very overwhelmed by, I don't have clean clothes or we're having trouble like getting dinner on the table every single night because I'm disorganized about it or, or some of these other really functional things. That's where I'm saying eventually you're going to get there.

You're going to. If you can do all of these small steps and deal with these pain points, you are going to get to the point where you're like, yes, I now have time and bandwidth to be able to tackle the task of making these spices just look amazing.

FIRST FUNCTION, THEN FORM

But I don't want you to do that too soon

because functionally it doesn't matter if you have beautiful spices. If every, if everybody's like, mom, I don't have clean underwear. You know, we just have to. Sometimes it's like I want it to be beautiful eventually, but I gotta get it to be functional and me to have enough bandwidth to be able to focus on some of those special touches I want to do to the point where, like, right now I feel like, my hair is on fire and I'm drowning

So, you know, I just want you to get to the point where you feel like you can tackle those pretty tasks.

A SNEAK PEEK AT TAYLOR'S GET ORGANIZED HQ VIRTUAL SESSION

Tasha: Yes, for sure. So I know that for your Get Organized HQ virtual session, you're kind of touching on something tangentially related to what we've been talking about here, which is what to do with the items that we've decluttered.

So, like you were saying, it's getting them all the way out of your house. Can you, like, without giving away the whole session, can you give us, like, a little preview or sneak peek of what it is that you're sharing and really like who this session is for and who it'll help?

Taylor: Absolutely. So, I mean, the session is about where to donate once you've decluttered items. And we talk about. And it all stems from kind of this statement that I make all the time, which is, it's not 100% decluttered until it leaves your house. Because what will happen is we sit there and we're like, oh, we're going to give this to so and so, and we're going to give this to so and so, and it all shoved in a box in the garage.

It's not really out of your house, is it? So you really haven't freed up that space. So it's not decluttered until you get it out of your house 100%. Okay? So that's the first rule that I have for stuff. Because there's really two parts to decluttering. It's, you're going to need to decide what you want to keep versus what you want to get rid of. That's the first decision. And it can be rough, but the second decision can also be rough. And that is, now that I've decided I don't want it anymore, what the heck am I supposed to do with it? And there's obviously lots of different decisions you could make. One of them is to give it away.

Okay, there's selling, there's recycling, there's throwing it in the trash. But one that a lot of people have a lot of trouble with is I want to give it to someone. And so that's what we're going to be talking about in that session, and it's going to be the do and the don'ts of what you can and should not donate and then different ways you can give it away, like to charities, but also to individuals, to family members, to, like, you know, random people in your community.

So we're going to talk about all of that?

Tasha: Yeah, for sure. I mean, we talk so much about decluttering, and that was just one of the topics that I wanted to be able to bring in, to Get Organized HQ Virtual, because we're encouraging so much decluttering. Get these things out of your home. And it's like, okay, where should I take them when I get them out of my home?

So I'm really excited that we're covering that, this year. So, Taylor, thank you so much for just sitting down and sharing all of these tips and processes with us today. I feel like

anyone listening can already go ahead and find that place. That's the pain point for them. Start decluttering in those small bite size increments.

Okay. One question, though, that I always ask. This is how I wrap up all of our episodes with guests. I would love to know what is one thing? It can be a physical thing or it can be like a system or a habit that you started, but what is one thing that's bringing you less stress and more peace right now?

WHAT IS MY BIG PICTURE FOR THE DAY?

Taylor: Okay, it is morning journaling and what I do. I have a series of questions that I ask, but the one that seems to be the most important clarifying for me right now is I ask, what is my big picture for the day? And so I'm thinking about what is it I have to get done?

But it's also more like, how, how does this whole day, like, affect my life? And I usually end up writing the same thing, which is try to enjoy as much of this day as I can because this is my one wild and precious life. And so it helps. I don't know, it just. I write it down every morning. I think about what it is that I'm going to do that's going to help me enjoy the day and my wild and precious life. And it really has brought me a lot of peace and a lot less stress because it, I don't know, it just clarifies what's really important and also lets me realize that it's all not that serious.

We just need to enjoy some things and spend some time with family or whatever it is I want to do that day to enjoy something. And it's been really nice.

Tasha: Yeah, for sure. That whole practice of

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just being intentional. And like you said so many times, when we're being intentional, it's not something new every day. It's not like, oh, I've never thought of this before. It's just reminding ourselves of what we already know is true every single day. So I love that.

Taylor: Absolutely.

WHERE TO CONNECT WITH TAYLOR

Tasha: Yes. Well, thank you so much for sitting down and chatting with us today. Where is the best place for people to go to find you, to hear more from you?

Taylor: All right, well, the site that I really work on the most is called homestoragesolutions101.com and if you go there, you can get a free Declutter365 calendar. It's updated every single year once you subscribe for the free newsletter.

DECLUTTER365 CALENDAR

So all free newsletter subscribers get this calendar and you would also, if you're still a subscriber the next year, you'll get the next calendar. So every single year you get that calendar and we work on it all the time. Every single day there's a mission that you can do in some area of your house to declutter for about 15 minutes to make that small amount of progress.

If you decluttered every single day using that calendar for just 15 minutes a day over the course of the year, that's like 90 hours of decluttering. And you can do a lot of decluttering of your house in 90 hours. You really can. So, once you've joined that free newsletter, you can also, you can work with me in a premium group for those missions.

Or there is also a free group which is called Declutter365 on Facebook. It's got over a million members, so you're welcome to join as well. And, we talk about what we're decluttering that day.

Tasha: Yeah, you've done all the thinking for them already, so that's awesome. You can just follow the checklist and say, this is what I'm focused on today. So. So that can make it really quick and easy to get those bite sized chunks in. So we'll have links to all that in the show notes for y'all to check out. And Taylor, thanks so much for sharing your time with us today.

Taylor: Thank you so much. I enjoyed it.

Tasha: Well, thanks so much for tuning in to this week's episode of the Get Organized HQ podcast. If you have not already, definitely check the show notes. Grab your free ticket to Get Organized HQ Virtual so that you can join me and Taylor and over a hundred others talking about all things life and home organization at Get Organized HQ Virtual 2025. And if you happen to be listening to this after Get Organized HQ Virtual 2025 has wrapped up, be sure to join the wait list for Get Organized HQ Virtual 2026, so you'll be notified whenever that rolls around as well.

I will see you right back here for next week's episode.

