



Financial Wellness tips by Theresa Gray

How to  
**Sort, Select, and Sell Your Stuff**  
**16 Step Guide**  
**(and Checklist)**

aka

Making Profit From Your Clutter

and

How to Find Extra Space in Your Home

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## How to sort, select, and sell your stuff - 16 Steps

# Congratulations!

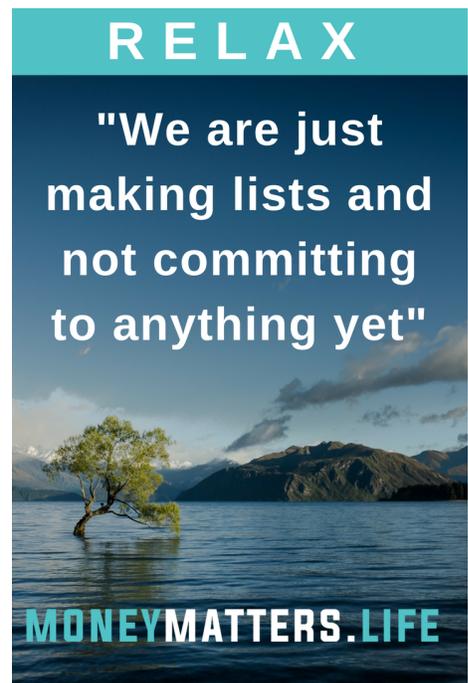
You have taken the first step to taking control of the clutter in your house. This process takes time and can be stressful to imagine a change to your environment, so give yourself some grace. However, if you do the work, you will be rewarded with more space, less chaos, a sense of accomplishment, and maybe some financial rewards (CASH!).

This checklist is divided into steps. Each step has a task. Grab a pen and keep an open mind doing this activity, this is an exercise to get your ideas flowing on what you can make money off in your house AND/OR how you can create less chaos in your environment. People tend to feel like life is out of control when they surround themselves with more things than they can manage - it can be hard to focus on ANY thing when you feel like you are crowded by EVERY thing!

Take a few pictures of what you see in each step. These will be fun to look back on next year when you have a clutter free home (create a before and after photo and [email me](#) with it), and are also good for insurance documentation of your home's contents.

Right now we are just making lists, not committing to doing anything, so don't get hung up on deciding whether to put something on the list. If it occurs to you to list something, then list it! The first time you do this process I would recommend that you only fill in 5 items for each step on the list and then move to the next step. You can find several workbook style pages at the back of this guide to use.

**Step 1** Look around your house like you are a stranger to the house. Enter in through the front door and stand in the entrance for a while, seeing things through a stranger's eyes. Be honest: what doesn't look right? What would a stranger see and



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Chaos?  
Declutter.  
Get Paid.  
Find Calm!

think, “what is that thing?”, or “why is that thing in that spot?” or “wow, this place has too much stuff!” Write those things on the list!

**Step 2** Now you are yourself again, and when you look around your home, take note of things that seem cluttered. What areas have been bugging you that you know you need to clean out? What areas of your home would be more comfortable if there was more space? Write those areas on the list! (Example: Closets, storage pods, cabinets, the garage, bedrooms)

**Step 3** Note items that you have forgotten about in your home. Is there a table in the entry that you never really use and pretend it is not there? What have you gotten so used to seeing and having that you don't use in it's proper form (piling books on a piano, using a pool table as a desk, there are clothes consistently hanging off your treadmill)? Write those things on the list!

**Step 4** Think about anything that you are just storing and have not used in several years. Even if you can think of a reason when it could be used, you probably won't need it! (We had a quad in storage that hadn't been driven in 7 years. It would have been perfect to escape in a zombie apocalypse..... but..... we decided we should sell it!) If you haven't used it in a year put it on the list! These things are often 'out of sight and out of mind', so you may need to pause for a moment and try to remember where all your little squirrels hoards are stored. (i.e. Do you have stuff stored in your uncle's barn; your friend's garage; a storage unit; in the attic?)

**Step 5** This one can be touchy, but just be honest. Remember that you're not committing to anything, you are just writing a list. What don't you like in your house? A wedding present from 10 years ago? An inherited table? Your

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husband's Lord of the Rings Officially Licensed 'Glamdring', Sword of Gandalf, replica? Put it on the list.

**Step 6** Write down anything that is broken and needs to get fixed before it can be used again.

**Step 7** Stop making lists! Get a drink and go sit outside. Take a break from looking critically at your stuff and just enjoy knowing that you are doing a good job working on a big project. Sometimes starting a project is the hardest part. Spend some time being thankful now. Be thankful for having a place to keep all your stuff. Be thankful for having stuff!

**Step 8** Get back to work, slacker! Review THE LISTS and notice how you feel about the items. If you feel completely comfortable about getting rid of something, put a smiley face by the item, circle the number or use a highlighter on the words. List those items on the SELL THESE THINGS table. If you don't feel comfortable selling something, consider moving it. Maybe you will like it better or appreciate it more in a more appropriate location. Or, maybe you will realize that you really don't need it and decide to sell it the next time you go through these steps. The next time through, you may decide to focus solely on one of the 'areas to be cleaned' you identified.

**Step 9** Fill in the "SELL THESE THINGS" table as much as possible. You may need to do some research online. Find out how much comparable items are worth new, and what others are selling them for used. Write down the price of purchasing the item new (you can use this as original cost) and where you can buy it (or where you bought it), and what a good used price (your sale price) would be. I usually sell everything at about half of the original price, unless I have found a market that supports something different. (vintage, memorabilia, collector's items, or the item still has original value and is not out of date or 'used-up') Be prepared to go down on the price periodically or have patience and keep it at the price. Sometimes things take months to sell, sometimes days. It helps if you decide ahead of time how motivated you are to sell. This year I had a train table listed for \$250 and had several offers for \$150 but I was completely

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comfortable saying “no” and holding on to the table until I got the full price - which I did eventually, but I had to wait 3 months.

**Step 10** Decide how much your time is worth. Some items just don't resell for much and end up costing you a lot in time but yield you only a little in CASH. This is your call! There have been times when I've sold \$10 items and paid \$5 to ship them, netting me only \$5 in profit but I was happy that the item went to a new home. (This is always how I feel about books!) If you realize that the item to sell falls into this category, you can donate it or put it in a pile to sell at a garage sale. This is the time to realize that if you do not make money on the items, you are gaining space and decluttering. It is still a win! Way to go!



**Step 11** Decide on your resale spot. This is the answer to the question, “where can I most easily sell this item”. Think about shipping prices for your item. If it is smaller and worth a decent amount of money (>\$20), then you might consider selling to a larger market online. Having to pay for shipping and doing all the work packing it can be a pain. Also, sometimes you need to pay for insurance, tracking, and possible returns. But if you take all those things into consideration and you feel like it is going to net you more money than the local markets, then use the larger markets with online contacts.

Here is an abbreviated list of a few places that are good for resale, but the list is always changing and you have oodles of options!

Online - Not Local - Shipping of some sort required

- A. Search online resellers like [thredUP.com](https://www.thredUP.com) (Loft, Gap, Hanna Anderson, J.Crew, LuLu Lemon, Anthropologie), [swap.com](https://www.swap.com) (clothing,

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baby gear, toys, games, books, sports equipment, etc), [poshmark.com](https://www.poshmark.com) (Louis Vuitton, Gucci, J. Crew, Tiffany and Co., Coach, Michael Kors, etc), [therealreal.com](https://www.therealreal.com) (same as [poshmark.com](https://www.poshmark.com)), (electronics/DVDs) [glyde.com](https://www.glyde.com), and [decluttr.com](https://www.decluttr.com) - Most sites will pay for shipping and will do all the selling for you - marketing, sales, invoices. The clothing sites often send you a 'clean out bag' and you can send them a bag full of stuff to be evaluated. Sites that let you scan the UPC code with an app are great ([Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [decluttr.com](https://www.decluttr.com))

- B. [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) - Great for things that are already being sold as you can 'piggyback' on something already listed on the website and list yours as 'used'. You will need to personally supplement the shipping as the allowance they provide is rarely enough. And you have to provide your own shipping materials. You will pay a portion of the cost to Amazon. They prepare your invoice for you and collect the fees. You can also use their "Shipped by Amazon" service to store and ship out your item for a fee. For selling on Amazon, find the identical item that is already being sold on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Find the 'have one to sell' button and follow the steps to list your item.
- C. [eBay.com](https://www.ebay.com) - This is great for anything that is rare or has a specific market. You will need to determine your own shipping costs, but you can charge as much shipping fees for it as you like and could then have things professionally shipped. You will pay eBay a portion of the proceeds, and sometimes other fees. They will prepare your invoice for you and collect the fees. If using eBay, set a 'buy it now' price that you will not regret. Also pick a decently long period of time for the auction, just in case you find multiple interested parties. Give them time to outbid each other, but not so long they forget about the ad. One to two weeks is a good time, I think, unless you have something that is time dependent (like show tickets).

Local - No shipping required

- D. Craigslist for local market. Great for things that would be too costly to ship or would be difficult to package. You will need to meet with buyers and negotiate with them directly. You will have to make sure to meet in a safe location and be wary of buyers who contact you

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only to try to scam you. This is my favorite way to sell items, but it needs to be done with some forethought. Not everyone who contacts you will be authentic or will follow through, but everyone that I have dealt with personally has been very nice. If using Craigslist, remember to renew your ad every 48 hours.

- E. Neighborhood online sales - search for [nextdoor.com](https://www.nextdoor.com), [offerup.com](https://www.offerup.com) and local Facebook selling groups
- F. Garage Sales - do it yourself or pool up with a group. No shipping costs and you don't have to take pictures of anything or write anything up. This is the easiest way to sell lots of low cost items but also can be painful! (Personally I'm traumatized by a few in my childhood and I haven't attempted again as an adult - but I have friends who love to have them!)
- G. Consignment stores. They sell everything, from clothing, purses, shoes, furniture, china, antiques, baby gear, arts and crafts, etc. You place your item for sale with them and they will tell you a recommended price. Often then have the right to reduce the price to move the item, at intervals as time increases (ie - drop it 30% in 30 days). You are usually allowed to remove the item at any time. Often you make 40-50% of the price that it sells for, sometimes more if you take it as store credit.
- H. Resale stores. These places can sell everything that consignment stores sell, but will pay you outright for your goods. You bring in your items and they choose what they want to buy. They will often give you 30-40% of what they will sell the item for (if you get paid in cash) or 40-50% of sale price (if you get paid in store credit).
- I. Gold buyers. Easy to find several around. They also buy estate pieces and can offer advice on values.



**Howdy neighbor!**

For the non-local things, once something sells, ship it within 24 hours. Print the invoice and enclose it with the order and make a copy for your files. Attach the shipping receipt with the tracking and insurance information. Be sure to pay for the ability to track your item. You may want to consider purchasing insurance. If it was listed on [next-door.com](https://www.next-door.com), craigslist, Facebook (etc) mark the item as sold so

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you don't have to keep explaining that it is sold to everyone. (Some people get grumpy when they can't get what they want!)

**Step 12** You are doing great! Way to stick with the plan! Now that you have the table filled out (and all of the lists) you should be able to prioritize what items you are going to put up for sale, and which items you are going to take further action with (donation, garage sale pile, trash, get repaired, move to the garage (I'm looking at you Glamdring), etc.). So get crackin'! Start moving stuff around in your house! Make some piles and LABEL THEM so you will remember what the pile is and what you're supposed to do with it. This is a good way to confirm that you will be ok with a change. If you move a table to the garage for a week and don't miss it, then you know that it is a good decision! If every time you walk in the door you drop the mail and the keys on the floor, then you will realize that you were using the table and actually miss it! This step is a great way to let people in your home know about the changes without the abruptness of having the house normal one day and the next watching strangers take stuff away. Keep everyone in the loop! Moving things will also help you with the next step in selling.

### **Step 13** Clean it up!

Make sure it is in good shape and clean before you put it in the new pile. This will give you a chance to

make sure the item is in good shape and to take note of any flaws. You can also use this time to take awesome photos of the item (necessary if you are selling online - and nice to have a record of the changes you made that year). Take several pictures of your item to sell. Get different angles. Make sure that the lighting is good. Don't try to hide any flaws. Do make sure that the background of the photo is a clean and clear as possible. Making the environment of the item you are selling look good helps to give the prospective buyer confidence that the item has been well maintained. Don't let the cat be in the background! Don't show the item amidst a pile of junk in the garage! Get the item and put it with a nice backdrop - I often take the 'thing' outside and stage it near a bush to take



**Take great photos**

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the photos. Or, I will put down a white bed sheet and photograph the thing on an all white backdrop.

**Step 14** If you are selling online, write up a fabulous listing. Find original listings for the item online (copy from the website that is selling a new version of your item) or from any materials you have on your item. Write a listing that is informative yet fun to read. If you sound like a real person, then you will be more approachable and your items will sell. For example, in your listing, write something that:

- A. Tells of your experience with an item, “I have had this stroller for four years now and used it only on the weekends, and my kids never ate in it.....etc”.
- B. Tell the truth! If there is a flaw with the item be sure to be very upfront about what the flaw is - I even go so far as to take a special picture of the flaw. Discuss the extent of the flaw and how you personally dealt with the issue. “The top of the dresser has a large gouge, but I used it for a changing table and kept the changing pad on the left side and it was completely hidden”.
- C. State why you are selling the item. “My kids are potty trained (hurray) and now I do not have to change diapers (hallelujah) so I do not need to have a changing table in my house (happy dance).” Make it interesting and upbeat.
- D. Post all the facts that you have about your item. This is where I like to copy and paste any info from the websites that are selling the thing. I state “this information is taken directly from the stroller website” and then post all the specs and the company spiel that I can find. I love to give the original cost, and then stress that my item is assembled and there are no extra costs due to taxes or shipping costs and they are getting a great deal by buying my thing.

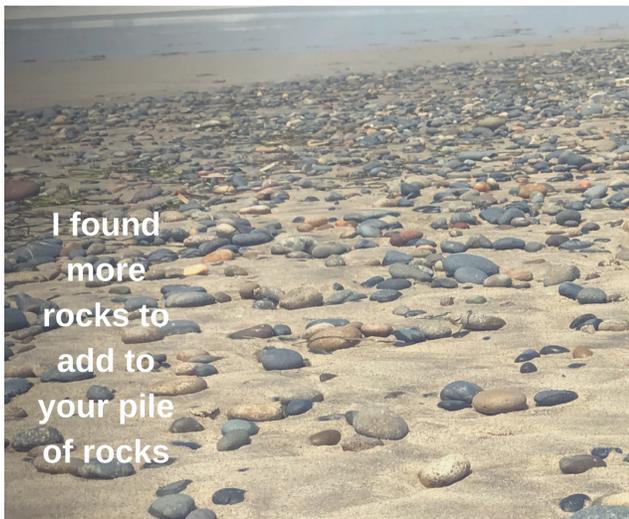
**Step 15** Selling to consignment or retail stores:

- A. Call ahead to make find out hours that they will view your items. Find out if they have a website so you can see what they accept and their recommend ways of sorting and preparing. Some places only take a certain number of tubs at a time unless you have an appointment.

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- B. Clean your item and make sure it is going to make a good first impression. Think 'would I buy this item if I found it in a store'? Clothing must be clean. They will not take any item with stains, and often will pass on items that are wrinkled. Toys, games, strollers must be very clean and have all the parts.
- C. Be prepared and act graciously if they do not want to take your items! Sometimes it's not that the item isn't good for resale, it's that they already have too many of that item, or it's the wrong season. Keep your items packaged and try another location. Also before you leave, ask nicely if there is anything that they might purchase on another occasion. They might go through your stuff again and pull aside a few things that they would consider in a future visit and give you a definite 'no' on the rest.
- D. If your items have been turned down by several stores and you are comfortable donating them, most of the resale stores can donate your items for you. You won't be able to get a tax receipt for write off, but you will be donating your items without having one more thing to do!

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### **Step 16** Be proud of yourself!

You've assessed your house, made some lists to use and learned how to create calm from chaos! And, maybe, you've even made some CASH to put towards new stuff (or my favorite, paying off your debt!) Stuff creeps into our homes and clutter seems to grow organically so keep this guide handy. You know the drill - lather, rinse, repeat! Stop by the blog for more inspiration - [moneymatters.life/blog](http://moneymatters.life/blog)

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## THE LISTS

A 'stranger' would notice these things:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Things you haven't used in a year:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Areas in your home that need to be cleaned out:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Things you just do not like:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Forgotten or misused items:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Things that are broken and need to be fixed:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)



## THE LISTS

Your selling notes:

Local resale or consignment shops

Local online resale results (Craigslist, NextDoor, etc.) sign ins/  
passwords:

App store search results and sign in info/passwords:

# Selling Checklist

This checklist supplements my “Guide to Selling - Making Profit from Your Clutter” post, so to get the most out of this checklist below, be sure to read the blog post [here](#).

## General Selling

<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you filled out “THE LISTS” pages?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you filled out the “SELL THESE THINGS” table?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What is your accepted minimum profit? Items that net you below this amount will be sold in bulk (local store/garage sale)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you identified your local market resale or consignment shops? Write down their information to have it handy for future iterations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you created accounts for online local selling options like Craigslist, NextDoor, OfferUp, etc. and noted your sign in information?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you researched how to sell online? There are several selling apps that make scanning the barcode easy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Before moving items, have you taken the ‘before’ photos to post your bragging rights later?

# Selling Checklist

This checklist supplements my “Guide to Selling - Making Profit from Your Clutter” post, so to get the most out of this checklist below, be sure to read the blog post [here](#).

Item Specific	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you willing to ship your item? Pick your resale spot accordingly.
<input type="checkbox"/>	How motivated are you to sell? (Hold out for full price if you can wait)
<input type="checkbox"/>	What is the lowest price offer you would accept?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you moved the item to a new spot to make sure you are comfortable with the change?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you made sure the item is clean?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If selling online, have you taken great photographs? <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Take several different shots from different angles in good light</li><li>2. Include flaws in the pictures</li><li>3. Make sure the background of the photo looks clean</li><li>4. Include shots of brand labels, UPC codes and tags</li></ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	If selling online, have you written a good description? <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Do you tell a good story that lets the new buyer see why you are selling and feel good about buying from you?</li><li>2. Do you include original price, how long you've owned the product, and where you purchased it?</li><li>3. Do you disclose any flaws?</li><li>4. Have you included any write ups from the manufacturer?</li></ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Post item for sale! Or, take it to a store! Good luck!