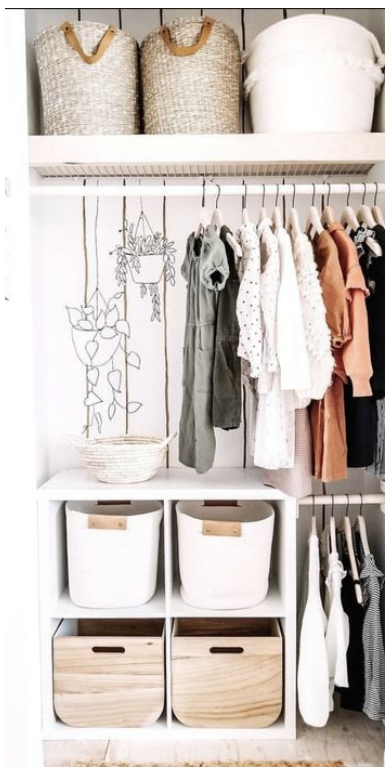




HOME.

HOME ORGANISING MADE EASY™

What To Do When Your Partner Refuses to Declutter



HOW TO GET YOUR SPOUSE ON BOARD



Right this minute – put everything you’re doing now aside and dedicate the next 15 minutes to learning how to change the status quo. Now or never!

What can you do when you’re one hundred percent dedicated to decluttering your home, but your partner refuses to budge? And, their mess is even bigger than yours!

This is one of the biggest obstacles faced by many couples. I have written about it in my Facebook Group ([Home Organising Made Easy](#)), but I’ll save you the search and share a few helpful hints here in this easy to access download!

NAVIGATING NEW TERRITORY

So, you’ve decided to declutter your home, but your other half is not so keen. Here are a few strategies that have helped my clients navigate the clutter-disparity. Even if your partner is reluctant to get rid of anything right now, try one or more of these suggestions and see what happens!

1.

PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE

Converting someone from a clutter-keeper to a decluttering demon is unlikely - it takes patience and considerable time. If you've been through the process yourself, then you'll know first-hand how difficult it can be. We don't all have that lightbulb moment at the same time.

If you're a natural neat freak (like me), who simply can't comprehend their mindset, then patience is even more necessary.

2.

SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

Declutter your own stuff – and keep it that way! Watching your positive attitude towards decluttering is sometimes all it takes to help someone see the benefits and possibilities in keeping a clutter-free lifestyle, especially if you both had a tendency to be clutter-keepers.

Also, watch *The Minimalists* together. This is like a no-fail motivator with my teen son!

3.

DECLUTTER TOGETHER

Never declutter your partners' belongings without their permission, even when you feel it's mostly rubbish. One person's trash is another's treasure. How would you feel if someone went through your things and made decisions without consulting you? You would probably be hurt, or resentful and unlikely to cooperate in the future. Chances are your partner would feel the same, so just don't go there.

Make the offer to work **WITH** them, and make sure they know they will have the final say about every single item. Reassure them that taking everything away is not the goal. And remember to make good on your promise.

4.

START SMALL WITH THE COMMON AREAS

Start small, in common areas. One thing that might be worth considering, is that your partner may be also feeling overwhelmed by the sheer volume of stuff in their life...just like you were when you began decluttering. They may be feeling stuck, and be a victim of clutter and feel embarrassed to admit they are feeling overwhelmed.

There is also the possibility they doesn't realise that's what's happening. Offer to work together on 'easy' areas that you both use.

A great way to engender new habits, is to start with a 30-minute morning declutter and tidy ritual. This slow-burn decluttering process is much less stressful than a emptying an entire room or garage.

Start with a small section in a common area of your home. Set a timer and spend 30 minutes decluttering one small section every day! It's low-pressure and overtime they will start to appreciate the results first hand.



That's great Pete, but I've tried all that, and they **STILL** refuse to declutter. What now?

5.

POINT-BLANK, ASK YOUR PARTNER TO DO IT “FOR YOUR SANITY.”

Point-blank ask your partner to do it “for your sanity’s sake.” When we have issues with clutter, we tend to purely think about it in relation to ourselves. It’s “my stuff; leave me alone.” However, they probably don’t realise the deep impact it’s having on your mental health.

Clients have often expressed their discontent saying; “My partner’s clutter overwhelms me and I can’t cope with it anymore.” I totally get that. But perhaps your partner doesn’t appreciate just how deeply overwhelmed you’re feeling. And, let’s face it, some people need a good sledge hammer and a direct confrontation outlining the real impact.

When you let your partner know exactly what all their stuff is doing to you – and the family – it can help them appreciate the situation from a different angle.

6.

GET COUNSELLING

If you’re at breaking point, counselling might help.

You can either go alone or ask your partner to join you. But if they refuse, then you should still go.

Clutter can be a symptom of so many underlying issues, and getting guidance from a psychologist who specialises in hoarding disorders, can help you work through your concerns. This will also help you decide what your next steps might be.

7.

LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT

For many reasons, I'm not an advocate of this plan. Your happiness and contentment are equally important as your partners. But you might find that a preferable method and choose to ignore the mess instead.

You can perhaps get their agreement to declutter all common living areas, and keep their stuff somewhere out of sight, like a basement, loft or garage.

If you can contain their clutter, this will make things bearable for you and easier for your partner. I appreciate it's not ideal, but there are times when a compromise can be an effective temporary solution which avoids preventing further conflict.

8.

STAGE AN INTERVENTION

If your mental health can't take it anymore, and you have tried everything and gone past the point of no return, it's time to pull out all stops. Excuses like, "*that's just the way I am*", only go so far. When it comes to mental health implications, and all other attempts have failed, then it's time to take a more serious approach.

Bring in a psychologist or professional organiser to help you navigate the next steps. That way, your partner is hearing the tough things from someone who can bring them an outside perspective and work with their limitations and guide them to find a solution that supports your needs also.

THE LONG & THE SHORT OF IT

Will using these tips be the answer? Honestly, not always. We're all different, and there may be times you simply cannot get through to a partner who refuses to declutter. When that's the case, double down on attending psychology appointments because at the end of the day, you need to keep afloat and get help with the tough decisions.

For many people these tips really DO work. Not always immediately, and not always to the extent that we might WANT, but often well enough that decluttering can become a unifying family project instead of a source of division.

Life is so much easier when you can work together towards clutter-free living.

What are your biggest decluttering challenges with your partner? Join our [Facebook group](#) and let me know!

If you're struggling to declutter and need professional help, contact Peta on 0414 689 779.