

# Clearing Clutter for Clarity and Confidence Using an Ultimate Truth Statement

By Lindsay Kenny, EFT Master, EFTCert-Honors

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## What causes us to collect clutter?

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Messy homes, cars or offices are common issues today with our busy lives. True clutter, however, (and I mean really messy environments) is really a symptom of something other than a busy lifestyle. Most often clutter is a control issue. Being unwilling to let go of things is a way people can feel in control of their lives. Even though it appears that they are totally out of control, hanging onto 'stuff' gives people a sense of being in control. It's similar to how anorexics feel about food and their ability to at least control their weight.

Another common reason for clutter is fear. Fear of loss, rejection, failure and losing control are the most universal of these. But again, all of these fears and issues are just symptoms. Underlying these symptoms of clutter is a cause or core issue.

Clutter is often triggered by an event or a series of events that left the victim feeling traumatized, fearful and powerless. Hanging on to things gives some people a sense of commanding, or controlling at least a portion of their lives.

Determine the event that started the feeling of loss of power or loss of control and neutralize it. You are then halfway home to eliminating clutter.

## What do you really mean by clutter?

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Let me define what I believe are the THREE LEVELS OF CLUTTER:

- LEVEL 1: Generally messy and disorganized at home; 'stuff' lying around on many or most surfaces
- LEVEL 2: As for Level 1, plus ...
  - a messy office, car and often (but not always) personal appearance
  - an unwillingness to throw away outdated or useless things

- lack of desire or ability to put away clothing or items or to clean up behind one's self or others
- litter and disorganization everywhere

LEVEL 3: As for Level 2, plus ...

- elements of complete disorder and filth, even to the level of pathology (meaning unsanitary conditions that create a health risk)
- complete organizational chaos; from dirty dishes overflowing the sink to unwashed clothing everywhere
- garbage accumulation (in or out of bags) on the floor or furniture, in the garage or car
- often there is animal excrement on the floor or furniture
- all accompanied by a feeling of being 'paralyzed' by an inability to do anything about the situation

It's the last two Levels that I want to deal with in this article.

### Case Study: Janice - Level 3

'Janice' came to see me with a Level 3 problem. Although she looked relatively clean, she assured me her home was beyond filthy. Boxes, stacks of magazines and newspapers, and junk lined her walls and floors so that she could only reach her bedroom or kitchen through a small path. She said you couldn't see her sofa, chairs, TV, or even her kitchen table. Dog poop was on the floors, in the spare bathroom tub and even on her bed. A loose parrot contributed bird "*pucky*" on everything everywhere. She said the smell when you walked in the door was "*staggering*".

This was clearly more than just a messy house. And similar to a TV program where three tons of garbage was hauled away and a crew cleaned and sanitized a woman's house, six weeks later it was on its way to being the same pigsty it was before. That's because the reason for the 'clutter' was not dealt with.

For Janice, the age of the magazines (dated in the late 80s) was a clue to me. I asked her what happened 20 years ago. She had no problem remembering. A drunk driver had killed her only child, a much-adored 11 year-old daughter. Janice was still devastated and in shock when three weeks later her beloved husband of 15 years was killed. The mudslide that took away her husband eradicated their home and virtually everything else Janice had left. Photos, family keepsakes and personal treasures were lost, along with the two people she loved the most. Her whole life was turned upside down in a flash.

From that point Janice was virtually paralyzed with grief, sadness and a sense of abandonment. She became frightful and hyper-vigilant about everything. She didn't want to live, yet was terrified of dying. Janice became afraid to make a move, throw anything away, go anywhere or do anything. Her hoarding of the few things she recovered or replaced began her trend toward clutter. She didn't do it intentionally. She subconsciously had developed such a fear of loss that controlling her environment became her way of controlling (and protecting) her very life.

With this knowledge we first cleared out her grief and trauma about losing her husband and daughter. She said she had "*dealt with it*" through years of therapy. I knew that was doubtful, based on the results in her life.

### **How did you help her to move on from the original trauma(s)?**

We started with a reversal on the KC point:

- ❖ ***Even though I don't want to let go of the grief and trauma over losing my family and home ...***

Then the Setup on her sore spot:

- ❖ ***Even though I'm still grieving at some level over the loss of my daughter and husband ...***

We did several rounds just tapping on reminder statements of grief, sorrow, emptiness, sadness, anger, being afraid and alone. This brought a lot of tears, which surprised her.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> round we gave voice to her feelings with phrases like:

***It was so unfair... I still miss them ... I blame myself somehow ... How could they leave me like that ... Why me ...? It still hurts ... My life isn't worth living ...***

After a few rounds of venting like this her intensity dropped to a 6.

We did a few more rounds adding in positive phrases like: ***I want to let this go ... I want to move on ... I'm ready to get over my grief ... I'm ready to honor their lives by living mine to the fullest ... Bob and Melanie wouldn't have wanted me to live like this ...***

When the intensity was 2, we changed to the Choices Trio {see *The Choices Method*}, choosing to let go of the negative emotions around the loss of her family and choosing to live life to the fullest. She was responding very well and reached a zero in intensity at the end of this process (the first round of the remaining issue, the second round of positive choices to let it go and the third round alternating negative and positive statements at each consecutive point).

I asked her to really try to get upset about the loss of either of her loved ones. But she couldn't do it. She actually laughed about something funny she remembered her daughter had said.

With the cause of her clutter issue now put to rest, we could then move on to fixing the symptom of clutter problem. As always, I used the Ultimate Truth Statement to work toward a positive outcome. I could have started the whole process with this as well, but the underlying grief issue seemed so apparent that I wanted to eliminate that first.

## **How did you help her to build an Ultimate Truth Statement?**

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I had Janice come up with a basic statement (I call it the Ultimate Truth Statement or UTS) as the goal she would like to achieve: *"I live in a neat and orderly environment"*.

We then filled in reasons she wanted this to be true: *"I could find things easily ... I could have people come to my home without feeling shame ... I would feel healthy, safe and comfortable having a clean home, car and office ... My life would be easier and simpler ..."*

We added some of those positive phrases to the UTS, so that it read something like this: *"My life is easy, comfortable and safe living in a healthy, neat and orderly environment."*

I then asked her to describe how that would make her feel when that statement became true. *"I would feel free and proud of myself ... I would have clarity! I would feel good about myself and have more confidence ... I would feel WONDERFUL and so happy ... I would feel so much lighter...!"*

By compiling all of her phrases to her basic goal her 'Ultimate Truth Statement' looked like this:

*"I feel wonderful, light and safe living in a healthy, neat and hygienic environment. My life is comfortable, easy and free with my clean, well-organized, tidy lifestyle. I have clarity and confidence again, and I'm happy and proud to invite people to my beautiful, clutter-free home."*

This was a statement Janice could not only live with, but loved! She was very excited about the possibility of achieving it. On a scale of 10 to 1, with 10 feeling and owning the statement right now, she was at a 5.

## **How did you help her with her remaining fears?**

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She now had two major concerns. One concern was wondering how she could possibly clear everything out and clean up the incredible chaos she lived in. The second was fear. She feared letting go of things (control), feared she'd throw something away she might need later (loss of control), and even feared that she could never even get started, much less finish. In a way, holding onto her fears, control issues, and clutter was her way of holding on to her family!

We put aside the UTS for the moment to work on the obstacle of the fears in her way. We clumped her fears together and Janice gave them a 9. We then did a Reversal Neutralization (I define a Reversal as a “Subconscious Resistance to change,”) saying:

- ❖ ***Even though I don't want to let go of these fears ...***
- ❖ ***Even though these fears keep me safe or keep me from failing, they are part of my identity ...***
- ❖ ***Even though I may not deserve to let go of these fears ... because I don't really want a clean orderly environment ... these fears ensure that doesn't happen ...***

Just doing the Reversals gave Janice some relief, which surprised her. We then simply tapped away the fears:

- ❖ ***Even though I have these fears about letting go of my filth, feces, and squalor ....***

**Note:** When dealing with something you want to eliminate, I've found it's far more impactful to paint it in the worst possible light. Using loaded words such as squalor and feces instead of just saying 'clutter' has much more punch. If you want to stop drinking Pepsi, call it 'this sugar and chemical-laden brown toxic stuff'. This is not, however, a good idea if you're letting go of a trauma or abuse issue.

After the setup statements we did one round just alternating the fears:

REMINDER PHRASES: ***This fear of letting go ... This fear of failing ... This fear I might need something I throw away ...***

On the second and subsequent rounds we added words to give voice to the fears:

REMINDER PHRASES: ***What if I throw something away I really need? What if I can't even get started? I'd feel like even more of a failure. How will I ever get this all done? I'll feel so out of control and helpless. I can't do this. I need my stuff. I want to keep it***

After a round or so I then transitioned to the ridiculous.

REMINDER PHRASES: ***I need my squalor. I love filth. It smells so good in there. Feces is my friend. I don't really need to find my cat. I need these fears. They help me keep my 'clutter and filth'. They are my friends. I don't want to let go of the fears OR the filth. Oh, ewwwwwwwww, yes I do! No I DON'T! YES I do! I'm tired of living this way. I want to have a clean, healthy environment. No, I love garbage. No I don't! I want to eliminate these fears, and this filth so I can be healthy again***

After arguing both sides of the issue, we reassessed Janice's number and her fear issue was at a 3.

We then moved to the Choices Trio with the setup of:

❖ ***Even though I still have some fears of cleaning up my environment, I choose to let them go.***

After doing that two or three times we did the next three rounds with the Choices Trio:

- Round 1: Just the negative: ***Remaining fears of letting go of clutter ...***
- Round 2: All positive statements such as: ***I choose to eliminate these fears ... I choose to be fearless about cleaning up ... I choose to have a neat an orderly home ... I choose to let go of any remaining fears about it ... I choose to feel good about being fearless ... I choose to make this easy!***
- Round 3: Alternate the positive with the negative statements at every other point: ***remaining fears, I choose to let them go, remaining fear, I choose to be fearless ...***

By now Janice's fear was completely gone on all levels and I tested her to make sure. It was truly at a zero for Janice. Now when looking at her UTS, her number had gone up to an 8 (with 10 being the target). She felt like she was almost there in feeling and believing in the veracity of her statement ... in spite of the reality of a mess in her home. It's those positive feelings you want. That's what pulls you into the position in which you want to be.

## **How did you help her to 'OWN' her Ultimate Truth Statement?**

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We then used the setup statement:

❖ ***Even though there's still some reluctance or resistance in owning my UTS, and I don't even know what it is, I choose to let it go now. I choose to have a clutter-free, clean environment.***

We did slight variations of that three times, then:

- Round 1, on the negative: ***remaining reluctance to owning my statement ...***
- Round 2, on the positive: ***I choose to eliminate this resistance to cleanliness ...***
- Round 3, alternating remaining negatives with positive statements.

- Round 4, only positive statements pulled from the Ultimate Truth Statement, such as: ***I feel great now owning my cleanliness ... I love having a tidy, clutter-free home ... I feel confident and comfortable having people over ...***

At this point Janice was at a 10, meaning she could say her UTS with absolute conviction as if it were already true. I had her tap on this statement daily, just to reinforce her resolution. But she didn't need to for long. Within a week she was completely clutter-free.

### **OK she's feeling much better, but how did you now help her to put all this into practice and start clearing the clutter for real?**

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It is here that most people say *"But how do I get it done?"*. Well if you really trust the Universe you can just allow it to happen; an idea will come to you, or a solution will be shown to you. With Janice we did a few more rounds to magnetize a solution.

Simply alternate these kinds of phrases on the tapping points: ***I ask the Universe to clear this clutter for me ... I want to be involved and I want it to be EASY ... I choose to find a creative, fun way to have a clean, orderly environment ... I know a safe, tidy home is on the way ... And I want to have fun participating in it ... Deep inside I already know how to eliminate this clutter.***

All of a sudden Janice stopped me and said *"I have a plan!"* It was a pretty good one too, and in a nutshell here's how she implemented it. She recruited three close, non-judgmental friends and assembled lots of boxes and bags. Trash was thrown into bags and immediately taken outside. Donation bags of unneeded but reusable items were labeled and set aside for charity. A set of boxes containing Janice's 'keep' items were numbered and recorded with their content.

Her friends generated a Master List of box numbers and their content so that Janice could find 'Shoestrings from 1989' in Box 82. Most of the boxes were stored in her garage so that in time, Janice would be able to reclaim what she really wanted and dispose of the rest.

### **Did these positive effects really last for Janice?**

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To follow up Janice's story, three months later, when we spoke again, her home and car were still immaculate. She also hired a housekeeper to help her clean each week so she would never again have to experience a clutter problem.

Not surprisingly, Janice exclaimed how much better she was feeling; very focused, restored clarity, much higher energy, motivated, light, confident and happy. She also reported that she

has more time to do the things she enjoys, she has often has friends over now, and her life is so much easier.

With those positive aspects to motivate her, Janice is maintaining an orderly, clutter-free life. And you can do it too.

Good Luck and Good Tapping!

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Lindsay has been doing EFT since 2000 and has branded her own advanced version of tapping as Progressive Emotional Release, (Pro-ER ) also known as Pro EFT. She is also an author of three Pro EFT workbooks, founder of the National Alliance for Emotional Health and a certified AAMET EFT Trainer.

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