

# THEE TAILORED LIFE

## Sentimental Clutter Guide

Do you have sentimental clutter?

*Sentimental clutter is any item you place meaning on beyond its practical use or function. You keep it strictly because of the memories, emotional attachment, or stories it tells.*

Place a check next to the types of sentimental clutter you have:

- Artwork
- Awards & trophies
- Baby clothing or items
- Books
- Clothing (i.e., event t-shirts)
- Event programs
- Furniture
- Gifts
- Glassware & china
- Hand-me-downs & inherited items
- Items from a deceased loved one
- Jewelry
- Journals, diaries, and notes
- Letters & cards
- Magazines
- Newspaper articles
- Photographs
- Schoolwork
- Ticket stubs
- Trip souvenirs

What other sentimental clutter do you have?

Tips for decluttering sentimental items:

- 1) *Identify your why.* Whatever it is, it must be important for you. Why are you decluttering sentimental items?
  
- 2) *Develop a plan that considers you.* Who and what do you need to succeed while taking care of yourself? Examples may include a specific time of day and favorite music.

- 3) *Assess the emotion and feeling with each item* – is it mostly positive or negative? Possible questions:
- What emotions come up for me when I see this item?
  - Why am I struggling to let go?
  - What memories are associated with this item?
- 4) *What to do next.* If it's mainly negative, that's the easy button; the goal should be to release that item. If your emotion or feeling is mostly positive about the item and you want to keep it, then you have a few other things to consider. First, be honest about how much you can keep in your space. Second, plan to use the item and consider repurposing.
- Ideas for repurposing:
- Artwork: take photos or use a resource like [Artkive](#)
  - Awards & trophies: take photos of anything you can no longer display
  - Baby clothing or items: display in shadow box
  - Books: use as a piece of artwork or turn into a shelf with a shelving bracket
  - Clothing (i.e., event t-shirts): create a blanket, pillow, curtains, table runner, apron, tote bag, scarf, frame as artwork, place in a shadow box, ornaments, create jewelry such as earrings, apply them to existing clothes
  - Event programs: digitize or place in photo album. Note that there are professional digitization services that make scanning much more manageable.
  - Furniture: paint or wrap it in wallpaper
  - Gifts: regift, donate, or sale
  - Glassware & china: hang on the wall with appropriate mounts, use as pots, or create a mosaic potter
  - Hand-me-downs and inherited items: regift, donate (more ideas in tip #5 or consider the local museum if applicable), or sell.
  - Items from a deceased loved one: keep your favorite item in each category, ask family members, and consider using it—wear old clothing, etc.
  - Jewelry: turn a broach or pin into a necklace or add them all to a jean jacket
  - Journals, diaries, and notes: digitize or place in a photo album
  - Letters & cards: create a [Shutterfly](#) scrapbook, place in a photo album, or digitize
  - Magazines: frame
  - Newspaper articles: frame or create a collage
  - Photographs: create a [Shutterfly](#) scrapbook, place in a photo album, or digitize
  - Schoolwork: keep a few favorite pieces and digitize the remainder
  - Ticket stubs: create a [Shutterfly](#) scrapbook, place in a photo album, or digitize
  - Trip souvenirs: create a [Shutterfly](#) scrapbook, place in a photo album, or digitize
- 5) *Donate with intention.* Sometimes, the best way to honor yourself and others is to give the items a life with someone who will use them.
- Reminder: family items start with someone in the family
  - [Buy Nothing Project](#), local Buy Nothing Groups (Facebook) and [Nextdoor](#)
  - Group homes, homeless shelters, and youth-serving agencies
  - [Salvation Army](#), [Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#) (including furniture pick-up), and [Goodwill](#)

*“If everything is sentimental, nothing is sentimental.”*  
– Margaret Ellison