

WELCOME TO THE RANDOM ACTS OF DECLUTTERING CHALLENGE

DAY 4 - REFINE THOSE RECIPE BOOKS



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LESLEY & INGRID

Hi everyone, did you tune into the Facebook Live this morning? If you didn't manage to watch it live, it will be in the Facebook group for you to watch on replay so do take a look. If you did tune in, thanks for watching and we hope Ingrid helped answer some of your questions and it's helping to keep you motivated.

Do utilise the Facebook group for motivation and inspiration from your fellow challengers. Being in a community of like minded people is so important when you are on a journey that is often hard. It's always good to know you aren't the only one feeling these emotions.

So, it's Day 4 now - almost there! let's get started on refining those recipe books.

SO WHY RECIPE BOOKS?

It's fair to say that recipe books don't often find themselves randomly dotted around the house but we chose this category as part of this challenge as the space we give to our recipe books is often more than their usefulness justifies. Now, we have a caveat, of course. There will be those of you out there who use recipe books daily, are highly motivated in the kitchen, host guests for meals regularly and for whom those recipe books are a huge part of your life and we wouldn't suggest you radically offload them but then there are certainly others amongst us who keep recipe books for ever and rarely use them.

For this part of the challenge, we will look at

- Honesty
- Quantities
- Organising
- Donating

So let's work through decluttering our recipe books efficiently and methodically so we are successful. Take it step by step, don't forget to watch Lesley's video too - the link is in the Day 4 email.

Good luck!

STEP
1

PRE-SORTING AND CATEGORISATION

Recipe books are slightly different to the other random categories we have looked at this week as they normally have a designated home. But, they are still here, there and everywhere in our homes because we get them out to use them and don't put them back or we have too many for their designated home. So find all your recipe books and gather them together. Let's do some basic categorisation to help.



Category 1 - Cookery and baking books

Pile your books together in one place. Don't make the piles too high, maybe 4 or 5 books on each pile so they don't topple. Subcategorise into baking and cooking books if that makes sense.



Category 2 - Magazines and loose recipes

Recipes are often found in magazines and we keep the whole magazine just for the recipe. We also have lots of loose recipes that people have given to us or we have cut out of magazines.



Category 3 - Gadget manuals

When we buy kitchen appliances they often come with an instruction manual and/or a recipe book. Gather them into one area.

STEP
2

DECISION MAKING AND HONESTY

So now it's time to start making decisions on what you want to keep. Be honest with yourself. The way we find and use recipe books nowadays can be quite different to the way we used to use them. Most of us search the internet or use apps for inspiration so we don't always need the amount of recipe books we used to.



Is it in good condition?

Our recipe books are often a little dog-eared and will almost certainly have pages sticking together and stains due to the proximity of them whilst we are cooking. But that's part of their charm and an indication that they are well used and well loved. But if pages are falling out, it may be time to let them go.



Is it still something you would use with regularity?

We aren't really fans of allocating timescales when decluttering as it is often way too simplistic but in this instance, time can be a great indicator of whether something is still going to be useful. If it hasn't been used in a year or more, the chances are it's not a popular book that you use. A year allows for a full cycle of entertaining and seasons.



Are you struggling with the idea of letting a recipe book go that you may want to use in the future?

If you let a recipe book go, what's the worse thing that will happen? You can always find alternative recipes online or in a different book.



Are you being honest and realistic?

Where are you in your life right now? Do you still cook and entertain like you used to? Have your kids flown the nest? Have your food tastes changed? Has the amount of time you have to cook meals changed? It's important to evaluate your own behaviour and keep only those things that serve the current you.



Are you clinging onto things through sentiment?

Do you have recipe books that have been passed down through generations? It's perfectly natural to have sentimental attachment to cookery books because food and entertaining relate to special times with family and friends but do make sure you are favouring quality over quantity. It's better to have a couple of truly special family recipe books than a whole collection.



Will your recipe books fit onto the shelf, bookcase or cupboard that you have designated for them?

The decisions about how many recipe books to keep is largely related to the space you have available. Designate a space in your kitchen and don't allow the space to be overcrowded. Try and avoid having overflow storage.



Are your recipe books in the kitchen?

It's vital that recipe books are in the place that you use them so the kitchen is going to be preferable. If things are not stored where they are used, they tend to either not be used or not put back after use and that's when random clutter starts to build.

STEP
3

DECLUTTERING TIME

It's time to finally decide what is staying and what is going so use the information above and decide whether to keep a recipe book or lose it. Some of these decisions will be easier than others. Remember to focus on all the things we have mentioned. If you are still struggling to make those decisions, refer back to Lesley's video where she goes step by step through her rationale for keeping her recipe books or letting them go.



Challenge whether it is fit for purpose

Challenge whether you would still use it



Challenge life changes, guilt and sentiment

Challenge the quantities



Challenge the space you have designated

Challenge yourself and #releasetherandom!

STEP 4

ORGANISING

So, you're now ready to start putting the recipe books that you have decided to keep back on the shelf or in the cupboard.



Visible or hidden?

Decide whether you want your recipe books on display or not. The aesthetic of books is pleasing to a lot of people but they can also look quite messy too so if you prefer a more streamlined look, do you have a shelf inside a kitchen cupboard you can use? If you don't have space for recipe books, think about putting up a strong shelf if you have wall space.



Stack in categories or size

Decide how you want to organise your recipe books. You may want to categorise by type of cooking or you may want to stack in height order. Have a system that make sense and that you can easily maintain.



Deal with loose recipes

If you have large amounts of loose recipes, store them neatly in one place. You can buy recipe holders, use a ring binder or a box with dividers in it. If you have kept magazines just for a recipe, take the opportunity to cut it out and store it with your others.



Go digital

There are lots of apps out there designed for meal planning, shopping lists and finding recipes. If you already use a lot of technology in other areas of your life, why not take the opportunity to go digital with your recipes too?

STEP
6

WHERE TO DONATE

There will no doubt be recipe books that are still useful and it's going to make you feel a whole lot better to send them to a good home.



Charity Shops

Charity shops love recipe books so go ahead and donate your books to your local one. Make sure they aren't too damaged first though.



Freecycle, Freegle

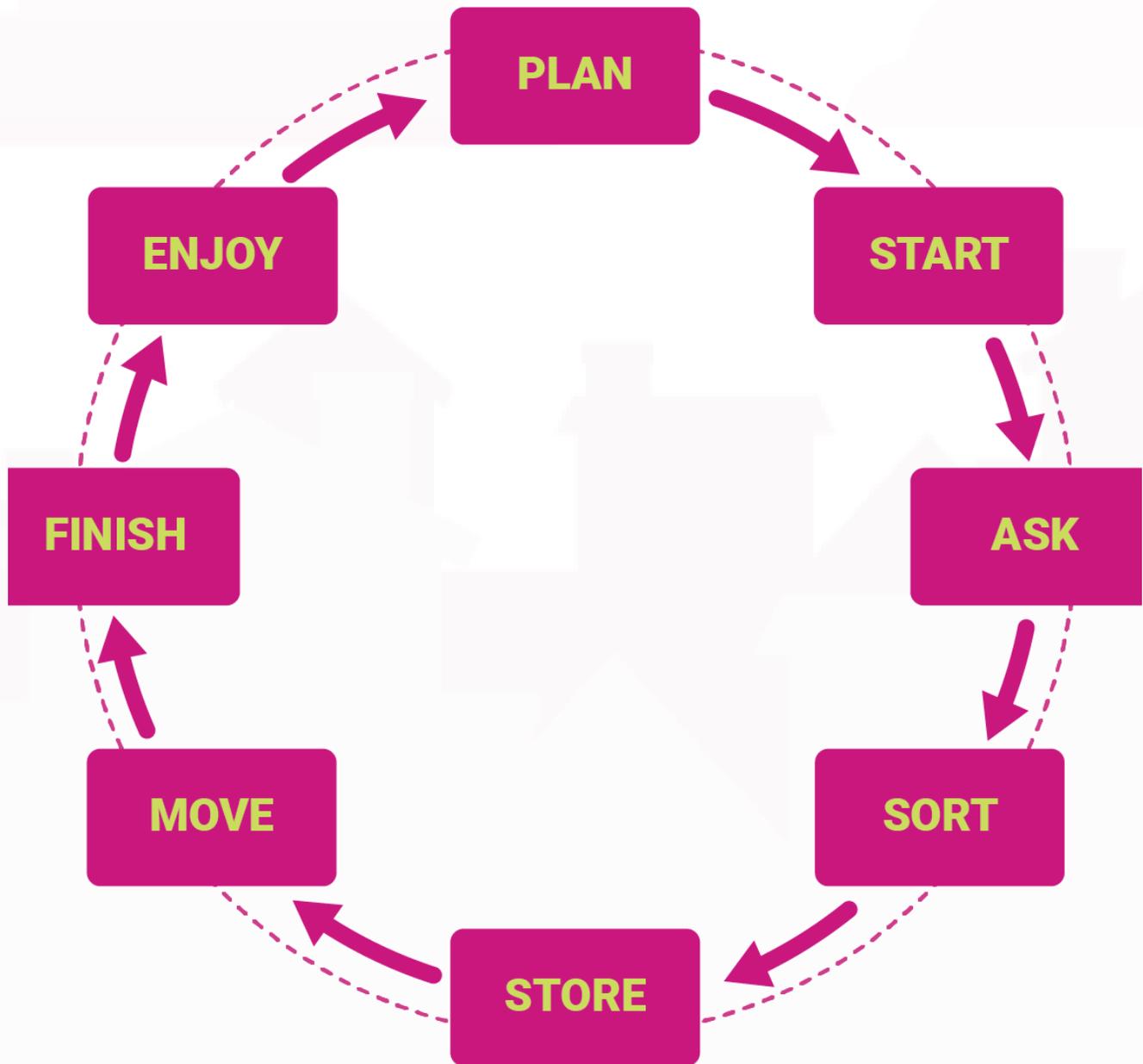
In the UK we have Freecycle and Freegle which is a great way to donate things for free to other people who may want them.



Recycle

Sometimes recipe books are heavily damaged and so they can be recycled with general paper. Please do remove any plastic sleeves first though.

THE DECLUTTERING PROCESS



CONGRATULATIONS YOU'VE SORTED YOUR RECIPE BOOKS!!

You have finished working through Day 4 of the Random Acts of Decluttering Challenge!

Great stuff. What a brilliant feeling it is and you should be proud of yourself for getting started and getting finished. Hopefully, you have managed to be really honest with yourself and donated some recipe books that have been cluttering up your kitchen. The nice thing about decluttering books is that they free up so much space that you can use for other things. Make sure you get to that final step of donation as it's critical to that feeling of enjoyment and accomplishment.

Have you completed today's mini challenge in the Facebook Group?

To be in with a chance to win a 3 month pass to our Members' area, make sure you complete today's mini Facebook group challenge. Post a before and after photo of your recipe books. We would love to see them! Don't forget to use the hashtag **#releasetherandom**

AMAZING JOB TODAY!

Lesley and Ingrid