



Spring Cleaning

Don't worry – I'm not going to go all Martha Stewart on you. One look at my office would convince you that I'm unqualified to do that. Out of sight, out of mind applies to me, so I employ a "horizontal filing system" of keeping folders for current projects on my desk. Since I'm usually working on no fewer than four projects at any given time and I have a small desk, the result is anything but Stewartesque.

Next to the Goddess

I take comfort in John Boe's essay *Messiness Is Next to Goddessness* where Boe observes, "If cleanliness is next to godliness, then messiness must be next to goddessness. God creates order, gives us ten neat rules carved with no crossing out in a stone tablet. The Great Goddess, on the other hand, gives us life... life is chaotic – creative, unpredictable, uncodified."

Boe highlights the inverse relationship between neatness and creativity. His writing room may start out neat, but as he creates order on the page, the order in his study decreases. "As I write, the room gets messier and messier. Papers, cups, glasses, cans, old food, pencils and pens, newspapers, books seem to grow, to spread out from my desk until they fill the whole room. As the piece I'm working on gets more ordered, the room gets, with each successive draft, more disordered. When I'm finally done, clutching a few neat pages, my study looks like a bomb hit it."

Creativity requires the willingness to be messy. The apparent disorder of my office is the primordial soup that creative ideas evolve from. And yet, there is an undeniable satisfaction in occasionally imposing order in my office.



Perhaps it's just an illusion of control. Perhaps it's the unconscious awareness that, as John Cheever pointed out, art is the triumph over chaos. Just as the phoenix cannot be reborn without first burning itself to create the ashes it arises from, art cannot arise without the creative chaos that is its genesis.



Dance Between the Poles

Life is chaotic, but it is also orderly. Life is the dance on the razor's edge between order and chaos. Too much of either will extinguish life. The same is true of creativity. It needs the ebb and flow of order and disorder, the rise and fall of chaos and calm.

We cannot create if we are unwilling to embrace chaos. Let me quote Pablo Picasso one more time, "Every act of creation is first of all an act of destruction." The destruction is always some kind of head-first leap of faith into chaos.

But we cannot wallow in the mess forever. Attempts to do so are forms of, if you'll forgive the expression, creative masturbation. We don't get the full satisfaction of creating until we complete the process by creating something tangible that can be shared with others. And we can't do that until we push through the chaos to find a new order.

The dance on the razor's edge between order and chaos is not an easy one. Most of us have inclinations to one extreme or the other. Is it any surprise that Martha Stewart once said "Life is too complicated not to be orderly."? Martha, at least Martha's public persona, adores order. I, on the other hand, am more inclined to the messy end, as you might guess from the description of my office. (Once upon a time in a

former life in cubicle land, I proudly displayed a sign that proclaimed “A clean and orderly desk is the sign of a deeply disturbed mind.”) Martha Stewart has a precise method for, well for pretty much everything, but for the sake of example, let’s say for arranging Gerbera Daisies. I just plop them in a vase and add water.



But to tell the full truth, I waffle between the extremes. I have a messy office, it’s true, but I also have to confess that I am an absolute snob about copyediting. What’s worse, I rearrange the way other people put dishes in my dishwasher when they’re not looking. (I’d like to think that Martha wouldn’t let other people load her dishwasher or that she’d have a diagram inside, the Maytag equivalent of a Whitman box of chocolates, but that’s probably just petty jealousy and creative snobbery on my part.)

It’s not the image I hope I present, but I really do relate to a cartoon of a man in a suit and tie sitting at his desk squaring up the papers, stapler, pens, eraser and ruler, thinking “There! Perfectly organized for my spontaneity session!”

Deny Your Inclinations

The challenge of the dance is to keep ourselves moving between order and chaos. And to do that, we need to switch things up a bit. So where you tend to be messy, it’s time for a thorough spring cleaning.

Where you tend to be obsessively attached to order, it’s time to take the willy-nilly approach. You know, toss it in the direction of your desk (or dishwasher as the case may be) and wherever it lands, there shall it rest.

Here are some dance steps for both poles. You should do some of both, but spend the most time with the suggestions that make you shudder. The whole point is to deny your inclinations by pushing yourself to spend more time at the other pole.

Want to Know More?

Learning to dance between order and chaos is one of the polarities we’ll explore in the **Resolve Unsolvable Problems** workshop on November 19th. Many of the problems that we just can’t seem to get past aren’t really problems at all. They’re polarities, opposite ends of an infinity loop that defy one-sided solutions.

Thinking that the willingness to be messy is the always the answer is a prime example of a polarity mistaken for a problem. You end up living in a pigsty and still feeling blocked because being messy only takes you halfway. Moving back and forth between neat and messy is what resolves the situation.

Join me on November 19th to learn how to recognize the polarities in your life and how to manage them well.

How to Straighten Up and Fly Right

Ancient Wisdom: Feng Shui Your Creative

Space. I don’t know where you’re supposed to put the mirrors or what’s the best relationship between your desk and the door, but I do know that two of the best principles of feng shui are the demand to eliminate clutter and the requirement to place objects consciously.

Here’s the easiest way I found to apply these: Go through your creative space and eliminate everything. Clear the decks. Clean the decks. Then put the things that you really want present, and only the things you want present, in specific and aesthetically pleasing

Feeling Resistant?

If you feel resistant to this crazy idea of denying your inclinations, have I got a workshop for you! On April 23rd we will **Move Through Resistance!** (Please see page 4.) This is one of my favorite workshops; I was absolutely fascinated to learn what’s going on in the brain when we have the familiar feeling of “I want to, but I don’t want to...” It was such a relief to realize it wasn’t about lack of will power or discipline. And even more of a relief to learn what we can do to minimize the effects of resistance and maximize our accomplishments and the resulting sense of well-being. As much fun as it was to learn all that, it’s even more fun for me to share it.

So please join me on April 23rd and bring your resistance with you! Because I know you might be feeling a little resistant (otherwise why would you bother to come?), let me make you an offer you can’t refuse: **If at the end of the workshop, you haven’t learned something of value, I’ll refund your money.** You’ve got nothing to lose but your resistance!

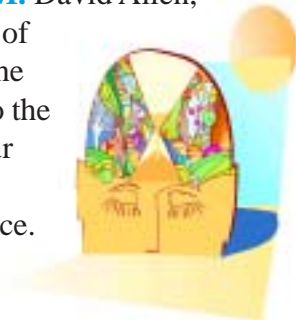
places. Sort through the remainder and consider tossing things out. Are you really ever going to finish that needlepoint that you started twelve years ago? Let it go. Give yourself the gift of completion by either finishing old projects, giving them away as they are right now or throwing them away. You'll be amazed at how much lighter you'll feel.



For the finer points of feng shui, you can consult an expert, but this is a great beginning.

Not So Ancient Wisdom: Imitate Your Mother or Grandmother. My mother and grandmother had the time and commitment to keep their homes immaculate. I don't have either the time or the commitment to maintain their standards, but I do all right everywhere except my office. And every three or four months, I pay homage to my grandma and my mom by excavating the desk, filing the filing, dusting the surfaces, even cleaning my keyboard, something my grandma certainly never had to think about.

Defrag Your Psychic RAM. David Allen, productivity expert and author of *Getting Things Done*, coined the term 'psychic RAM' to refer to the short-term memory area in your head. According to Allen, the human brain makes a poor office. "When you file something you need or want to do in your mind, without writing it down, it will have some of your subliminal attention and can drain your energy." Allen points out that using psychic RAM is ineffective. You'll think about what's in your psychic RAM more than you need to and at inappropriate times, like at three in the morning. Or you'll forget it and fail to give it the attention it deserves. Moreover, the psychic RAM part of your brain doesn't seem to process time, so as soon as you think you could or should do something, that part of your brain is thinking about doing it all the time.

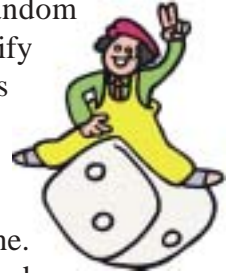


Allen has a whole host of useful suggestions to solve this and other problems. Just take a look at his website for sample suggestions. The short answer that's relevant here is to defragment your psychic RAM by writing things down in one place (that way you don't replace your inefficient psychic RAM with

equally inefficient masses of To Do lists that you never follow through on before you lose the list). The Egyptian pharaohs knew the power of writing when they said "So let it be written, so let it be done."

The Flip Side: How to Loosen Up and Fly Wherever the Spirit Moves You

Follow Mr. Willy-Nilly. Be random wherever you can. Specifically, identify the things you do precisely, the things you have to do just so. You know, the things other people would say you're a little 'anal-retentive' about. Loading the dishwasher is one of mine. For a week (or as long as you can stand it), don't do it precisely. Do it any old whichway. Or better yet, do it the way your imprecise partner or friend would do it.



Tissue Paper Painting. Buy a package of assorted colored tissue paper. Tear up at least four different colored sheets into little pieces. Toss it like a salad. Leave it sit around for a couple of days. If it falls to the floor, don't pick it up. After the paper has seasoned for a few days, use a glue-stick to paste the tissue paper onto a piece of card stock to make a painting. You can be representational or abstract. I suggest you choose the style that bothers your sensibilities the most.

Red Light! Green Light! Identify the places in your living and working space that you regularly neaten and clean. Red light! That means stop cleaning those areas for at least two weeks. Identify the places in your living and working space that you don't regularly neaten and clean. Green light! That means invest the energy you would have used to clean the usual places by cleaning something that you wouldn't ordinarily clean.

You can devise your own ways to find a new dance between the poles of chaos and order and as you do, you're sure to expand your creative options. So enjoy!

When you or your organization need motivation and information to expand your creative possibilities, check out my coaching and speaking services at www.RosanneBane.com. Or call 612-722-4139!



Deepen Your Creativity!

You have a calling to share your creativity in meaningful ways. Your desire to express yourself is a message from the Divine, encoded in emotion. The message is: “Share these gifts I’ve given you with the rest of the world. Quit worrying about whether you’ll be good enough. Risk being a fool to show your love to yourself, your community, your world. I’m telling you to do this, so get moving!”

It’s time to take your creativity to the next level. These workshops are designed to help you do that. They are all are interactive and use a variety of techniques like guided imagery, brainstorming, partner processes, freewriting, discussion, etc. We’ll meet on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Open Book. You can take just one workshop or any combination of the six. The more workshops you register for in advance, the more you save! First workshop: Only \$50! Any 2 workshops: \$93, **Save \$7**. Any 3 workshops: \$136; **Save \$14**. Any 4 workshops: \$179, **Save \$21**. Any 5 workshops: \$222, **Save \$28**. All 6 workshops: \$265, **Save \$35!**

March 5: Clarify Creative Purpose and Vision

Crystallize your awareness of what you’re called to do with your creative talents and desires. You will:



- ⊙ Discover or refine your creative purpose
- ⊙ Animate your commitment
- ⊙ Draft a vision statement for your creative life
- ⊙ Draft a mission statement for a specific project

April 23: Move Through Resistance

Resistance is not about willpower; it’s about neurology. Discover the true origins of resistance and how to respond effectively to it: You will:



- ⊙ Find out what’s going on in your brain that causes resistance
- ⊙ Identify which of the 6 common forms of resistance you tend to experience
- ⊙ Apply a 4 Step Method to move thru resistance

June 11: Motivate Yourself

Motivational Interviewing will get you ready, willing and able to move forward. You will:



- ⊙ Recognize and reinforce what has prepared you to take the next step
- ⊙ Translate awareness into motivation and motivation into action
- ⊙ Identify rewards that excite you
- ⊙ Plan celebrations for your success

August 6: Beyond Excuses, Illusions and Obstacles

Discern between excuses and real obstacles. Disengage from beliefs that make it impossible to move forward.



You will:

- ⊙ Identify common excuses and how you use them
- ⊙ Recognize illusions that inhibit creativity
- ⊙ Muzzle excuses and illusions
- ⊙ Develop strategies to eliminate obstacles

October 1: Please Don’t Feed the Saboteur

Learn how to keep the Saboteur, that nasty inner critic that constantly complains and is never satisfied, from eating you alive. You will:



- ⊙ Recognize and respect the connection between creation and destruction
- ⊙ Discover the 5 hallmarks of the Saboteur
- ⊙ Develop strategies to feed appropriate destruction and starve the Saboteur

November 19: Resolve Unsolvable Problems

Stop frustrating yourself trying to solve unsolvable problems. Learn to effectively manage polarities instead.



- ⊙ Distinguish between polarities and problems
- ⊙ Identify the polarities that inhibit creativity
- ⊙ Create your own personal Polarity Map
- ⊙ Gain insights that transform your perceptions and behaviors

Register at www.RosanneBane.com or call 612-722-4139