



Spring Cleaning Is the Ultimate Mental Health Reset



Walter McKenzie for xSELERatED

As winter fades and the first signs of spring start showing up - warmer breezes, blooming flowers, sunlight that sticks around a little longer - many of us feel a quiet nudge to start fresh. It's innate, something handed down for generations...something timeless and yet wonderfully simple: **spring cleaning**.



This ritual isn't just about cleaning out closets and dusting shelves. Spring cleaning has a powerful impact on our mental and emotional wellness, too. It might just be the easiest, most underrated form of self-care there is.

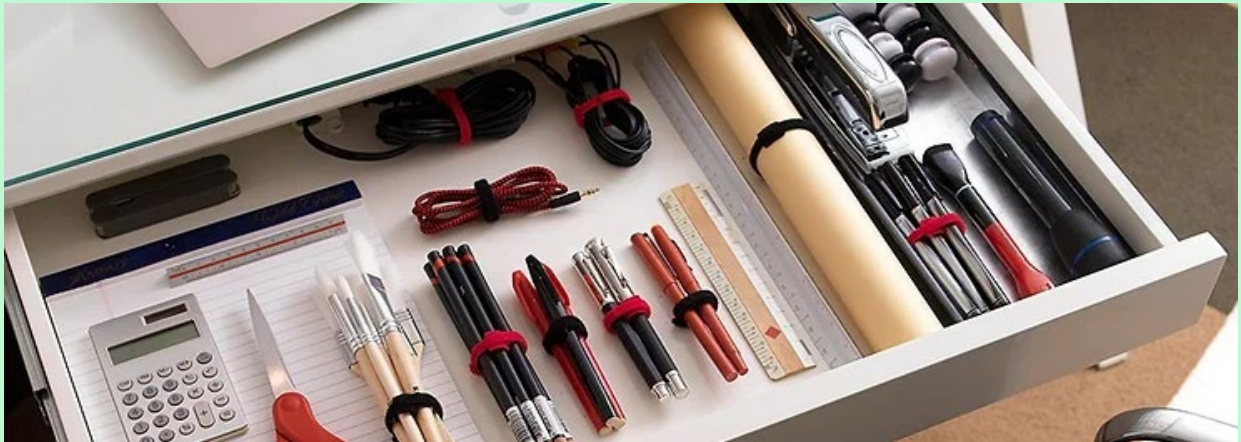
Here's 5 ways spring cleaning is more than opening up the windows to let the fresh air in:

1. Clutter = Stress

Ever notice how your stress spikes when your space is a mess? That's not just you. Research shows that cluttered environments can lead to increased anxiety and even higher levels of cortisol (the stress hormone).

When you clean your space, you're also decluttering your mind. A tidy home gives your brain a break from constant visual noise. It's like turning down the volume in your head.

So when you organize that drawer or finally toss out that pile of papers, you're not just tidying up; you're making mental and emotional space for calm.



2. Mindfulness in Motion

Spring cleaning might not seem like a spiritual experience, but when you're focused on folding clothes, wiping counters, or organizing shelves, you're present in the moment.

Being in the moment is one of the most powerful ways to quell anxiety and reset our emotions. It's a kind of active meditation where you are more aware and intentional about what you're doing. You take inventory not only of what you own around you, but internally, too.



3. The Act of Letting Go

That shirt you haven't worn in five years? That drawer full of "just in case" junk? That pantry haunted by expiration dates? These kinds of things carry emotional weight. We know they're there, but there's always something else keeping us from getting to them.

When you spring clean, you give yourself permission to let go of:

- Older versions of yourself
- Unfinished stories
- Expectations you've outgrown

Spring cleaning becomes a symbolic reset. It's a way of showing that you're ready to move forward.



4. Creating a Sanctuary

Our surroundings affect our state of mind. A cluttered, chaotic home can drain you. Conversely, a clean, cozy, and organized space becomes your sanctuary. Every time you come home, it serves as your refuge from the outside world.

When you take the time to refresh your surroundings, you maintain an environment that supports your wellbeing; one that feels safe, peaceful and inspiring. You will literally feel yourself exhale, relax and rejuvenate. You'll sleep better and you'll have more energy to do the things you enjoy.



🧡 5. Practicing Self-Care

Spring cleaning is an act of loving yourself. It's a way of saying, "I matter enough to take care of my space and myself!"

It's not just scrubbing windows and vacuuming floors. It's compassion for the person you are and your well-being. You're creating the space for clarity, growth and joy!



🌸 Final Thoughts

Spring cleaning isn't just about neatness, it's about mental and emotional wellness. It's a way to lighten the emotional load, clear out the chaos, and reconnect with your authentic needs.

So grab that bucket of cleaning supplies, crank up your playlist, and dive in to this year's spring cleaning...not just to brighten up your dwelling, but your heart and mind, as well.

In the annual cycle of the seasons, spring signifies rebirth and renewal, and you deserve to take part in the celebration!

What's one thing you're ready to let go of this spring? 🌱💬



Our May Resource from Heather Lageman: How to Conduct an Educational Garage Sale!



How to Conduct an Educational Garage Sale

The countdown to the end of the school year has begun! This is the time when things are incredibly hectic for all school administrators who are faced with balancing everyday responsibilities with added tasks such as local and state testing, finalizing next year's schedules, coordinating meetings with parents, staff, and central office, addressing budgetary needs and promotion ceremonies, to name a few.

During this time, it is recommended that you effectively plan ahead to avoid chaos and burn-out. Remember to focus on your end-of-the school year checklists, as it will help with staying organized and will keep you from getting side-tracked. As you are creating your checklists, consider taking a few minutes to conduct an "Educational Garage Sale" (from Shaping Positive School Cultures for the 21st Century (2008) by Dr. Kent D. Peterson of the University of Wisconsin-Madison).

You do not necessarily have to complete this activity alone; you may want to complete it with your leadership team during one of your upcoming meetings since your team and you share the leadership, coaching and managerial responsibilities at your school.

Grab some sticky notes and begin to write down things that you believe should be placed in each station. (Remember to use one sticky note per item). Once your sticky notes are completed, place them under the five categories (listed below). Next, conduct an informal "Gallery Walk" and then share your reasons regarding your sticky placements with your team.

The sharing may lead to thoughtful discussions and considerations of much-needed changes. This simple activity may possibly result in a "decluttered" focus plan to start the school year in the fall. The steps are as follows:

- Decide what in the school should be sorted into the five different categories;
- Consider what you want to keep, store, repair and discard;
- Place aspects of the school in five different stations. The stations are:
 - Museum: Place items that have served the school well, but need to be "retired" to a valued place of honor.
 - Not for Sale: These features of the school are some of the best things going on and are important to keep and celebrate.
 - Repair Shop: These are aspects of the school that need some repair fine-tuning or improvement.
 - Garbage Can: These are items that need to be thrown out. They no longer serve for the good of the school.
 - Toxic Waste Hauler: These are negative, hostile, or toxic aspects of the school that take special handling. These need to be discarded carefully!