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## 2014 DETOX ISSUE

- ✓ Goal setting
- ✓ DIY Skin overhaul
- ✓ Cosmetic acupuncture
- ✓ Declutter your life...

**EXPERT  
TIPS**  
ON NATURAL  
MAKE-UP



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see page 4



# Declutter *your* diary

To make time for your dreams,  
some things have got to go.  
**Louise Wedgwood** shows you  
how to listen to your inner values  
and cull with confidence.



**E**ven though we now know that we 'can have it all, just not all at once', most women still try. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 42 per cent of us feel rushed and pressed for time with all the competing demands we face, and time for our most precious pursuits is always squeezed out by things we should be doing, or get sucked into, but that don't reflect our true identity.

You think you'll finally get time for painting, reading or travelling if you just work harder, and so you keep struggling with your bottomless to-do list. Subconsciously, some people even equate being busy with being needed and important, but Henry David Thoreau saw the truth of it more than 150 years ago when he wrote to his friend, 'It is not enough to be busy. So are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?'

Clarifying what you actually want to be busy about means you can confidently detox everything else from your diary and enjoy being liberated to live a truly authentic life.

### **Uncover your personal priorities**

Terry Bahat, a Melbourne-based health coach, says that happiness depends on knowing and living your values, which she describes as the "compass" that guides your life. Living in alignment with your values results in "a sense of certainty, an inner peace and a total congruency," she says.

To discover which points of the compass will guide you to happiness, write down your top 10 priorities in any order. You might include common

near the top of the list. Just like the pre-flight instructions to put your own oxygen mask before helping others; if you don't take time to exercise, relax and have fun, you'll find it difficult to give your best."

Now, to sort your list of priorities by importance and separate the 'nice to do' from the 'absolutely vital', consider these questions:

- If I had only six months to live, would I want to spend time on this today?
- Would I like this activity to be mentioned in my eulogy? (Kept a clean house? No. Made time for friends? Yes.)
- Is this just something I feel I should value or is it a true reflection of who I am?

### **Let your list shape your life**

Simply clarifying your priorities can help you make better decisions in line with your values. But to maintain this clear frame of mind, keep your list where you'll see it – on your mirror or fridge. When you face a hectic week or an awkward decision, refer to your values. For example, remembering that self-development is near the top of your list makes it easier to justify the cost of a yoga course, and having family as your number-one priority eases the guilt of choosing the school concert over a work function.

As part of her business, Bahat needs to chase up invoices and payments but prefers chatting with existing and potential clients, so she's made a conscious decision to spend more time on interactive business activities like marketing and sales, and less on bookkeeping, even though it means her payments might be late.

**“ Simply clarifying your priorities can help you make better decisions in line with your values. But to maintain this clear frame of mind, keep your list where you'll see it – on your mirror or fridge. ”**

priorities like being fit, nurturing your marriage or relationship and achieving work goals. Also think about your personal passions like starting a market stall, exploring Australia, or campaigning for refugee rights. Stop to record them now – most people need just two minutes to do this.

In deciding what makes the cut, try to notice when you're being influenced by what others value. As Jane Taylor, a wellbeing coach on the Gold Coast, says, "The answers are inside you. However, it's always sensible to put caring for yourself

Similarly, when Taylor realised that she loved reading but hadn't finished many books lately, she got together with a group of women to form the 'Booklettes' Women's Book Club. She has been pleased to find that "I now spend less time watching TV and more time reading."

### **Weed out common time-wasters**

Once you know when to say 'yes', the times to say 'no' reveal themselves. Taylor points out that the time-wasters we need to be wary of, just like the top-10 things



## DECLUTTER YOUR DIGITAL LIFE

- Start your day by looking at your priorities, not your emails. They'll still be there after a few hours' work on what matters most.
- Unsubscribe from email newsletters ruthlessly. You can resubscribe if you miss them.
- Unfollow, unfriend and unlike. Unless you're thrilled every time you see that person in your feed, reduce their drain on your attention.
- There's an app you don't need. Uninstall Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest apps on your phone so that you spend less time scrolling. You can still access them in the browser.

that matter most, are different for us all. However, almost everyone finds it too easy to let TV, social media and email consume their attention – and these are unlikely to be on your top 10 list. Bahat sees the benefit of social media but reminds us, “be very careful and have clear boundaries when dealing with those technological ‘toys’ and sites”. For example, vow to check Facebook and Twitter only at lunch,

and explore trends like Inbox Zero or Calmbox to cope with email.

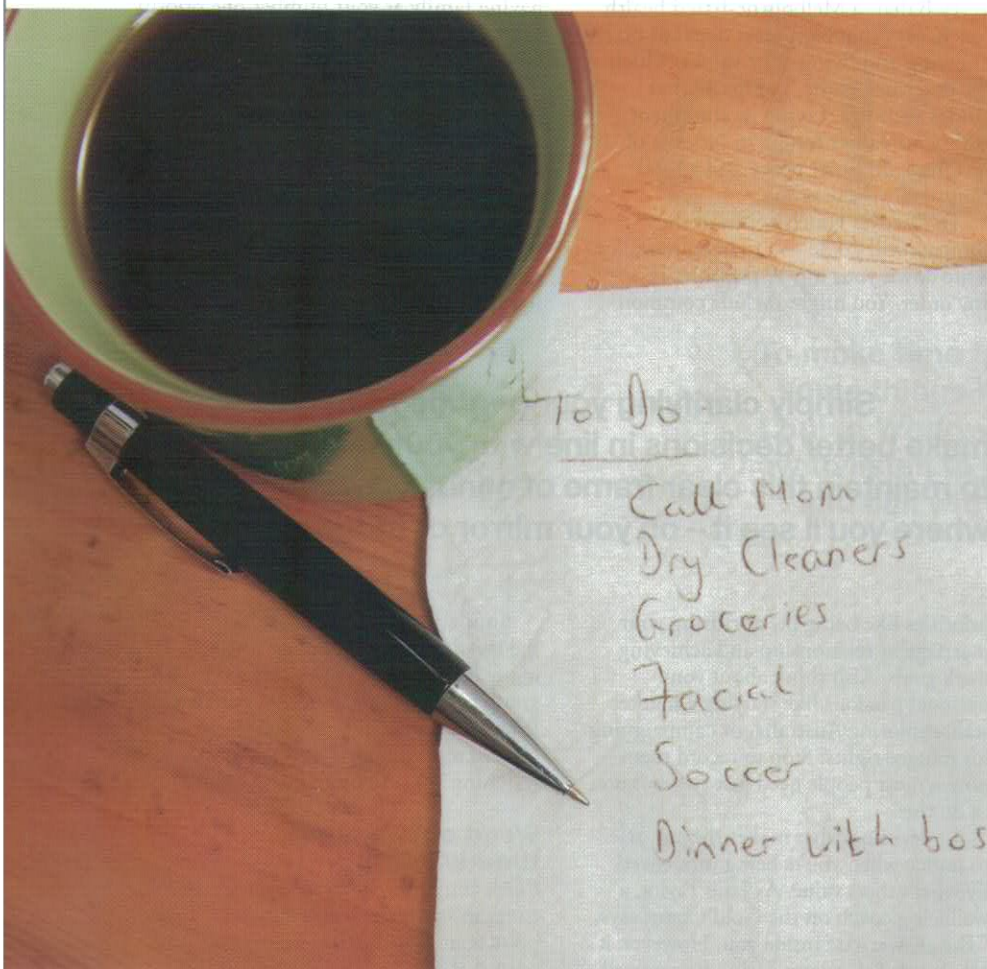
Taylor says other common time wasters include being disorganised, and tasks awaiting your attention like assignments to write, buttons to reattach, and phone calls to return. Even when they're on the backburner these unfinished tasks continue to drain your brain power. A to-do list is a good way of focusing on what matters, identifying what you can delegate, and ditching anything you can live without doing altogether.

## Delegate and outsource

Your to-do list includes tasks that are important but you don't necessarily have to do yourself. Buying time to do the things that are vital to you instead of buying things to own or consume, can help you live in alignment with your values. Instead of spending \$200 shopping for new shoes or bed linen (probably not one of your top-10 priorities), spend it on a month's worth of cleaning and use the time you save to start your book or host a dinner party. As well as housework, you can outsource chores like ironing, grocery delivery and pruning to professionals and redirect your energies to your priorities.

## EASIER WAYS TO SAY NO

- “Thanks for thinking of me but I can't make it. I look forward to seeing you next week.”
- “I've enjoyed being on the committee but need to step aside for someone else now.”
- “It's a great idea but I don't think it meets our project priorities. Can we revisit those?”





The help you need might even be under your nose – have a family roundtable to renegotiate domestic responsibilities. Put specific duties on the table and let people put their hands up for whichever suit them. If family relationships are at the top of your list, having an honest conversation about your needs is part of honouring that value.

### **Become a pro at letting go**

When you delegate to others, they won't do it quite like you do. They might need

practice or prefer a different method. If you find this uncomfortable, remember the mantra 'let go to let come'. Bring to mind the things in your life that rate higher than streak-free mirrors and perfectly steamed vegetables.

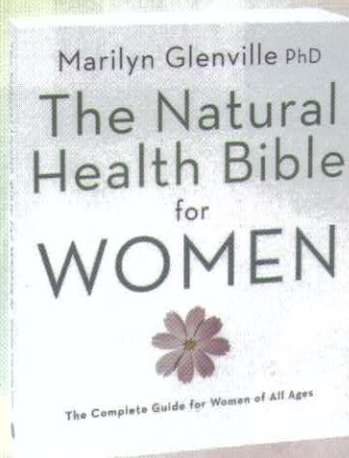
Some activities you can leave out of your schedule altogether. This affects others when you turn down invitations and requests, but it doesn't have to damage your relationships. Taylor reminds us "one of the most important

“ The help you need might even be under your nose – have a family roundtable to renegotiate domestic responsibilities. ”





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things in any relationship is honesty – being real and authentic”. Share the reasons you need to say no, and give your friends and family the chance to understand.

Bahat says that being assertive is key. Some people flinch at the idea because it sounds like getting your way at any cost. It actually means respecting your own needs as well as the other person's. Your body language forms part of the message and Bahat suggests you use “a quiet, calm voice and relaxed posture, while looking at the person's face.” If necessary, she encourages you to try the ‘broken record’ technique. Continue to politely and assertively turn down the request until it sinks in, even if you think you shouldn't have to say it more than once.

When you leave behind the activities that don't fulfill your true priorities, you'll find the time and space for

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO DECLUTTER YOUR LIFE, VISIT:

- Terry Bahat – [coreworks.com.au](http://coreworks.com.au)
- Jane Taylor – [habitsforwellbeing.com](http://habitsforwellbeing.com)

whatever is most precious to you. Be aware of the temptation to fritter away your energy on anything less important, and respect each day the way Pulitzer prize winner Annie Dillard did when she said: “How we spend our days is of course how we spend our lives.” NH

*Louise Wedgwood is a freelance health and lifestyle writer. She would love to continue this conversation with you on Twitter @louisewedgwood*