

### ***EXPERT SPOTLIGHT***

This article was published in the *Meaning and Purpose Newsletter*. Each month, *Meaning and Purpose*, shines their spotlight on an expert in a field directly related to living a meaningful, purposeful, balanced life. This month, the spotlight was on Mary Sigmann, a professional organizer and coach who uses her background in spiritual counseling and holistic development to help others become organized in a way that honors their needs and styles.

**Name:** Mary Sigmann  
**Occupation:** Professional organizer and coach  
**What She Does:** Individuals and companies hire Mary to help get them organized. She also offers workshops and seminars, coaching services, and is currently writing a book on fearless living.  
**Education:** Graduate of both Ohio State University and Coach University  
**In Business Since:** 1996

**Getting Started:** Mary began as a spiritual counselor and moved naturally into the field of coaching, with a special interest in organizing. She considers the best advice when starting out, in this or any business is to worry less and have more faith in your business process, plan, and ideas. “Just trust the process and take whatever action you feel guided to take – keep moving your feet and have faith in yourself.”

**“Quickpoints”:** When getting organized, Mary suggests:

1. Make the commitment to complete your organizing project.
2. Chunk your overall project into small, do-able pieces.
3. Schedule time for organizing in your calendar to make it “real” in time, “so you have that time set aside for the organizing process.”
4. Ask for help if necessary.
5. Start with subtraction. “First, get rid of all the things that are old, broken and moldy. The stuff you know you’re never going to use again is easy to get rid of. Create some space and stir up the energy a little bit. Once you start to get rid of all the junk, you can organize what’s left.”

**Barriers:** Two major ones: feeling overwhelmed and thinking one does not have time to become organized. The remedy? Make the time – schedule in organizing. “Like anything else,” Mary asserts, “you make the time for what’s important to you.”

**Favorite Products:** While many fancy organizing items can be purchased, Mary prefers the basics – especially large Rubbermaid plastic bins “for everything from toys to storing linens to everything else”. Mary prefers banker’s boxes for storing papers and files.

**Daily Small Steps:** Bookend each day with list-making. In the morning, review and revise your list to get an idea of what you want to accomplish today. At the end of the day, straighten up your home or work area and make your new list for tomorrow.

**Making A Difference:** Mary feels her job makes a difference in many ways, one of the most important being helping the planet. “If people embrace simplicity, then they stop wasting resources. And when they stop wasting resources, they help the planet.” Mary also volunteers with several organizations, including “Beyond Welfare”, a circle of support aimed to help provide resources and skills to people trying to get off welfare and become self-sufficient. She is also involved with Human Services International, an organization working to build a mobile hospital to bring into Afghanistan.

**Treating Others:** Don’t make judgments before getting to know someone. “Bottom line: Get to know each person as an individual before you make any judgments... In my experience, every person I’ve encountered has this deep richness – so much to offer.”

**The Balancing Act:** The key is recognizing we only have a limited amount of time each day. “I don’t schedule more than any human being can reasonably get done in the course of a day – that way, I’m not frustrating or disappointing myself.” Other important factors: being totally present in the moment, and planning with flexibility.

**To Relax:** Mary needs three things: pajamas, a blanket, and a book!

**Self in 3 Words:** “Spiritually-Based Organizer”