

YEAR OF WEALTH ~ GOING GREEN: APRIL 2020

Building human, social, and environmental capital for ourselves and our communities

Hello! This month, with Spring arriving and all its cleaning fervor, we were going to look at sorting and culling, keeping what's most important, and what happens to all the stuff. How different is that in the Time of COVID? Some of us may have more time for this; some less. Some will have no patience at all for it; others will find this small act of decision-making to be calming.

April Practice: First a Word on "Waste"

With this virus in our midst, it has made us think differently about everything we touch, how often we use things, and what we need and how much of it. Reducing waste may seem impossible when we need single-use protection. We will use more protective coverings, and do much more hand-washing and clothes-washing, and disinfecting. We will use more chemicals and water and materials than perhaps ever before. But, in this moment, thoughtful single-use is care, it is safety, it is smart: *waste is none of those things*.

Be safe. We will learn from this experience and use it to shift our resources -- in the future, not today. That is okay. It is necessary.

Tips and Tricks: What about the things you *can* control? Can you try sorting as Spring cleaning? If you have the time this month, and want to sort stuff in anticipation of a post-COVID trip to rehome them, here are some thoughts from the three times I've closed up homes, twice leaving with only what would fit in my car.

Action: take stock without deciding. Then circle back to make only the easy, obvious decisions about which pile items belong to: Goodwill, consignment shop, family/friends, habitat for Humanity, recycling, garbage. Repeat as needed.

Notice: that you may make the most thoughtful choices under particular conditions: mood, time of day, with daylight or music or company (or alone) or with a cup of coffee or glass of wine. You may also become very emotional as you touch and revisit items and experiences. I found that

allowing those emotions full time to appear, say what they need to say, and then move on, was valuable, valuable, time and learning. I hope that if this happens, it can be valuable for you.

Review: Revisit piles a week after they're sorted, adjusting if you'd like. Then leave them there until it's time to start the relay to rehome. Smile and give yourself credit for tackling a big chore and sharing your wealth. Next time will be easier.

Plan B for Waste: My issue, now, is recycling.

The trash company for my apartment does not accept recycling; I counter by taking it to our marvelous transfer station: Tacoma Recycling Center. The staff is so well-informed and helpful! They adapt to seasonal needs such as recycling holiday lights; collect niche items such as corks; and repurpose others such as clothing catalogs for women who must hide their addresses from abusers, and cartons for donated eggs at food pantries. When I go there, my body and mind rejoice. This place uses its talents and resources to do the most good it can.



The staff are staying home and safe. So, in six to eight weeks, I will take all the bags of recycled bottles, cans, corks, paper and cardboard, that now share my little balcony with me, and joyfully visit my friends at the reopened TRC.

~ Sarah