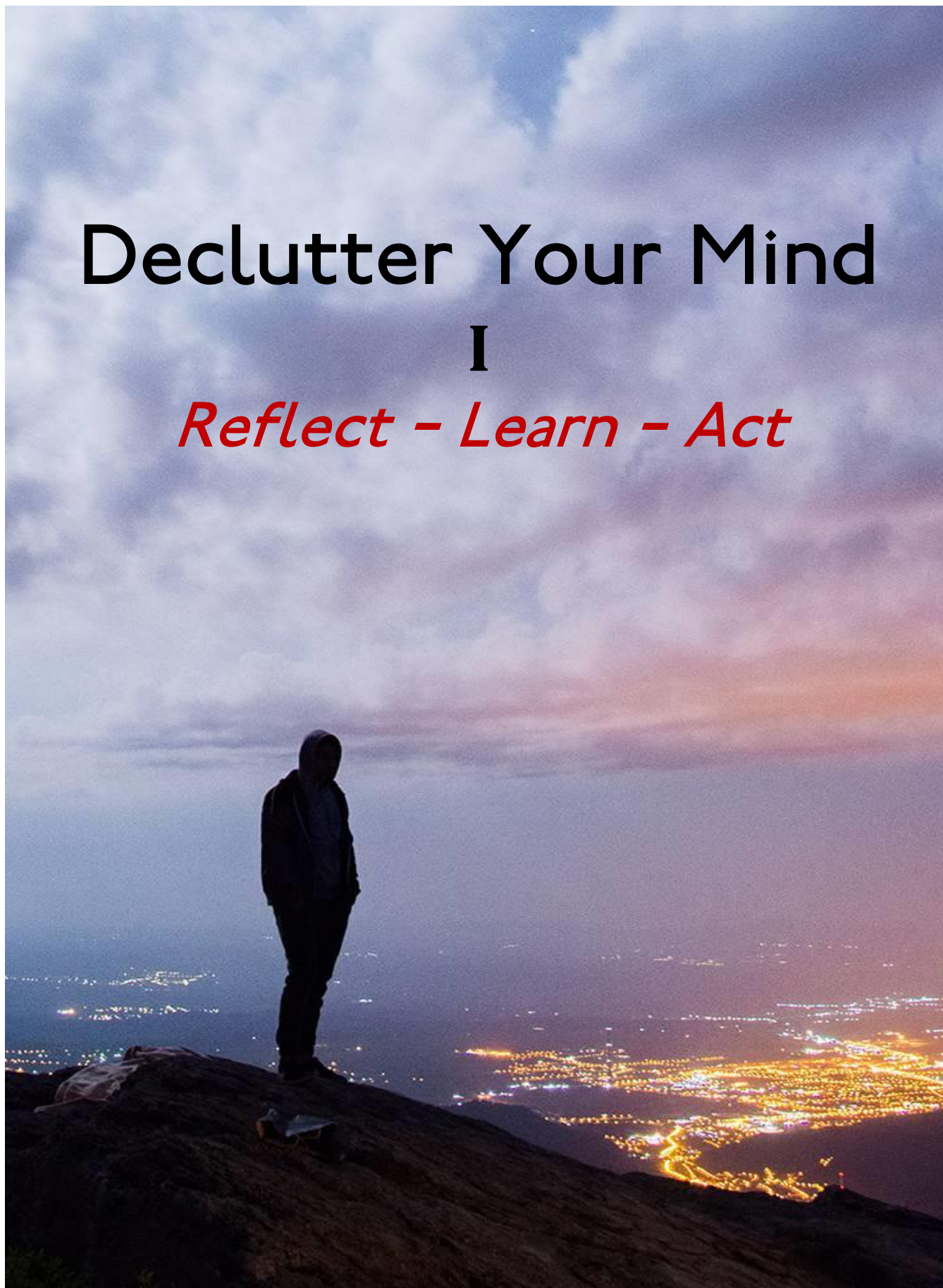# Declutter Your Mind

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Reflect – Learn – Act

Beyond the Far Cliffs offers training, coaching, and assessments. One special program for this topic is a 30-day "Reflect – Learn – Act" program for a team.

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Prioritize Your Life to Achieve Your Goals
and De-Clutter Your Mind

Mind-based clutter can lead to a watered-down existence. Suppose it isn't dealt with and removed regularly. In that case, your mental warehouse can overflow with needless memories, obsessions, experiences, and other mental litter that can negatively affect many aspects of your life.

Exactly what are we talking about? Here are a few examples of mental clutter you might be experiencing.

- Constantly focusing on negative thoughts. For whatever reason, you prefer to see the downside to just about everything. There isn't much room in your mind for positive thinking because it's packed with negativity.

- Constant rumination and obsession can lead to a cluttered mind. Ruminating is simple thinking taken to the extreme. It's repetitive thinking and dwelling on usually negative situations or feelings. This develops depression, anxiety, and stress because of the constant focus on potentially negative consequences and outcomes.

- Worrying about things you cannot control is a tried and true way to create a mental mess. We all do it even though it makes no sense. Try to spend less time thinking about and worrying about people, places, and things that are outside your control, and you'll have a more organized, clutter-free mind.

- Do you refuse to let go of past experiences, those that are usually negative in some way? Do you struggle to move past anger, sadness, and resentment? You've got to get over those types of feelings to experience mental wellness.

External clutter and distractions of any kind can cause mental clutter. It overloads your brain and forces you to spend mental energy dealing with unnecessary sensory input.

This happens to a lot of us. It's virtually impossible to achieve important goals if you don't remove this distracting load of negativity from your mind. One way to do that is to start prioritizing your life.

Set Priorities and Then Take Action

Break out the pen and paper. You can use your smartphone or computer if you like. Break your responsibilities, desires, beliefs, and thoughts into three categories.

> **1 – Urgent and Important**
> **2 – Important but Not Urgent**
> **3 – Not Important and Not Urgent**

Urgent means you have to do something now, right away, today. When something is urgent and extremely important, it goes to the top of the list. If something is important, but your life won't suffer if you take care of it tomorrow or later in the week, it's not urgent. It's not your biggest priority.

Finally, if you think about things that are neither important nor urgent, do they really deserve your mental energy? Maybe they are things you want to do, but you don't have to do them right away. For instance, maybe you'd like to watch one more episode of your favorite reality show on Netflix. If you're honest with yourself, you will label that activity as neither urgent nor important.

On the other hand, if you are due at work in half an hour, that is both urgent and important.

Prioritize your life this way. When you see the same things growing at the bottom of your list, you may cross them off entirely. This is a simple but very powerful way to get more done in your life. It clears your mind of the clutter that can keep you from achieving your goals. You boost your productivity while taking some stress out of your life simultaneously.

Move Repetitive Decisions to Autopilot
to Declutter Your Mind

Steve Jobs is the more well-known co-founder of Apple. He created the world's first one trillion dollar and two trillion-dollar company along with Steve Wozniak. Apple became the first company with a market capitalization of three trillion dollars in January 2022.

The meteoric rise of Apple in the computer and consumer electronics industries in the early 1990s had a lot to do with Jobs' leadership. One thing the tech icon did that impacted his management was frequently wear the same outfit. Perform an image search for "Steve Jobs," and you continually see him wearing the same three things.

- A black mock turtleneck top
- New Balance sneakers
- Blue jeans

One of the wealthiest men in the world, Jobs could certainly have afforded an endless amount of clothing. Yet he continually wore the same things. Why did he do that?

It gave him one fewer choice to make every day.

This allowed him to free his mind up for other things. He put what would otherwise have been a daily decision on autopilot. He didn't have to spend any mental energy worrying about what he would wear.

How many images of Albert Einstein have you seen that look the same? He reportedly purchased several versions of the same suit so he didn't have to waste any of his considerable brainpower on his choice of clothing each day.

In an interview on the NBC Today show, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg said he owns about 20 identical gray-colored T-shirts. Former US President Obama also believes in limiting the number of routine choices he has to make daily.

In a 2012 interview with Vanity Fair, President Obama said, "You'll see I wear only gray or blue suits. I'm trying to pare down decisions. I don't want to make decisions about what I'm eating or wearing. Because I have too many other decisions to make."

If it's good enough for these successful people, should you try it? Perhaps you should if you want to declutter your mind.

Limit Repetitive Choices

Maybe you don't want to wear the same clothing all the time. That's fine. All we're saying is that when you limit the number of conscious decisions you have to make, there's less going on in your conscious mind. That means fewer things that can collect in your head and lead to clutter.

Move simple decisions to autopilot. This could be what you will wear to work, what you eat each morning, or a specific schedule of activities you will follow at some time during the day. The less mental energy you spend on decision-making, the freer your conscious mind is when you engage in important activities.

This is a simple way to reduce the amount of input that goes into your mind. When you reduce how much you ask your conscious mind to do, you limit the possibility that mental clutter will build up and keep you from performing at your best.

3 Ways to Quickly Declutter Your Mind

We usually think of clutter as physical. It's all that "stuff" you keep promising yourself you'll clean up. Left alone, it seems to multiply on its own. Where you just had a few things out of place and distracting you a few days ago, now there are more.

Clutter is like that. A crowded, messy area magically attracts other items that don't need to be there. While you may think this isn't a big deal, it can be. Aside from the danger that substantial clutter provides (it can be a fire hazard, you may trip over it, etc.), any amount can be distracting. This kills your focus and concentration.

Maybe you don't have much physical clutter in your environment. You are exceptionally neat and organized. If that's the case, good for you. Don't forget that clutter can also exist in your mind. Having too many unnecessary things in your head at once can keep you from focusing on the things that matter.

Here are three simple ways to de-clutter your mind. They go to work immediately, removing thoughts, obsessions, and other mental messes so you enjoy less stress and anxiety and better mental wellness.

1 – Divorce Yourself from Drama

This might mean saying goodbye to some people in your life. If they don't provide more positives than negatives, their drama might not be worthwhile. Being around a dramatic individual regularly fills your head with unnecessary distractions.

The issues that the drama queens in your life are constantly dealing with become your issues to some extent. Ditch the drama. Say no to issues and individuals you

don't have to deal with. If the drama isn't yours, you shouldn't have to put up with it.

2 – Stop Living in the Past and Worrying about the Future

Well, maybe you can worry about the future just a little bit. It makes a lot of sense to plan your life. If not, you're letting chance, other people, and circumstances decide how your life will go.

You probably know what we're talking about here. It doesn't make any sense to obsess over things in your past. They're gone, and you can't change them. Use any lessons learned to move on with more information.

As far as the future goes, constantly worrying about it won't do you any good. This clogs up your brain and leaves no space for your mental machinery to deal with your life.

3 – If It Runs on Electricity, Spend Less Time with It

From when some people wake up until they go to bed, they are bathing in digital distractions. You have your own unique electrical field. Constantly exposing yourself to the electromagnetic fields of your phone and tablet, television, laptop, and all the consumer electronics you encounter at work and play can fry your brain and fill it with mind-numbing clutter.

These are things you can do right now, this very minute. When you do, you immediately start clearing out your mental storage unit. The benefits are less stress, more focus, and better mental health; you might even find yourself sleeping better at night.

Feeling Overwhelmed? Declutter Your Mind
by Talking to a Friend

Take a look around your workspace. What do the environments in your vehicle and at home look like? Do you have a lot of physical things in those spaces that don't really need to be there?

Perhaps you use them every now and then. So you keep them handy. This might sound perfectly reasonable. In some cases, it may make a lot of sense. You use something every few days, so you keep it around. This can become a problem when it turns into a habit. Before you know it, your immediate area has very little free space.

In this case, you might not consciously notice what all that physical clutter is doing to you. Unconsciously your senses are constantly dealing with everything they encounter. All that visual and physical clutter slows your brain down. It can ruin your ability to focus, negatively impacts your mental abilities, and can lead to stress, anxiety, and overwhelm.

Speaking of overwhelm, we all have to deal with it from time to time. In our hectic modern world where speed, instant gratification, and constant sensory experiences are the norm, it's easy to feel stressed out and overburdened. When that happens, when your mental clutter overloads your mind, and you need some freedom from the stress and anxiety you are experiencing, call a loved one.

Texting Is Okay, but Calling Is Better

Everyone sends text messages these days. It's great because you can instantly connect with someone. In this case, it's not the preferred means of communication.

Speaking with someone on the phone lets you hear their voice. Both parties can hear emotions in their voices that don't come across clearly in a text message.

If possible, sit down face-to-face with somebody who really cares about you. Tell them about how overwhelmed you're feeling. Talk about everything on your mind, all that's worrying you. Get it all out; fears, insecurities, concerns, worries, whatever it is causing you mental anguish. Confiding in someone you care about can erase the amount of damaging mental clutter in your mind.

You feel less burden when you share your thoughts with another person. So the next time you start worrying, stressing, and freaking out over something, stop the mental clutter-collecting process. Call someone who cares about you, someone whose opinion you respect. When you share what's bothering you, mental overwhelm gives way to better mental and emotional wellness.

3 Ways to Reduce the Modern-Day Mental Clutter that Ceaselessly Tries to Get into Your Mind

Do you have a mind full of clutter? You probably do, even if you don't know it. People have more distractions now than ever before. Look at your life and compare it to when you were a kid. In that short period, you have encountered so much change.

Now compare our modern world with the human experience of 50, 100, and 1,000 years ago.

> **That's an easy way to illustrate how much you have to deal with compared to past generations. It has much to do with important advancements in communicating and consuming information.**

Look around right now. How many electronic monitors, displays, and screens do you see? This includes televisions and laptops, tablets, and mobile phones. Not to mention those displays on your smart appliances, personal digital assistants, digital watches, and fitness trackers.

You are presented with a digital dashboard when you power up your vehicle. How many digital billboards do you encounter driving down the road? Digital medical, industrial, and transportation equipment and signage are everywhere.

Many of these screens and monitors distract your ears and your eyes. Their speakers are constantly working to inform, entertain and influence you.

All of this data and information ceaselessly tries to get into your mind. That constant onslaught can have you restless and unfocused. It can wear you down physically. You feel pulled in many different directions in our modern, busy, and distracting world.

The best way to handle the stress, lack of focus, poor productivity, and negative emotions that come with mental clutter is to prevent it. Here are three simple ways to limit the needless input fighting to take up residency in your mind. They also start clearing out the clutter that's already there.

1 – Don't Believe the Multitasking Lie

The human mind can only concentrate on one thing at a time. It's why when you're talking on the phone to someone, you will often close your eyes to process the conversation if there is a lot of stuff around you. Very little of your mental energy is directed to conscious activities. This means you must be very careful with what you're trying to do, or you won't be very productive.

Multitasking means doing several things at once, none very efficiently. Go through your life and prioritize your activities. Handle one task or item on your to-do list at a time, then move to another. This is a proven way to clear the clutter from your mind and boost productivity and feelings of accomplishment in every area of your life.

2 – Limit What You Receive

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tells us that more than 7,000 people in the US die from lung cancer caused by secondhand smoke. These people didn't smoke. But they either voluntarily or involuntarily exposed themselves to much secondhand smoke.

What does this have to do with decluttering your mind? It's all about limiting negative influences.

Limiting the amount of information you have to process reduces the odds that your mind will become cluttered with unnecessary junk. Set time limits on your phone usage and how much time you spend on the computer and social media.

Spend more time consciously putting yourself in situations that limit electronic input. Increase the amount of time you spend with people and mother nature. If you limit your exposure to possibly negative input, you logically limit the odds that it will clog up your mental machinery.

3 – Make a Decision

Be decisive when dealing with your thoughts. Don't let an unimportant feeling or thought hang around. Deal with it and move on. Decide what information, feelings, and thoughts are relevant to you, then disregard everything left.

Stop multitasking. It makes your efforts multi-terrible while creating unnecessary mental distractions. Speaking of distractions, limit how many you are exposed to. When you do receive information, be decisive. Deal with it and then move on. These are three simple ways to declutter your mind and prevent the anxiety and stress, restlessness, mental fog, and lack of focus that mental clutter causes.