



12

TIME MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

FROM David Cole's Story:

The June exams were mostly a big blur and after the last one, David dragged himself over to Jake's. As expected, Grade 10 had been a disaster. He felt utterly wiped out.

"So, man, Marty's got a great route planned for us and we can leave in a couple of days, if you're still on," said Jake.

David had been just barely hanging on for this bike trip – for the chance to escape all the pressure for awhile. But right now, he wondered how he would find the energy even to bother.

"Of course I'm on," he shot back.

"Let's make it Thursday."

Marty and Jake got to David's place a little after 9:00 A.M., even though they had planned to start off right at 8:00. But David wasn't even close to being ready. Odd socks and pants were shoved into his sleeping bag roll, his jacket was missing and he yelled at Mandy to throw his toothpaste down from the upstairs bathroom. His mother was frantically tucking snacks into his knapsack because he hadn't made time for breakfast.

"I certainly hope you're not leaving your room in that shape, David," she scolded, as Marty and Jake exchanged worried glances. A moment later, they each grabbed a piece of David's gear and hastily pulled him out onto the front porch.

"Here, you take the map," fired Marty as David finished loading up his bike.

["The map – oh no, whaddo I do now?!! I can never follow those stupid things."]

As Marty wheeled off in the lead, David briefly wondered why he didn't quite feel the thrill of escape, the escape he had been longing for all term.

Back in the kitchen, Mrs. Cole sat staring into her coffee cup.

"What is the matter with that boy?" she wondered. "He's so impossible. Is it our fault? Should we discipline him more or try to love him more?" She struggled with the sense that something was terribly wrong but she had no idea what, or what to do about it.

One of the most common laments of parents, teachers, relatives, friends, colleagues and certainly spouses of individuals with special learning needs is that they need major help with organization and time management. **This chapter is placed in the latter, more adult section of the manual because even with early intervention, it is usually one of the last pieces to show sustainable change.**

With the 3 to 8 year delay in emotional and organizational development skills in children with special learning needs, even families who provide best practice support can expect a catch-up time line at about **age 30!!** Not to panic, however – the gap between a 25-30 year old is less than a 16-21 year old, and certainly less than a 9-14 or 3-8 year old gap. And there are survival steps to take en route.



Another reason for extended and pervasive problems is that "Time Management" is incorrectly considered to be one specific skill – so very much **not** the case.

In a seminar I gave for counsellors with a focus on this issue, we came up with a list of some of the separate cognitive tasks that comprise this collection of skills:

1. concept of time and time segments
2. concept of macro/micro vision
3. ability to move between these
4. setting goals
5. recognizing connection between present behaviour and future goals

6. ability to delay gratification
7. making a plan with sub-steps
8. sequencing sub-steps
9. notating sub-steps: dexterity to work with a planner – in book or electronic form
10. predicting time for sub-steps
11. creating an environment for productivity
12. environmental space to store “tools” (clothes, school supplies, toys etc.)
13. ability to organize “tools”
14. ability to maintain neatness and structure
15. setting priorities
16. recognizing new stimuli/ circumstances that change priorities
17. readjusting priorities
18. emotional ability to let go of excess baggage
19. strength and determination to say “no” to environmental temptations
20. MEMORY – at all levels
21. self discipline/ motivation to keep to plan
22. a *reason* to bother with all this
23. enough self-esteem/ maturity to believe it will make a difference
24. acceptance of limitations
25. willingness to accept assistance and accommodations

Cognitive psychology may have other terms and formulations for these pieces, but we can clearly see that at each step of the learning process, each of these factors needs to be acknowledged, developed, and woven into what becomes a complex tapestry of organizational strategies. **So it is never a reasonable goal to expect children or youth with special learning needs to make even initial gains without significant adult support.**

Beginning with parents in the home setting, we will work through the process to the adult level program, later in the chapter.

Teaching Time Management at Home

Time management has to begin with YOU - the parent.

The challenge is to first assess your own sub-skill level using the above check-list and be willing to first address areas of weakness for yourself. You cannot easily teach to your children what you do not practise.

- If there are emotional factors contributing to your issues, personal counselling may be needed.

- As we have discussed in Chapters 3 and 7, major life sacrifices are required to carve out the time needed to both teach and to support your child in making significant and sustainable life changes.
- To begin, you need to simplify your family environment as much as possible and ensure that everyone is stopping about an hour or more before bedtime to prepare calmly for the next day and to have some relaxing reading or other quiet time before sleep. You schedule an early rising routine for weekday mornings to ensure an un-rushed and un-stressed breakfast and cheerful start to the day.
- Suppertime needs to be arranged so that there is plenty of extra time to look at the “family calendar”, every single day, if you want this to be successful. Children come to understand their place in the line-up of family activities. Times for self-care and hygiene, exercise, “study hour”, extra-curricular activities, family activities, special time with parents and extended family, and most important, unstructured *downtime* are carefully booked into every day. The structure of your family life is built around this planning.

But you are never locked in. As unexpected factors and complications inevitably arise, your kids watch you adjusting and revising plans to deal with these pieces.

The key to *calmly* navigating these unexpected changes is to build in consistent transition time between every step in your day.

If you book in 25 minutes for a 20 minute breakfast, the spilled milk or unexpected phone call are no problem. If you book 30 minutes for a 20 minute car trip, an extra set of red lights or a full parking lot will not make you late. An extra 10 minutes planned to assist your child with brushing teeth and getting out the winter coats and boots allows for a relaxed pace.



The agonizing challenge for so many parents is giving up the fantasy that you can speed through your day, taking on twice the number of commitments you should, and still both model and teach these complex skills in a relaxed and pleasant way. Media and social pressures have caught us all in a web of frantic and frenetic activity in the race to “have it all” and “do it all”, and all in one day, or week, or year.

That race does, however, lead us to poor eating and sleeping habits, a lack of self-care, and loss of the “spiritual” or “bigger picture”. Fatigue, irritability, headaches,

obesity, and a myriad of health issues are the price we are paying. Not to mention the stress we place on ourselves and our children with special learning needs. The resulting mental health issues are frightening to observe in my clinical work and severely affect the ability of families to work the rest of the program strategies outlined in earlier chapters.

Sarah's 11 year old daughter Jackie seemed to have no idea how long it meant when her mom would say, "Ten more minutes till we have to go" or "You can call your friend in half an hour". After years of nagging and tears, when Sarah realized Jackie's problem with the concept of "Time", she made up a Time Chart where they listed activities according to the approximate times needed to accomplish certain things:

Time Chart

5 to 10 Minutes	30 Minutes - 1/2 Hour	2 Hours
eat cereal	2 recesses	drive to grandma's
get dressed	watch my TV show	soccer practice
2 math questions	do dishes	afternoon classes
take dog outside	walk to school	a long movie

Jackie was excited to get her own neon-sparkle wrist watch (had to be digital, she finally sorted out standard clocks in grade 9) and Sarah also got her a picture wall calendar of horses (her passion) with large enough boxes to record Jackie's daily activities as well as the family activities. And with more parent structure, these conflicts virtually ended.

Keep in mind the 3 to 8 year delay in emotional and organizational maturation for most children with special learning needs. If you are asking a 10 year old with special learning needs to "get dressed for school" or to "clean her room", you may be literally dealing with a 2 or 3 to 7 year old level of ability to plan, focus, and execute all the sub-steps required to make this happen.



The solution is simple, but shocking to most parents: for years, you must set aside enough extra time to **accompany your child** through the steps for all of these tasks, as you would for a child at the younger end of the developmental spectrum. With gentleness, patience, humour, and actual enjoyment.

This means a significant adjustment in your expectations for not only your child but of your daily routine, for years; you must accept this as part of the reality of having a child with a *Disability* – much as everyone dislikes that term.

This is no less real than for Cerebral Palsy or Down's Syndrome. The upside here is that with years of consistent support and training, your child's development will level out by age 30 with others of that age with similar cognitive strengths. It becomes an “invisible disability”, requiring the ongoing use of all the strategies and accommodations developed, but like Diabetes, invisible to others if handled properly.

Chapters 3 and 7 provide more detailed strategies for setting up the structure and routines that your child will need at home. Review and use of the strategies provided elsewhere throughout this manual will slowly result in the time management and organizational skills required for school, for social situations and for ultimate adult success. This topic embraces every aspect of your life and therefore cannot be contained in just this one chapter.

For Adults

Some adults who take on too ambitious a load of expectations and commitments can appear to have symptoms of ADHD or aspects of the LD, NLD, and Asperger's disorders described here.

- Problems with organization and time management can be the presenting *symptoms*, when family or work stress, unresolved emotional issues or depression are underlying factors.
- Co-workers, bosses, spouses and children are uniformly disappointed and frustrated – the affected individual seems self-centred, insensitive, and even oblivious to the needs of others.
- Agreements and commitments are unfinished or “forgotten”. Promises are unkept, the person is often late or even absent, in person and certainly on an emotional level. As pressure and anger mount from others, the individual finds further escape mechanisms or becomes verbally abusive or actually hostile when cornered.

An intensive program of healing, self-care and counselling (first personal, and later family counselling) may be required to deal with these issues.



Many who first come into my office *convinced* that they suffer from ADHD, soon come to realize that this intensive work is needed, rather than the expected ADHD medication route.

But there are, of course, many adults with actual ADHD, Learning Disabilities, or Aspergers who were never diagnosed as children and have not developed a comprehensive set of coping skills in these areas. As well, those with diagnosed Acquired Brain Injuries frequently struggle with organization and time management. There are many books with many methods that can provide an interesting read and some valuable tips for sure. But trying to fit oneself into one of these programs feels to most people like the perennial “square peg in the round hole dilemma”. As with the academic strategy techniques outlined already, the best approach seems to be to incorporate whatever techniques fit for each individual into an individualized program.

The *structure* for this seems to be applicable across the board for all beginners, however: **it begins with setting aside a daily time for reflection and planning.**

If you stop your activities a half-hour earlier in the evening, this quiet time can assist you in letting go of the day’s stress, feeling prepared for the next day, and allowing yourself a peaceful rest until then. Those who are better “early morning people”, get up a half-hour earlier for this daily routine.



The crux is that this half hour must be a mandatory daily routine (no-excuses), 5 days per week.

The initial complaint usually rings, “But I’m overloaded and exhausted already! How can I add an extra thing to my schedule? This will never work!!”

If your problems were physical in nature and the doctor ordered physiotherapy in order to be able to walk again, or kidney dialysis, or insulin and measuring food for Diabetes, you would more likely see this routine as essential for health. In this case, it is also essential to begin with a full physical examination with your physician to rule out any other possible medical factors and to engage the understanding and active support of your doctor as well.

Shock Awareness

So, the shocking news is that a time management problem is as serious as those examples above. Without intensive intervention, you will possibly make a few initial gains, but then slip back into old habits, as with fad diets. If you want and need to lose 100 pounds, only a total lifestyle change will result in the long-term and sustainable success you are dreaming of - and this issue is exactly the same.

And without this change, adults with special learning needs lose jobs, relationships, marriages, physical health, and most always, mental health as well. It is a (quality of) **life threatening** problem.



So to repeat, the only non-negotiable given in this approach is to: **accept the gravity of the problem** and **open up a daily half-hour slot for this work.**

As with Al-Anon-type family programs, spouses - or families of young adults – must provide initial support to the affected individual to ensure uninterrupted time for this half hour of quiet time and to play several supportive roles as outlined further below.

Getting Started: Level 1

To begin, you need to purchase a hard-copy book-style planner – large, with a week-at-a glance. Electronic planners may be fun to program, but most people with these issues rarely look at them and one must flip screens to see an entire week or month all at once. Once you become an expert in the old-style method, electronic application options are possible for some people, but almost never to begin.

You create an atmosphere of comfort and isolation, with no distractions, in order to focus entirely on the task at hand. Use pencil and eraser only – easy to erase and adjust. Then, you feel less trapped and “nailed down”.

1. You first book in times for each aspect of your personal Self-Care:
 - 7-9 hours of sleep with an hour of downtime to precede your bed time
 - The half-hour quiet and planning time in which you are presently engaged
 - Extra morning time for a calm start to the day with a healthy breakfast
 - Time to shop for and prepare nutritious meals and snacks – start taking a healthy lunch to work (whole grain and organic foods)
 - ½ hour of exercise 5 times per week or 1 full hour 3 times per week (to start)
 - Required counselling or medical appointments
2. Next - is family and relationship time – with spouse, children, or significant others
3. Then - essential house maintenance tasks
4. And finally - work and travel time
5. Extras – with any time you may have remaining....

This will immediately help you to see if your priorities are even close to sustaining good health and happiness for you and your family. If not, changes need to be made to “re-set your compass” and your balance.

Level 2 (or Level 1a)

For many families, this may need to be the first level if the affected individual is unable to independently set up Level 1.

There is a mutual agreement that the supporting partner will actively assist in setting up the private space for the Quiet Time and in gently reminding the other to take the time and in ensuring that no distractions are allowed to interfere.

- Next, a *team meeting* of about 15 minutes that includes both partners needs to be set up twice per week, in the evening after children (if there are any) have gone to bed or older teens are otherwise engaged.
- If getting children to bed (or somewhat older children quietly in their rooms at least) in order to be free for these meetings is an issue, refer to page 37 in Chapter 3.
- The purpose of these meetings is just for the most basic level of coordination and planning to ensure that the required steps in Level 1 can be started. Or to proceed with the Level 2 steps.
- If more complex work is attempted, or the time is used for pent-up problems and arguments, the process will fail for sure. The supporting partner is exercising extreme self-control and patience in simply assisting the first step of the process.

In Chapter 14 we will deal with more detailed aspects of these relationship issues.

Once the first meeting is set up, the next one is scheduled before the first meeting closes. If both partners agree, a meeting can be *re-booked* for a different evening, **but a meeting simply cannot be cancelled** except for medical emergency.



Without this support, only a very few single clients in my forty-year practice have ever succeeded with any Time Management or Organization plan they have begun. It is a team project.

If Levels 1 and 2 are getting underway with some initial success over a couple of months, you are ready to begin planning for Level 3.

It was at this point that Clara and her husband James, an electronics technician with Asperger's, decided to sit down together and consider how to seriously simplify their lives. Clara was really beginning to see how James struggled to cope on a daily basis and that his work stress left him nothing to give to the family by the end of a work day. He was seriously attempting the personal planning time, but in their team meetings, he was usually so tired that he zoned out, or became severely flustered when faced with the commitments he was unable to manage. So they began to brainstorm: Could we re-mortgage or just move to a smaller place? Could we do without the extra car, holiday trips, new clothes, new anything for the next while? Could we downsize, make do with what we have – James had been raised with expectations of the newest and best in all things, but Clara was already an undercover regular at “dollar stores” and second-hand shops. When he realized what she was prepared to sacrifice to free up significant time for this work, he was both surprised and yet relieved to realize that he could consider less pressure, at least for the short term. Clara was already aware that these would unlikely be short term changes, but was willing to accept James' terms to reach consensus on the next steps.

Many other people drop out of the process at this point, unfortunately. The price seems too high.

Peace of mind, a calm environment, a close and trusting relationship with your partner or your children, are not enough motivation – *or a seeming distant and unattainable fantasy* – to move to the next level. Just like for losing 100 pounds, overcoming an alcohol addiction, or learning to play a cello, not everyone has the motivation or the stamina for the long haul. Sometimes it is only when the imminent loss of family becomes a reality that affected individuals, and their families, are willing to make the necessary sacrifices and radical changes for healing and progress.

Re-read the “Shock Awareness” section above on page 187. If you have reached this place, you are ready for Level 3.

Level 3

Your Quiet Time Routine now becomes more ritualized. You may use lowered lighting, a candle, soft music, a special meditation corner with pillows, some art or spiritual symbolism to help you focus on a deeper level. This time becomes as central to your mental hygiene as a daily shower.

- Take the first five minutes to read a few lines in the passage *Slowing Down*, Appendix D. Read very slowly, then close your eyes to visualize the image(s) in the

section you are reading. Then visualize an image from today or yesterday where some experience you had reflects that image, for good or bad.

- Then take another 5 minutes to think about your priorities, for today and for your life in general. In your planner write down two small and concrete goals for the day ahead, to be accomplished no matter what. Put them in an exact time slot, in a bright colour, with transition time around them, to be sure that they happen. Many people start with items like: pick up that part from the hardware store, return email from boss, fill up car with gas.

Over time, you will see that these concrete and needed items will become part of your daily work list, but that the *two priority goals will become more personal*: read story to daughter, tell husband I am proud of him, send family photo to grandma.



After you have thoroughly absorbed the wisdom in the *Slowing Down* passage, seek out further reading material for this time slot that reflects your values, your spiritual ideals, or your personal goals for the future.

As you calmly read and meditate on this material, you will see your priorities evolve and your motivation for self-care and personal relationship time naturally increase. Other “musts” and “shoulds” become less important or outright unnecessary.

When your physical pace and emotional energy “settle” into a more relaxed and sustainable pattern, you are better able to focus on priorities and make the necessary changes happen. These changes will begin to transfer into your family team meeting process, your personal life, and your work routine.

Level 4

As your Quiet Time becomes more routine and efficient, you can begin to refine your daily work list. Priorities can expand from 2 items up to 4 - 6 items, for some people. You agree to work more closely with your partner on family management issues at home and find yourself with more energy and motivation for Time Management and Organization at work.

- The key is to arrive early at work and find a quiet location (if you do not have a private office with a door) to look ahead at your day and make a detailed plan, where possible.

- Mark daily priorities in a different colour from the detailed work list and try to estimate approximate time blocks.
- Part of the plan needs to include 2-minute breaks (approximate time) all day long, where you have a small and healthy snack, move and stretch, and privately review and revise your list. Re-estimate and revise time blocks as needed.
- Toward the end of each day, plan to gear down with plenty of transition time and clear your work area for the next day so you arrive back to an organized space. If this requires some extra weekend time for initial set-up, make that a priority. Some people like to take an extra few minutes for planning at the end of the work day to reduce (but never eliminate) the early morning planning time.

The most common feedback from clients at this stage is that there is simply not enough time in a day for the work that is required, let alone for this extra organization time.



The solution is really quite simple, just painful: on a weekend, you need to list the tasks you undertake, or feel required to undertake, and revise your formal job description. If, like many people, you do not have a formal job description, then use this list to write one. Look on-line for samples to revise for your situation.

Then over the next week, take a few extra minutes each day to compare your job description with your daily reality and you will quickly see what changes are needed. Get assistance from your partner or a friend, if needed, to re-write a revised proposal job description to take into a meeting with your supervisor or boss. See page 207 in Chapter 13.

The “painful” part of this solution is that most individuals with special learning needs are simply unable to accomplish everything they may be able to imagine in a day and also maintain the balance of self-care and family connection that is needed for a calm and fulfilling life.

The sad reality is that much of our society is caught in a frantic and materialistic rat-race that models the opposite of what you are learning here. And so some painful choices are required for the short term. But the long-term gains and rewards of connecting with family and friends may come to be your new priorities.

There are many seminars and self-help books on the market that will assist highly motivated individuals to achieve even greater expertise in this arena – once you recognize the need for this crucial time to be set aside for the preparation work. As in any other endeavour, a personal counsellor, coach, or mentor is often needed for higher mastery. Be watching for and cultivating a friendship with a selected older, wiser, and more accomplished individual to work with. In later years, you can pay back this gift by being a mentor yourself to a younger person you meet or in community service you make time to pursue.

Level 5

“And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make.”

(Lennon-McCartney: *The End*, from *Abbey Road*)

The purpose of what you have learned is valuable only as it frees you to become close to those you love. The next level in this process is contained in Chapter 14: *Making Personal Relationships Work*.

Dealing with Clutter

The problem of clutter can be a **Time Management** issue: you are constantly rushed and overwhelmed and just drop everything where it lands.

It can be an **Organization** issue: you have no idea how to set up a space and a system with drawers and shelves – maybe you have no shelves, just floor piles.

It can definitely be an **Emotional** issue: you feel exhausted and unable to cope; the clutter reflects your inner state of turmoil. With everything else on your plate, getting organized becomes a bottom-level priority. Or the piles of stuff become an emotional safety blanket that you really don't want to lose.



Deciding to tackle this piece will most likely uncover other issues that the mess is literally “covering up”. Risky... but you feel ready to take on the challenge. There needs to be a clear decision for change.

It is not necessary to determine the underlying cause, because as you proceed, wherever an obstacle arises that you cannot handle, there will be your clue. While a basic level of time management is required in terms of setting aside a few hours each week to work on this, you do not need to have completed the levels outlined in the

section above. In fact, clearing your clutter may actually be a helpful step to assist with an intensive Time Management program.

There are two key stages: 1) the initial clean-up, and 2) the maintenance process

Initial Clean-up

The bedroom or living room are often the best rooms to begin with so that you have at least one cleared space to rest and relax as you proceed with the larger spaces.

Four half-hour “sessions” per week, booked in ahead, can help you break the mode of inaction without feeling initial overwhelm. You will need a helper (paid or unpaid) with the following qualities:

- organized in his or her own life
- caring and empathetic with your challenges
- patient, but motivated to move firmly ahead
- able to assist you in discerning the cause for obstacles

You will see later if and when you are able to continue the process independently, but the **accountability and support of this helper person to begin is essential for most people.**

You will need a large supply of boxes and bags, hangers, labels, open containers and some portable shelving that can be moved to each room as you proceed. Each room will require permanent shelving or cupboard space as well, possibly in addition to whatever furniture you presently have.

That’s the initial organizational piece, now comes the emotional test. Your helper assists you in sorting each pile into three sections: **KEEP - DONATE - TRASH**. In order to de-clutter, the “**keep**” pile needs to be drastically reduced in most cases and it must easily fit into the available space, with lots of extra air-space to spare. If you struggle to quickly and easily move items into the “**donate**” and “**trash**” bags, you may be touching upon possible emotional issues that make it difficult to “let go”.

This can keep you attached to your clutter. Those who have studied actual hoarding behaviours relate these to underlying anxiety or emotional safety issues.

Empty-nest parents can hold onto piles of the past in order to cope with the sadness of missing kids who have moved on. Your helper and close family or friends can assist you in discerning whether professional counselling is required to allow you to continue with the process.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy talks about “behaving our way to change” and so pushing through with your helper may actually assist your emotional process. You

will know by the results. If you experience severe anxiety or other panic symptoms, or start to cancel sessions with your helper, you know you need professional counselling help.

Maintaining Initial Gains

When you have a small piece organized, interim sticky-note labels can help you remember the new locations for items. These may change several times as you develop a new system that works ideally for you and for your family. Now some more advanced Time Management skills will be needed:

- You need to develop the habit of checking your newly cleared space several times per day, especially when you come into the room and before bed in the evening.
- There needs to be sufficient “transition time” created in your schedule that you always have an extra 5 minutes to spare before and after each new activity. That is how “organized” individuals keep up with the quick tidy-ups required to maintain a neat and un-cluttered environment.
- Revise possible labels or mini-systems as needed until a workable solution is achieved.

A note on bedrooms and clothes: many individuals with cluttering problems struggle with a workable laundry system. You need a small section of your closet and a side chair perhaps where once-worn clothes can remain accessible for a second-wear (if not the very next day, then soon) before going into the laundry. Your time management plan needs to make time for putting away fresh laundry on the same day so it does not become another new pile. The extra transition time in both your evening and morning schedule should also include time for hanging up clothes before flopping exhausted into bed or tearing about frantically late in the morning after a dreadful night of non-sleep. *Self-care...see Level 1, number 1, above.*

After you have created and are able to maintain your bedroom and living room space, the next usual step is the kitchen. Now your helper acquires sainthood status because cluttered kitchens are very often unclean kitchens as well.

Besides being willing to part with extraneous and unused kitchen items, you now need to face the issue of buying and storing way more food than you actually use in a week.



Again, this may touch on some underlying emotional issues that actually plague much of North America. Why is it that we seem to need massive refrigerators stuffed to the brim, and cupboards full of boxed and tinned foods that we could live on for six months at least?

Is it our distant relation to stockpiling squirrels, or some biological fear of starvation? We all need to challenge these tendencies and to learn to buy less, eat less, and waste less. For most of us, a store is only minutes away...

More Time Management strategies for weekend meal planning and careful shopping around that meal plan result in better nutrition, taking healthy lunches to school and work, and another huge step toward healthy living. **The secondary reward is living in a clean and un-cluttered kitchen.**

Sally believes she has ADHD and anxiety about various family issues and has lived in mess and clutter ever since her two children were born, within a two year period. Her sister worked through some of the anxiety and these program steps with her, much to her husband's surprise, who had given up in disgust years ago. As Sally became more expert in maintaining these three areas: the bedroom, the living room, and the kitchen - as part of her new routine, she was able to take on one more space every few weeks in her process of de-cluttering. With a medium-sized house in need of this work, the entire process took about one year to complete. And another full year to practise, refine, and semi-automate her maintenance habits. Her sons were now ages 12 and 14, so we needed to engage the support of her now happier husband who stepped up to help train and encourage the boys in the new routines as well. Increased allowance for housework was a definite motivation for them. Soon, everyone became accustomed to living with more transition time and attention to keeping a clean and tidy environment. Sally says this not only helped with her sense of calm, but she was better able to create the warm and structured environment that her husband and children also needed in order to flourish at school and at work. A gift to the entire family!

The best way to close this chapter would be for you to re-read the initial list of partial sub-steps involved in the complex cognitive process known as Time Management – further refined and re-tuned for the processes of Organization.

Be gentle and patient with yourselves and your loved ones as you take on the lifetime task of acquiring these process skills.