

Organization Deep Dive Part 2 - 2:15:22, 11.23 AM

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SPEAKERS

Allison, Joi Welch

A Allison 00:02

Hello homemakers Welcome to the Art of Home Podcast where we are exploring how homemakers cultivate a place to belong. I'm your host Allison Weeks. I'm a wife, a mom to four grown kids and I am in my 30th year of practicing the art of home. If you're new to the podcast welcome, thank you so much for checking us out. The Art of Home exists to provide encouragement and inspiration for women to practice the occupation of homemaking as an art with confidence, skill, joy and creativity. Through this podcast and our other resources, we desire to elevate the work of the home in the eyes of the homemaker and of the culture. Homemaking practice as an art exchanges drudgery for dignity, and brings beauty and great value to the ordinary tasks of life. In case you didn't know, that is our mission statement. To our regular listeners, we are thrilled to welcome you back and to present to you today part two of our deep dive into the art of organization with Joi Welch. Now, new listeners and listeners who have been here before, if by chance you have not listened to part one of our deep dive into organization, I highly recommend that you do go back and listen to that before you listen to this episode, because we'll be building on the concepts that we fleshed out in part one, particularly Joi's LIVE acronym for understanding the heart behind organization. I'm going to link to part one in the show notes down below. And we have a free resource to help you apply the LIVE principle to your own organization goals and projects. To get your copy, just click the link in the show notes or go to theartofhomepodcast.com/live. That's I-i-v-e. We have so much great information for you in this episode today. After a quick review of the LIVE acronym, we jump right into three areas of the home where many of us could use some decluttering and reordering to facilitate more smooth, peaceful, purposeful living in our daily lives. So whether you're walking the dog or mending some clothing, we hope you're able to glean just a few bits of inspiration from this deep dive into the art of organizing in the home. All right, well, welcome back to The Art of Home deep dive organization, part two. I have Joi Welch back with me here today. And we are going to deep dive into some specific areas of the house. But before that, we're gonna do a little quick review of what we went over last time, particularly Joi's LIVE acronym. So Joi, why don't you just give us a little refresher on that.



J

Joi Welch 02:46

We talked about L. L is our life purpose. And I just wanted to say something that I want to clear up from last time. If you are a believer in Christ, we all know what our real life purpose is. But this is what is God calling you to do for this season of life. And that's more what we meant about life purpose. So I think I just wanted to say that because after I was listening back, I just, we all know that we're supposed to glorify God IN everything that we do, everything that we say, but God has called us all to something different while we're here on this earth. And so that is what I was trying to get at on life purpose. I is for your interest. What are you interested in? We've probably gone over this and over this, but what are the things that you and your family like to do in your home? The V is for visual or a vision. The vision is the aesthetics in your home and the atmosphere that you want to create in your home as people walk in. Do they want to see just a lot of fun happening a lot of music playing? Or do they want us to have a sense of peace, you want to create that in your home. So that's the V, it includes aesthetics and the atmosphere. And then of course, the E is the evaluate. And that's kind of what we're going to talk about today is evaluating every place in your home every room in your home, and how we can best function so that we can live out the live principle.

A

Allison 04:19

Well, thanks for that review, Joi that was really helpful and concise. And I just want to remind the listeners that we do have that free, LIVE worksheet resource available for you. And it just walks you through each of those steps asking you some questions about what's your life purpose? What is your calling from the Lord in this season, right now? What are your values? I do want to point out that to do the values, you're going to need to go to a different site and find a values assessment. There's tons of them online. So just find one that that you feel like would work for you. Do the assessment and then pick your top, I don't know four or six values and you can record that there. And then it has the place for you to do the vision for your home and then lots of sheets on the evaluation step, which we're going to talk more about as we go into these three areas of the home. And Joi has chosen these three areas because they tend to be the most crucial areas in most people's homes that need some attention, some immediate attention in order for our daily lives to function more smoothly, and with more order and peace, and we're going to talk about the bathroom first. So I'm going to hand that off to you, Joi, to get started.

J

Joi Welch 05:28

Okay. Well, today we're going to talk about the bathroom, the bedroom/closet and the kitchen. But the reason I chose the bathroom first, because I feel like that is the easiest room to start. A lot of times, we can be overwhelmed with all of the different projects that we have, we have clutter everywhere. But if you start in one place and you can get it pretty well done, you have such a sense, a sense of accomplishment. And I think that is why I always choose the bathroom. Who wouldn't like to walk into your bathroom in the morning, everything to be in place. There's not a lot of extra stuff in there. And

A

Allison 06:09

that's a really good point. You start your day in your bathroom, most of us do. Yeah. So if you

have a calm space to go and start your day in, you're in that much better of a place to have a calmer day, a more productive and peaceful day. But if you start out that day, in a chaotic space of your bathroom, and you can't find anything, you're going to be frustrated from the very beginning. So good point.

J Joi Welch 06:35

Well, and I wanted to share to you know, the last, the last recording that we did back in January, I wanted to say I usually walk into a room and do clockwise, the bathroom could be a little bit different because it's hard to know, okay, where's your sink? Where is your toilet area, your shower area, so it's a little bit harder to do the clockwise. So we are going to break that one down into three key areas. And I'll look at the bathroom, you can think okay, are there's hardly any to no furniture in there. So you don't have to worry about you know, is this needing repair or do I need to refinish something, there's literally usually no furniture, maybe a cabinet or two that might need some work on but you don't have to worry about the furniture end of it. So there's usually very little decor. Y'all all know, I live in small house. And in my bathroom, I have one large pot with a plant in it, one candle, and I have a really nice print of an artist I like on the wall. That is all the decor I have. Now, I will say that my shelving unit has a few little pieces. And I have some baskets on there that are very practical baskets. And I make it look like a decor just because I'll try to make it look. The practical stuff look pretty. So that's why we are starting in the bathroom.

A Allison 08:03

Do you know about how many square feet are in your bathroom?

J Joi Welch 08:06

I sure don't, but I would I would imagine probably about 150. There 600 square feet in our little cottage in the whole whole house and I think it's about 400. So it probably be maybe just 75 square feet. Okay, it's not large. But remember, I do have my washer and dryer in there. So I have to be very, you know, conscientious of everything that's in there. Every square every square inch matters. Exactly. So anyway, that's what we are going to look at today. But I feel like there were three key areas that every body has in their bathroom. Okay, one of them is our medicine cabinet. And some people actually do keep theirs in the kitchen. But I feel like most people leave put the medicine cabinet are the medicine box or whatever you keep medicine chest, in your bathroom. So I feel like that is one thing that we need to look at today. Very briefly, the medicine cabinet or the medicine chest, we need to look at towels and linens. That's another thing that can just overrun our cabinets in our drawers. There's so many towels, so many towels. And then the last area is our cosmetics and our consumable products. Yeah, I feel like that's the area that we're going to really deep dive in today in the bathroom. Okay, so let's look first at our medicines. I know you probably have already heard this 100 times but go through your medicine chest and see what has expired. That is you'd be surprised you feel like you've I just did this yesterday but somehow I have a five year old bottle of pills in my medicine chest. It just just comes up so quickly. And I will suggest not to keep medicines all over your house. Some people keep a few things their kitchen few things in the kids bathroom, a few things in the guest bathroom, and then your bathroom, I would suggest keeping everything together. But I would suggest getting some kind of container, whether it's a plastic tub, I have

mine in a little black, old wooden crate, and I have every bit of our medicine in that crate whether you know, we, whether we think we need it immediately, or just had to have it on hand, I have it in our bathroom on one of the shelves that I have. And I have, you know, bad days, I keep all of our, you know, pain relievers, my husband takes a few other things. And just you know, stomach, there's always something that you need to add to the medicine chest. So I would suggest going through that very quickly. And that can be a job that maybe takes 15 or 20 minutes, right. And if you just have a little chunk of time, I would say work on that medicine chest.

A

Allison 11:02

And I will also let you know that most communities at least in the US, our county will do like a expired medicine drop off day, and the pharmacies, local pharmacies around here because some of that medicine, you don't want to just throw it in the trash, because it might be you know, opioids or something like that. If you if you had, I don't know, if you had surgery or somebody in your house had surgery and you've got like some Tylenol with codeine in it, we don't want to throw that in the trash and have that get in the wrong hands. And a lot of it, it's not good for you to flush down the toilet either. So I would recommend contacting your local pharmacy and just seeing if they have a program for you to get rid of your expired medication. Right.

J

Joi Welch 11:40

That's a very good thought.

A

Allison 11:41

And I will say one other thing. The way that I organize mine in my bathroom is I have these because we have quite a lot of stuff and I'll keep them in these. They're like Rubbermaid stackable drawers. So they have like little plastic drawers that you pull out and I have a space in my linen closet for them, they stack one on top of the other. And I label them according to the the type of ailment or the body part. So we have a drawer, we have a drawer for teeth, and we have one for eyes and then we have a drawer for digestion. And then we have a first aid drawer. So it's helpful to kind of keep it all separate, but it's still in the same place right in our medicine cabinet.

J

Joi Welch 12:27

And I will say Allison does have a little bit more room that I do. So that's real briefly on medicines. I feel like that's just an area that can be quickly done. Like I said a while ago, quickly gone through if you just have a few minutes of time. The other area that I feel like can be quickly accomplished is our towels and our linens. I mean you probably got all these towels back when you're married and hope hope some of you are not hanging on to him if you've been married over 30 years. But you never know you never know. But um I feel like towels are some something that needs to be updated more often than we actually do. Every person in your family needs about two bath towels. And then you need some extras for your guests. So you

know if you have like extra maybe extra two bedrooms and you feel like you could accommodate four guests at a time have an extra towel for each one of your guests that you can accommodate and maybe throw in a few others because sometimes you know we have have unexpected people come in so always thinks that's a good idea. I shared a tip with one of my friends. I'll say a long time ago and she still remembers this like her. Her kids are about 20 The about 20 At least 20 or 25 years old and she said joy I'll never forget you tell me this when I was a newly married young lady. She said you all you told me to always buy white towels and I am a white towel person. So I will say I have a couple of tote color towels just for decor hanging in my bathroom right now. But the majority of mine are white and when they start wearing out and looking dingy, I just need to replace but those are just two areas that I feel like can quickly be looked at and nicely placed whether you want to keep your extras nicely folded in a linen closet. You want to put them in baskets you know you determine what your space has to be able to store all the extra towels.

A

Allison 14:41

Do you have some suggestions for people who just I know that there's a lot of bathrooms even in larger homes, there's just not enough storage space. You know what if you have a situation where your bathroom just has a pedestal sink? With no closet underneath? You know not every not every bathroom has a linen closet inside the bathroom.

J

Joi Welch 15:00

I love big baskets. And in our one of our bedrooms, well one of the only the only bedroom we have in our cottage, we have a place that I keep the extra linens because I do have a pullout sofa and I do have a little guest house also. But I keep the extra linens in a big large basket. I roll up the towels and I roll up the sheets have those already for when I have guests. So there's there's always a little container or you know you can you can put them in plastic tubs if you want to put them in your linen closet if you have a linen closet, or maybe you want to put it in the closest bedroom. Like it's if you have a guest bedroom and you have a bathroom attached and there's no place to put extra towels, maybe put something like a tub or a nice basket in that guestroom closet so that the guests would have a use. Okay, that's that's a handy Yeah, that's

A

Allison 15:53

a good tip. So I have a question for you. When you did have space with linen closets in them...How do you fold your towels? Are you like, has to be folded in thirds? Are you a fold in half kind of person?

J

Joi Welch 16:08

Okay, well fold it in thirds. And then I folded over. Okay, okay, my dad ran a store. Back when I was a department store when I was, well middle school school through high school, I would go and learn from the ladies that worked for us how to fold towels, and we had this immaculate towel department. So anyway, but I fold the the long side I fold them in and then I fold it over.

So it's so you see this nice little? You see them? Pretty? Pretty edge? Yes. And put those one on top of the other. That's so I did my hand towels the same way and then the wash calls or just fold them in fours. So okay, or little parts. So anyway, it's different. Yes, everybody is different. So and

A

Allison 16:58

as far as just from the perspective of we're talking about maximizing your space and making it work for your family, you may need to figure out what's the best way of folding your towels to fit the space that you have. It might be Joy's method. It might be some some other way. So those are the kinds of things you want to think about.

J

Joi Welch 17:16

Right? Okay, we just looked at our medicines and our towels and linens. And now let's look at our consumables. That is the area that consumes us. Yes. Yes, we have lots of cosmetics, we have lotions, we have body washes, we've got shampoos, conditioners, all the hair products. That is the area that can totally make your bathroom feel cluttered, cluttered and just overrun and maybe give you a little bit of anxiety. Yes, anxiety is for sure. For sure. So let's just look at that real quickly. And you have to decide what is the right amount of stuff for you the right amount of cosmetics, I mean, do you like do you enjoy using a lot of makeup on your face, or you know all Do you have a lot of hair products that you use, you know you decide but I feel like you personally I'm down to one skincare line and one makeup line, I use the same products in the makeup line, I just go for the foundation, the the mascara, but I just limit it down to just the few things I need. I do have a backup stock because with the supply chain going on right now I do have one of each or maybe two of each of the things that I use, but I'm down to just a few products that I use that I really, really like. And I keep them in a container. I have one drawer and our little chest of drawers in the bathroom. And I have a container that I can put all my products where they're standing up, and I can easily quickly get dressed and you know, get my makeup on. I've got a basket underneath my sink that has all my hair supplies, and my hair. You know, I have my hair products and they're my straightener and my blow dryer and just a few other things that I have needs under there. I have a few loesche Extra lotions that I keep on hand, but I just have a few things of I've decided what I really enjoy locking in. I try to keep those nicely on my shelves where it looks pretty. And it

A

Allison 19:37

sounds like you have it sounds like you have a good system so that with your cosmetics. It's very visual. You can open that drawer you can see exactly what's there so that you can get what you need to get your face on and be done with that. And then it sounds like you, you group all of your hair products together into a basket. Yes. Which I think is a really great thing to implement in the bathroom. especially if you have multiple people sharing the same bathroom, right group like items together or group items according to the person together.

J

Joi Welch 20:08

Yes. So I feel like those are some key areas that we can make. If you open a drawer, you don't

Yes, so I feel like those are some key areas that we can make. If you open a drawer, you don't want to just a big heap of makeup or a heap of just stuff in there you wanted to so you can easily find it and put it right back in place. That's how we maintain what we've what we're trying to do. Right. That's, that's a key thing.

A Allison 20:28

That's a good point that we probably should have made at the very beginning is the whole idea here of setting up the system. We talked about this in episode one, getting organized and staying organized are not the same thing. Yes, the getting organized is the setting up of the systems, but you don't want to shoot yourself in the foot and not be able to stay organized, because you've set up a system that's not maintainable for you and your family. And that's a really important factor to consider as you're thinking about what's going to work best for my family, what's a system that I think that we can reasonably expect to maintain? And then also be willing to tweak it after you've set up the system and be willing to make some changes? For what would work better?

J Joi Welch 21:15

Right? Right, right. Okay. Well, in I do stock up on a few items that I do keep, and we, we have some certain containers that I really think are pretty. And so if I buy something that's maybe not in such a nice looking container, I do pour it into the the prettier container because that's just important to me to make that bathroom as small as it is a beautiful place to to be in well, it's less visual clutter, yes, you're

A Allison 21:43

not looking at a row of you know, loudly colored and mismatched labels and bottles from all the different types of products that you're using. Yes, if decant them into, say, all clear bottles, or all blue bottles or whatever, whatever it is to match the aesthetic in your bathroom, it's going to just be more visually pleasing, less visual clutter.

J Joi Welch 22:05

Yes. And I have a real pretty soap dish that I just started buying this, these bars of soap from a little local store that they hand make these soaps. And they're beautiful. And I just feel like it makes your bathroom smell so good. And they make home spray, they just do so many things to just make your space so appealing. You just want to stay in there, I have a little heater. And when I go in there, especially in these cold winter mornings, it's just so refreshing to know that everything's in its place. And it all has a home a place to live. All the towels are Bolin. And I said I liked white towels earlier, I have them all stacked on open shelf so you can see them. So actually, it's part of the aesthetics of, of our bathroom, right. So anyway, just you just want to decide what's important for you and clear out the stuff that's not working.

A Allison 23:03

Alright, so we've talked about the bathroom, now we're going to move out into the bedroom. And we are also going to address the closet as we talk about the bedroom because most of us have some kind of clothing storage, whether it's a self standing wardrobe, or an actual closet in the bedroom. So Joi, let's talk about the bedroom.

J Joi Welch 23:20

Okay, we said the bathroom was the easiest room to deal with at first, then we're going to look at the bedroom and maybe set the closet aside for just right now, we want to decide, or we want to help you decide what is the function for that bedroom. Hopefully it's just to sleep and just have a relaxing time maybe read a book before you go to bed. But a lot of times that's not really a viable, it has to sometimes have more than one function. Yeah, you might have to have your office in there, you might have to have your exercise bike or equipment in there, you might have to have your library of all your books now say that earlier. Okay, I was just thinking about thinking about all the things that you would need to have in that bedroom that maybe not necessarily needs to go in there. So you yourself have need to decide is this where I'm going to have a craft table is this what I'm going to you know, use this for besides sleeping, if you can get away with it just be a place of refuge sleeping, that's the bed better idea, but sometimes you can't really do that. So you have to decide and set up little areas in your room to to operate you know, in the in these different capacities. I feel like you could go into the clockwise principle in the bedroom. So you could walk in, start looking on your left start looking at everything on the wall. Are there some things that maybe I could get rid of to make it decluttered you know, just maybe some old pictures that You've just been made need to get rid of but you just they sometimes you don't see things when you walk in your door because I've been there sitting there or hanging there for so long to start looking at decluttering those kinds of things, work all of the wall surfaces and then go back and look at your furniture. Sometimes the bedroom just is the dumping ground. Yeah, you don't have a place for a little extra table, you just end up okay, I'll move it back to the bedroom and then decide later. So now's the time to decide, Okay, does this piece of furniture really serve a purpose for me? I think sometimes we over furnish the bedrooms. I feel like you just need a comfortable bed nightstands and maybe a reading chair and a lamp. And sometimes you do you need a dresser. Personally, I put all my clothes in the closet with some hanging shelves. But other than that, I mean, I haven't used a dresser in I couldn't even tell you how many years it's been since I've had had that. But some people do like those kind of, you know, those pieces of furniture to where I feel like the the bedroom sometimes can be cluttered with too much furniture.

A Allison 26:17

Yeah, I think in general, the bedroom can become the dumping ground for all things, all the homeless things in the house, yes, can end up in the bedroom. Because it's typically not a space open to the public, right? It's a private place where nobody's going to see it. So if I'll just shove it in the corner over here. And before you know it your your bedroom, which really should be a sanctuary for you, a place to go and rest, is not restful at all, because it's cluttered with, you know, maybe an extra dining chair that you don't have room for the dining room, or that pile of books or that pile of paperwork that really should go in the file, in the long term file up in the attic, or whatever. It's just could be any number of things.



J

Joi Welch 26:59

And sometimes it holds a lot of your kids things to know that they'll come in and bring something to show you and then it gets left there for right you know, who knows how long so.

A

Allison 27:08

So I think the bedroom for a lot of people is that that decluttering process of the evaluation, that's going to be challenging, and it's probably going to be where you're going to spend a lot of your time and you may find at the end of that step that's all you needed to do. Right. And then and maybe you need to go into your drawers and do some a little purging and reorganization in there.

J

Joi Welch 27:27

Right. Okay, so after you have looked through all your furniture, you've looked through all the drawers and if you have a dresser or any other nightstands in a you've cleaned all of that out, you've taken things out of the bedroom that don't belong there, you can look around and just say, okay, I can have a peaceful night's sleep because I don't see a lot of clutter. Now the closet is probably the hardest one of the hardest areas besides some things in your places in your kitchen to deal with. So that's when you really need to take the live principle and think about your style, your purpose, your interest that you have and what kind of visually you want to look at. So you can think through those those letters and decide, okay, what do I usually gravitate towards all my clothes? You know, there are a lot of times you'll hear people say take everything out of your closet. Well sometimes that's not totally practical. Sometimes it's easier to say, Okay, I'm going to take and try on every one of my blouses this evening, you know, I feel like, you know, want to see what works and what doesn't work, what still fits. Do not go on what you think fit last year, because I had some dresses that I have kept around for a few years. So finally I said, you know, I think they still fit but I'm gonna try them on. And, uh, no, they did not look good at all. And I just all packed them up. And I thought as small as my closet is, I can't afford to have one thing in here that I do not like. Try on every single thing. But take it, take it you know, slowly you can do categories tops first. Maybe pants, decide if you want to do a capsule wardrobe. And I'm sure all of you know what a capsule wardrobe is. Or if you want to have something like a uniform, you know, are you everyday into leggings and an oversized shirt? Or are you in jeans and a sweater? You know, decide those kinds of things. Okay, are you for taking everything out of your closet?

A

Allison 29:40

Am I for that? Uh huh. I mean, well, so let me tell you what I do. Because I started doing this about a year or so ago. I started actually really culling down my wardrobe just like I know that I like to typically wear mostly wear dresses. It's just more comfortable for me, especially in the summer, because it's so hot here, and I'm not a shorts person, and so it's either jeans or dresses. So I wear dresses. But what I've decided to do is I just I have decided to take my wardrobe out seasonally. And for us, that's really only twice a year. Because where we live, we just have kind of two, like one demarcation for cold to hot and then hot to cold.

J Joi Welch 30:26

Yes, that's pretty much it.

A Allison 30:28

So we have I have two wardrobes, seasonal wardrobes. And I take everything out when it's getting close to time to switch. When I'm ready to switch, I feel like okay, the weather is is changed enough that I can go ahead and switch over to the other season. I take everything out. And I look at it and I decide, did I use this this year? And if this season, if I said if the answer was no, then it goes. I don't keep in. Does it need to be fixed? Hopefully I've already done that. But if not, I set it aside to mend. I take it all out. I lay it all out, I clean everything. Yes. And whatever I've decided I'm going to keep and bring back next time it's cold again, then I lay it all out or a hanging up, I have a little hanger, I have a little wardrobe thing that goes I can put in my room, it's actually my drying rack. So I hang my dresses there, I take a picture of it so I know what I have and keep it in my folder on my photo roll. And then I bought these boxes on Amazon. They're just they're fabric boxes, but they pop up and they're they're rigid so that they hold their shape and they have a lid. And then I just put some tissue paper in there, I fold all the clean items that I'm going to bring back next time and I put them in those boxes, and those go on the top shelf in my closet. And I think I have about four. And so and then everything that was in there from the season before. So if I'm going from cooler weather to hot weather, I'm putting all my my sweaters away and my long things away. And then I'm taking all the summer things out and I'm airing them out. And if I need to clean them again, but I put them away clean. That's how I do it. So I have a system where I'm purging through my wardrobe twice a year. Yes. And that way I'm never overwhelmed with I've just got too many things that don't fit or I went on a shopping spree and I got, I now have four black blouses. I don't need four black blouses, right? So because I'm addressing it twice a year, then that really has helped me to just keep it under control.

J Joi Welch 32:28

Right? Yeah. And that's pretty much what I do. I feel like in our climate, you can almost have a year round wardrobe, you can almost almost Yes, I put away a few things that are white and that just look summery. And then I put away my sweaters when it's you know, the wintertime is over with. But I think I do the same thing. And then if I've worn it great, you know, and I still like it, if I haven't, I go ahead and get rid of it at that time. And just but I keep a little giveaway sack at the bottom of my closet until it fills up and then I take it straight to wherever I need to

A Allison 33:01

write Yeah, I have a I have a giveaway basket that's in a spare closet over there under the stairs, that's my goodwill basket. And when it's full of whatever it's come from around the house, then it goes in the back of my car, and I take it. But I think this is a really great system also to do with kids. Yes, because I just remember, if my kids had lots of options for clothing, boy, they're gonna go through all those options, and I'm doing that much more laundry, right? So really kind of limiting what, what my kids had available to them to wear and keeping

everything pretty neutral and easily. Mix and matchable you know, right? Doing that with my kids regularly was super helpful to keep the closets from just overflowing and just way too many clothing. I think most of us have too much clothing,

J

Joi Welch 33:50

right? US I tend to have a neutral palette. So I've got you know, a black couple of pair of black pants, you know, three pair of jeans and well, black, black and jeans. I think that's about all I have. But it just helps me I've got tops and sweaters to you know, just to mix and match. And so it makes the morning so much easier. You just get up, you know, you're gonna you know what you're doing that day, grab this, grab that and you're not wading through a whole bunch of clothes that don't fit and that don't right, you know, really fit your lifestyle anymore. I remember back when I first got out of college, I worked as a retail manager in a big department store in Dallas. I had to have so many clothes and nice clothes. You know, it just was just a season of life where that's where your money went to because that's what you're expected to wear. Then I started having you know, got married, had a family and boy that totally changed life. My clothing totally changed. So I feel like you need to look and say okay, I love this dress. It's a great dress, but it's Is it really serving me for this season?

A

Allison 35:02

Yeah, because that's back to what we talked about in the first episode, we want our stuff in our space to serve us not be in service to it. And if you keep hanging on to those clothes that either don't fit, or they just aren't useful for you in the stage you're in right now, you're still having to maintain it. Yeah, it's still taking up space in your closet. And it's visual clutter again. It's just there. And you're you, you have to look at it every time you open the closet and just get rid of it. Right? Bless bless somebody else with that thing.

J

Joi Welch 35:33

Yes, well, and you know, after you get your clothes done, and you've you feel like you're down to just the wardrobe that you like, where you feel so much better in that wardrobe. Because you know, that it's fits and it's you know, clean and it's, you know, repaired, everything's fits. Well. Don't forget about your shoes, your accessories, and your undergarments that those are all key areas that sometimes just pile up and just start looking real raggedy. So I feel like those are some key areas that you might want to address after you do your clothes. You know what what you like as far as jeans, okay? What shoes go with those, you know, what goes with your leggings? What goes with your, you know, have a if you have a few coats, what do I have rain boots, do I need rain boots, you know, talk, talk to yourself about that kind of those kinds of things. So don't neglect the shoes, the accessories and the undergarments after that,

A

Allison 36:29

right? And when you get to the planning stage of just sort of mapping out your space and what where things are going to fit, I think you'll find after the purging you no matter what, no matter how small your closet or wardrobe is, you're going to have more space. Yes. And then you look

at how best can I use this space. If you're like me, and you tend to mostly wear dresses, then you probably don't need that low. If yours has a lower bar in it, I took mine out. Mine has like a, it has an upper bar and a lower bar. And I guess it's meant for shirts on the top, pants on the bottom or something like that. But all my dresses were like getting stuck on that lower bar. So I just took it off. I don't need that I think about ways in kids rooms, you know, there's all kinds of tools and useful things out there to help maximize the space in the closet, using the vertical space, you know, with with unique kinds of hangers and little bars, you can attach to even create a second lower bar, I did that in my boys, closets when they were younger, because they only had an upper bar and their clothes aren't that big. So I wanted to be able to use all that space. Because you hang a size five pair of pants on an upper bar, that's a lot of wasted space on the bottom. Right, it's not being used. So put another bar on there, or maybe move a dresser in there so that they can you know, put their clothes and whatnot. Just think outside the box. Right?

J Joi Welch 37:47

Right, my husband share a small reach in closet. So we have to be very careful about what we put in there. But wait, it holds all of our clothes, we've downsized to exactly what we need. But our biggest help has been those hanging fabric shelves that we each have one, we have all of our shirts and T shirts and you know things that we need, hey, I think it has about four different shelves on each one of them. And that's the easiest thing. If I'm, if I know that I'm working out at the ranch, and we have we have certain T shirts we were when we serve our guests out of the retreat center, I can go right to that and pull those T shirts out. So having those kind of things that serve you. It's all dependent on what your needs are. And that's what you have to decide.

A Allison 38:35

Right. Okay. All right. So now we move to the kitchen. This is the behemoth of the organizational world. A lot of people are intimidated by organizing a kitchen they just don't even know where to start. You move into a new house and you just want to get the boxes emptied. So you just start like shoving things into cabinets and drawers. And then four years later, everything is still where you put it. Yeah, you can't. It's just you have sort of like a system but it's probably not the best system. So let's talk about that.

J Joi Welch 39:10

Yes. All right. Let's start with are the three zones in the kitchen. Okay, the first one is the prep zone. That is the area around your stovetop, it should contain all the items for your cooking. It can be divided up into meal prep and baking prep. So if you've got your baking dishes, all of your cake pans pans, all that goes on one one in one area, and then anything like pots and pans goes into another area, but it kind of overlaps with your cooking zone. Okay, your cooking zone is where your stovetop or your oven is. And sometimes they're in different places. But a lot of times they're in one range or

A Allison 39:55

mine are in different places. Yeah opposite, across across the room from each other

J Joi Welch 40:01

but that's okay. That's okay. Um, your your that could be more like your baking zone over there. Yes, you're baking there and you're cooking on your cooktop. So your cooking zone it has, where all your pots and pans are your utensils, spatulas, wooden spoons, tongs, all all of your oils and spices need to be right in that cooking zone area. And then your cleanup zone is your sink, and your dishwasher and all your dishes and utensils, cutlery, all of that needs to be closest to your dishwasher. And also close to the area of where your table is to make it convenient. So those are the three areas. Before we start looking at how to declutter how to make it pretty how to move and make cooking easier. Keep those three zones in mind, I think we we probably need to take a separate look at the pantry and the refrigerator, the refrigerator, it's hard to not clean out the whole refrigerator at one time, because things can gonna get moved around and they get pushed to the back of the refrigerator. So that needs to be an area where we need to just basically quickly take everything out, wipe it all down, make sure everything hasn't expired and but I've like to decant all of my milk and my creamer and my juices into glass jars anyway, so we're trying to trying to make it look even pretty inside your refrigerator. You know, I think the easiest thing when you get home from the grocery store, you're putting stuff in the refrigerator, go ahead and wash all that up and put it in nice bowls so that it's easy. You're you can snack on those strawberries, you know, they've been washed to do those kinds of things. So the refrigerator is a project in itself. So take some time work on that refrigerator. But don't don't overthink it. If you like your milk in the plastic jug, it comes in great, you know that that's the easy thing. We just you know, at our house, I have just a different kind of thinking.

A Allison 42:09

Well, it's part of your aesthetic. So I did something in my refrigerator that is part of my aesthetic, but it's also a practical application. I don't like the layout of the inside of the my refrigerator, it came with the house. And the way that the drawers work that which are supposed to be the produce drawers. I just they just didn't work for me. And I found that if I took my drawers out, just remove the drawers completely the space where those drawers would go, I could actually fit baskets in there.

J Joi Welch 42:38

Oh, that's a great idea.

A Allison 42:39

And I could fit more produce. And so that's what I did. So when you open my refrigerator it there's baskets inside of there.

J Joi Welch 43:00

J JOI WEICH 42:46

O that's cool. Yeah, well, and sometimes those drawers get hung up. Yeah, we had some water seep down into one of ours last night and I was trying to try and and trying to get it out and almost wrecked the whole refrigerator. But sometimes they're not as convenient as you'd like it to be. So I think that's a great idea to make things more convenient for you and it looks pretty

A Allison 43:06

And it's easier to keep clean. Those drawers, like you said, things can spill behind them. Yes. And sometimes it's hard to get that out. With the baskets, I can take the whole basket out very easily and when I'm kind of doing my weekly wipe down of the inside of the fridge, I can just quickly wipe it down and then I'm done and I can just put it right back in there.

J Joi Welch 43:25

And sometimes we can get talking about getting at the back of the refrigerator leftovers can crawl back there very easily and stay back there and get lost but um anyway just to do that in I would suggest maybe every couple of weeks at least go through what's in your I mean I think Allison you said you do it every week

A Allison 43:44

every week or every two weeks just less now that there's just two of us here with my husband and I but yeah, I used to do it weekly. I would do it right before a grocery shop so that when I came home with a car full of groceries I had somewhere to put them.

J Joi Welch 43:59

The other day the the egg cartons all got weepy with some water and I thought oh my goodness. And I found this really cute old crock bowl and I put all my eggs in there and I put it in the fridge and I thought, that looks really cute. I think I'm gonna just keep all my eggs in there from now now on. So anyway sometimes you don't realize all these little tricks until you have an emergency and have to have to do something else. But anyway the pantry is another whole whole big story. And so you think that you have to take care of it all at one time. No, you can do it shelf by shelf. But I am a person that I love jars. I love glass jars. I put all my flour in a jar, sugar in a jar, oatmeal in a jar. All my baking needs a lot of like my dried beans and rice. I put all those and I use those Fido jars I you can get those a lot of places. They're just very well sealed and it just makes your pantry looks so pretty, I don't like to see a lot of cereal boxes and, and just stuff in a pantry. But I have in my little cottage, one whole side of the cabinets, it was all is all pantry. So even in the smallest space I have I put baskets where I have one shelf, which is all of our baking goods. The second shelf is all of our meal prep. And then the third shelf is snacks. So I have baskets that fit exactly into two baskets on each shelf, it fits the exact space. And that's all I keep in there, the pantry a lot of times is just some can be just throw it in and move on. And you never know what you have in there. So

A

Allison 45:46

I think that's a good point that, to me the important part of organized and functioning again, we're going to keep coming back to that word functioning, particularly in the kitchen, a functioning pantry is I need to be able to see what I have, you know, the way my pantry will function well, and I'll be able to not run out of things and make sure that I have what I need is if I can see the oatmeal is getting low, then I know I need to put it on my grocery list or I need to go to where I store my extras and and fill it up. And just keep track of what I have. And it also helps you from over buying and buying, you know, excess when you realize you bought too much. And then you've now you've got eight bags of rice. Because if you have it in containers that you can't see what's in there, whether it's the original box that came in, or you know something that's not see through, like a glass jar, it's hard to know what you have, right. And I think that's for me, that's what's worked best as a functioning pantry. I use a lot of mason jars in my pantry, the quart size and even the half gallon size for some of my things. And then if I'm not using mason jars I'm using like an Oxo. I like the Oxo containers that have a little push button top because it provides an airtight seal. And that's why it's a one handed. So if I have my hands dirty from you know, whatever I was just doing in the kitchen and I need to grab something I can pop the top open with just one hand. Hmm. Oh, yeah,

J

Joi Welch 47:12

those are nice. Yeah, I've seen those before. Yes. So don't let the pantry overwhelm you. You can take it in sections, you know, shelf by shelf. Or you can do it all in one day where you take everything out, wipe it down and really do it right. But that is something that you will need to be sure you have the tools like we talked about in part one, the baskets to put you know, spices in or whatever you do want to how you want to categorize your, your dry goods are if you want to do the jars, whatever you decide that would work for you, you will need those before you really get started in to do it. Right,

A

Allison 47:54

right. So that means you need to have your measurements, yes, taking the time to measure the depth of the shelves and the height of the shelves and all of those things. So that when it's time to go by or find even if you're shopping your house, for containers to sort of corral your items and get your pantry more organized. You don't necessarily have to go out and buy things. If you're just shopping your house, it's just helpful to know actual dimensions. Right, exactly will save you a lot of frustration. And so you just need to write all those down and keep them with you.

J

Joi Welch 48:23

Yes, yes, yes. So after you have all of that you can work on your pantry, just in bits and pieces are all in one day, whatever works for you. So let's move on to appliances and dishware I think that's where we can get totally overwhelmed. A lot of us have Panini presses and griddles and all these kind of things that maybe we use once or twice a year. But do they have more than one function? Can you use you know, just upskill it to do a cheese? You know, grilled cheese sandwich? Ah, you know, I think that's what we need to ask ourselves. Do we need this? I asked for a panini grill one year for Christmas. I got a really nice one. We did use it for maybe

a year or two. But it said in a big spin. It's pretty nice size. Yeah, those are big. Those are pretty big. And I bet I did not use it well in I still don't haven't used it. But I did give it to down to where we serve people at our dining hall at the retreat center. But I'm because I didn't have the space to take up. I usually used to I had kitchen that if it sat there it sat there and it wasn't taking up valuable space. But you have to decide is that appliance working for me? Can I use something else? To do the same task? Yes. And I think that's the key thing. I think that's where maybe the appliance industry kind of gets us Oh yeah, it says okay, everybody needs Rice steamer to, you know to cook rice. Well I cook it in a pot with a lid on top of it. Yeah. So but you but you may like a restaurant steamer and it works for you. But that's what you have to decide. In our little cottage. I, I do use my crock pot. You know, I know people just sit it crockpots sit there for years and don't get us. That's not me, I use my crock pot a lot. I've given the morning, I'll put something on, go do what I need to do and know that I've got a meal cook. Yeah, when I get home. So a crock pot serves me I do have a Vitamix. That is one thing that I probably wish I use more it's just a little bit in a bad place is I don't get it out as much. And I use my KitchenAid those are my three I told myself, I can only keep three appliances. Those were the three appliances that I use. But my KitchenAid does have a food processor, attached attachment. So I kind of still counted as three three appliances. So I was

A Allison 51:01

just watching something the other day. I think it was the clutter bug lady who she's got some great resources and I think it was her and she said Never. Her rule for herself is don't have any appliance, small appliance in her kitchen that only does one thing. Yes. That's what you were just saying if it just does one thing. Now. Right. Now there are a couple of things like you said, you decide what what is something that you're going to use a lot, you know, you're going to use a lot and you're willing to give it that valuable real estate in your in your kitchen. For me. My airfryer I will not part with my airfryer I use it multiple times a week. Wow. Because I just it's so convenient. It's it's basically like having a super conducting oven. It's just like having a second oven, which I don't have I have one. So it's nice to have that option. It doesn't heat up the whole house. And I have all kinds of reasons why I love it. And I'm willing to give up the real estate to have it to have that.

J Joi Welch 51:59

Yes. Oh, anyway, okay, good. I'm just recently I took a cooking class at a local kitchen store. And I learned how to make pie. We usually go to a place on our vacation that makes really good pie. So I thought okay, well, I'm gonna go learn how to make this. Well, I got gift there. And they have a special pot that they have chorus in and special ingredients. And so I thought, okay, how can I do this a little bit simpler with what I've got. So I determined I'm going to use my skillet that I have there so won't have to buy anything extra and use my stirring stick that I had special things that he stirred and started pay

A Allison 52:43

when I'm sure they were gonna offer you a discount if you bought it at their store while you were doing your class.

J

Joi Welch 52:50

Yes, but I was just gonna remind it, sometimes you can do so much with just the few things that you had. There's a fella on I think he has a website or he's on Instagram, he has a list. He's a famous chef, he has a list of the basic items that you need to cook and he that's all he has in his kitchen. And I took that list and I thought wow, I think I have more than he does in my little tiny kitchen. But he said you can use so many. You can do so many things with so few of pieces of equipment. Yeah, I think that's what we all need to look at what we're doing. Look at the things that we have in are they serving us well, right. Now, I think that's a great point. Well, and that also goes for extra pots and pans. Because a lot of times we can get a zillion skillets and, you know, I've got a cast iron for this and a cast down for this and then a regular stainless for this. Decide how many you actually use and then just get rid of everything else. When can we move to a house maybe well, maybe three houses ago, I decided to get rid of all my pots. And I got a nice set of a had a skillet a Dutch oven in two sizes of pots. And it was a very nice brand, I still have it. I wouldn't trade it for anything, but I haven't needed another pot and probably 10 years that I've had those just because that's they've served me well. You know, just that Dutch oven, the small saucepan and then the skillet that comes with so anyway, so decide what you need. Get rid of everything else that'll just help here with your cabinet space. Even if you have a large kitchen. Sometimes it's nice just to have the pots lined out where you can easily get to them. You don't have to fill those drawers up just because just because they're there. Exactly, exactly. Then decide how many dishes and cutlery you need. Make sure you have a couple of plates for each person that lives in the house. How many of you have kids that come home very often make sure they are taken care of too. And then keep in mind, maybe how many guests that you usually have. And if you have a play setting of 12, that usually, you know, serves most everybody, you know, if you do have, you know, like gas, I know, Allison has a lot of people over at her house, but I don't know how many, typically she serves, I know, it's just she and her husband, for most of the time, but um, but you want to know that, you know, she has the gift of hospitality, she's gonna have lots of people over, she's gonna want plenty of plates and cups and saucers to be able to serve, serve them. But you know, other people have different needs. And so just tailor how many items you have to how many people that you that live in your home.

A

Allison 55:51

So we've worked through all three of these areas, we've looked at some of the problems, some of the common problems in the bathroom, some of the common problems in the bedroom and closet, and in the kitchen, it's been a, again, just a ton of information. We're being very generalized here. And I'm just saying that so that you'll remember in the first episode, we really focused on the individualization of this process. And that's something that we can't do for you. So you'll have to go back and do those steps and then take some of the principles and the tips and the tricks that you've heard today, and apply them to what works for your family, I'm hearing that come up a lot is does this serve you? And does this serve your family? Does this item or this way of organizing the linen closet or this way of organizing your kitchen? Does it serve you well? Not you serving it, it serves you and that's what we're all about here at The Art of Home. We're about serving. We're about being with our families, and living out the purposes that God has called us for within the four walls of our home. And that was the whole point in doing this series was to help you think about ways that you can bring order out of the chaos because as moms and as homemakers, that's kind of our M.O. That's what we do all the time bringing order out of the chaos. And when we do that we're actually imaging our Creator,

because he was the one who brought order out of all the chaos. And so it's just, it's a noble goal to try for that. So Joi, if there's one thing that you would want our listeners to take away from the discussion today, what would that be?

J Joi Welch 57:27

I think I would say just start small. Decide where the need is for you to accomplish a task that maybe has been hanging over your head for a while. And you just would feel so accomplished knowing that boy, that is that drawer is so neat and decluttered right now, that counter and the kitchen looks beautiful, it doesn't have very many items on there that are cluttering up, I've got plenty of space to enjoy taking a bath in the bathroom. Just decide what is important to you. And take a small step and try to do that just maybe once a week or twice a week and just take those little baby steps of cleaning out a drawer cleaning out a closet making something beautiful, bringing fresh flowers into your home, to just have that fresh smell. Do the things that appeal to you. And I think you will just wonder how what how life can be so much more free of the chaos free of the the consumable things that distract us from our real purpose in life.

A Allison 58:39

Well, thank you for this discussion.

J Joi Welch 58:41

Allison, thank you so much for having me. This has been so fun.

A Allison 58:45

It's so fun. Yeah. All right. I have to go declutter a closet now. Oh,

J Joi Welch 58:49

me too. Now that I've talked about it, definitely.

A Allison 58:54

I know we covered a lot of ground today. But I just want to encourage you all to follow Joi's advice of starting with small steps that address the most needy areas of your home? Where are you noticing a breakdown of system in order? Which areas of your space caused you the most anxiety? Use the LIVE principle as you troubleshoot these areas? Ask yourself what is my life purpose for this season? And what are my core values? What are our interests as a family and as individuals? What is my vision for my home and for the spaces in my home? Once you've answered those questions, evaluate each room or space by applying these answers and adjusting accordingly. That might just mean a quick declutter using Joi's clockwise method. Or

it might mean a total overhaul of the space. Just remember, you don't have to do it all in one day, or one week, or even one month. I think this quote from Mark Twain sums it up really well, "The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex, overwhelming tasks into small, manageable tasks and starting on the first one." Well, that wraps up our mini series on organization. We hope you have been inspired and encouraged to apply these concepts to cultivate a home that serves you and your family as you seek to serve God and your daily lives. If you have found some value from this organization series, would you consider giving the show some love in one or more of the following ways. Number one, share the episode with a homemaker you know who could use some encouragement. Number two, leave us a rating and honest review in your podcast app. And then finally number three, you can leave us a tip in our virtual tip jar, Buy Me a Coffee, we have a link down in the show notes. And your financial support helps offset the cost of producing The Art of Home. So thank you. You can connect with us over on Instagram and Facebook. All the social links are down in the show notes. And the resources mentioned in this episode are also listed in the notes below and on our website. We will be back in two weeks with another homemaker portrait. Until then, keep practicing your art of making a home