

Neatnick or Clutterer

10-6-25

“Barbara. Clean your room.” “Yes Mother dearest.” That was not an uncommon conversation with my mother when I was a kid. I never argued or refused. But did I do it? Not on your life! I probably spent a token five minutes to superficially tidy up and then was off to do whatever I had I mind in the first place.

In college, my desk was always a clutter of books, notebooks and papers. However, when it came time to study for an exam, the first thing I did was spend time tidying up my dorm room and desk. Somehow having an organized environment really helped me to also organize my thoughts. Once it was all tidy I could really settle down and study.

So now, no one is around to tell me to clean up, but I did somehow internalize that mother voice in spite of myself.

My theory is that everything in my house needs a “home.” That way you can find what you need. However, I actually like a little clutter for practicality sake. Piles of papers needing to be addressed sit conveniently by my computer. The pans and measuring cups hang in my kitchen within easy reach, for all to see. No need to dig around in a drawer or cupboard. My knitting sits on my chair.

My basic philosophy to keeping a clean house is having regular company. What a great motivator that is! That results in decluttering and “deep” cleaning (i.e. knocking down cobwebs and dusting.)

There are things that I do routinely, company or not. The kitchen requires daily washing up and tidying. That is because I cook, processing fresh vegetables and canning or freezing them during the harvest season from August until October. I would have no working surfaces if I didn't keep up there.

Another thing I try to do daily is sort my mail. Most of it ends up in the recycling anyway. (Bob, I must admit, helped me develop this habit.)

There are some habits I did get from my mother in spite of politely ignoring her. She always wanted a clean bathroom and clean floors. Also she and my grandfather did the supper dished every evening. It was their time to talk over the events of the day and plan future meals and other mysterious things. I have never tried to get Bob to buy into that routine though, and I must admit to the fact that I often finish up the kitchen cleaning the next morning. However it does ultimately get done.

Then there are books. What is wrong with people who do not have stacks of books and magazines in various places in the house, conveniently begging to be read? Surely books are not clutter!

So the lesson..... If you are coming to my house for an event, the house will look clean and tidy, but don't expect that same level of organization if you just happen to drop by. You will just have to take what you get!