

"The more you adapt the more interesting you are."

~ Martha Stewart

INTRODUCTION

This book details my specific experience. I'm a (mostly) single girl with no kids and a well-paying job. I've lived in different places around the world, in countrysides and in cities and currently live in a large European city. Usually, I've lived in fairly small spaces. I also travel a lot, for both business and pleasure. Some of my advice might be a bit more specific to people who live something similar to my current lifestyle. But I also think that my life experience has something to offer lots of different people. After all: at my core, I'm an expert in adapting, whether it's adapting from the countryside to the city, from one city to the next, to different sizes of spaces, or to different countries. Whether you're single or part of a large family, whether you live in an apartment or a mansion, you need to know how to store your shoes and fold your sheets, and we all need to embrace the wonders of labelling. Ultimately, I'm presenting this book's tips and info as potential inspiration, rather than prescription. I want what I do to inspire you, not tell you how to live your life.

For right now, though, I want to go back, to give you a sense of where my organizing habits started. Ever since I can remember, my friends and family have always been amazed at how organized my home and especially my closet was... and still is! Throughout my life, I've fielded a steady stream of requests to help friends clean and organize their closets, and I've always happily obliged, because organizing is my passion. I would follow up each organizing session with detailed letters outlining what the friends who came to me for help could do to sustain the sense of order I'd created.

I didn't only organize closets for friends, but also pantries, garages and offices. This is why I wrote this book: to put my passion on paper and to share how simple it is to be organized. I am, and have always been, very serious about my passions. Case in point: even though I'm terrified of flying, I travel a lot. And during every airplane flight, I find myself thinking, oh no, I didn't pass along my organizing secrets to all my friends yet! What if this plane doesn't land! Hopefully, my planes will continue to land safely. But I still can't be everywhere at once, helping out the friends I've made all over the world. That in mind, this book lets my friends access my organizing tips whenever they want, even when I'm not there to personally guide them through the process of putting things in rows and boxes.

Ultimately, this book is about sharing what I know, and what I've learned, from organizing my own life, and helping others organize theirs. Plus, I really want to give

a unique home-made Christmas gift to my friends this year—so, Merry Christmas :))

I've often been asked if my parents are super organized, and if I grew up in a very disciplined, neat home. Although our home was always clean and tidy, my mother was in no way as committed to organizing as I was. At six years old, I started to organize my cats by size, finding myself continually frustrated when they wouldn't stay put. Then I organized my stuffed animals by colour and size. When I first started reading, I would organize my books by title or size. I read a lot of books by Roald Dahl, and from the Nancy Drew and Sweet Valley High series, so they were easy to organize by author or publication date. When I became interested in fashion, and started to build up my wardrobe, organizing my closet became my favourite secret hobby. I say secret, because I felt lame telling my friends that I was staying home on a Saturday night to re-organize my closet—and I did do this, on more than one Saturday.

So where did my organizing knack come from? I think it must be from my Swiss roots. Switzerland is a country that's uber-organized and efficient, perhaps stemming from its small size, which makes order essential. The Swiss tend to have smaller houses and living quarters than North Americans; they also tend to invest in quality over quantity, and often prefer a more minimalist lifestyle. My mother also confessed to me that one of my Great Uncles was an obsessive organizer; she remembers visiting him and being impressed by his extensively polished and organized shoe collection. So, maybe I inherited the organizing gene from my extended Swiss family.

As I discussed above, my passion for organizing extends to helping others. I'm constantly finding new ways to get and stay organized, and I love sharing these ideas with my friends and family. A short text from a friend saying that she colour-coded two bags of clothing before donating them puts a smile on my face, as does waking up each day to my organized space and knowing exactly where everything is.

Much of my practical organizing experience comes from living in small apartments and having to adapt to small spaces. I believe that as more and more people move to cities and face smaller living quarters, we're increasingly challenged to do more with less. When living in a small space, being organized becomes a central part of any quest to be successful, have time for meaningful relationships, and maintain a healthy, beautiful body and mind. You may think I'm exaggerating, but getting and staying organized will improve every aspect of your life, and smaller spaces leave less room for organizing errors.

This book is organized (very meticulously, of course!) into common themes that will

help you organize your house, closet, and storage rooms. A special chapter for travel and the science behind organizing are included to provide a holistic approach.

A constant theme to keep in mind during reading is that organizing is a lifestyle, but it isn't one-size-fits-all. Incorporating organizing into your life shouldn't, ultimately, involve changing who you are, but rather maximizing it. Knowing where your favourite socks are, and having them stored correctly, means you'll be able to wear your favourite socks more often, and look better doing it. Similarly, packing properly for a once-in-a-lifetime trip means you'll be able to enjoy that trip even more. Remember: being organized doesn't mean thinking about organizing all the time. Ideally, being organized means that you don't have to think about organizing all the time—because you do it automatically, as an organic part of your everyday routine. And you can only reach this level of organizing bliss by making sure your organizing systems and routines are perfectly adapted to your goals, personality, and needs. *Again: organizing is a lifestyle, but it needs to be your lifestyle.* I hope this mantra captures the spirit of the book, even though I do make reference to certain things that every- one should always do, such as labelling, folding, and ironing (to name a few). However, I also try to emphasize that everyone should take the basics and then adapt them to their own goals and needs. To reinforce this philosophy, the next few lines ask about your organizing goals. Hopefully, outlining these goals up-front will help you think about ways you might adapt the organizing inspirations that follow to your own life.