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My hiatus and what I have learned

By Amy Stanley

So here it is – over 7 months after giving birth to my second child – a beautiful baby boy, Luke Elias Stanley! I can't begin to tell you how thrilled I am to be a mother again! Motherhood & parenthood is such an amazing event. I could go on & on about my feelings on it, but that is not what this forum is for – back on track AMY! I think of myself as a student of life; so while off on this hiatus, I started to recap what I have learned or better yet what do I already know that I need to reinforce to myself? As many of you know, when I was 9 months pregnant (2 weeks from delivery to be exact!), my dad was diagnosed with lung cancer. I found this diagnoses extremely hard to take. It is bad enough to manage your emotions while pregnant, let alone getting a blow like this! I have a lot to share with everyone & it all comes back to leading a simplified, ORGANIZED life:

1. Learn to say NO! How many times have we heard this one?! We all hear it, but sometimes we don't apply it. Let me approach this a little differently.

- Sometimes we have to say no, not only to others, but to ourselves. Think about something today that you could have said no to yourself about (i.e. I will answer all my email RIGHT NOW). How does this task/project help you to support the life you want to live? Even saying no to ourselves in our heads to less important things leads to what is really important to you. Focus on that. Say YES to yourself to things that support your best life. See # 2 for more clarification on this one.
- Accept others' mistakes, shortcomings & who they are. This saves us the time & energy we spend on anger, frustration, etc.; on things we can't change. See people for who they are & I mean this with sincerity. Some people in your life aren't capable of being supportive the way you need them to. Maybe they can't give you what you need & that is ok. Do you need to dismiss them from your life? No, unless that relationship is destructive & or abusive. But we are just talking about friends, family, co-workers, etc.; people you must interact with or want to interact with, but get frustrated with. The majority of the time we don't express our feelings to these people in our lives or maybe we can't for some reason or another. Unless you are willing to confront those in your life, get over it & realize that YOU are the change that person needs. Mahatma Gandhi said "***Be the change you want to see in the world.***" You can't change others, but you can change yourself. So how do we deal with this? Also do you think if you confronted this person they would ACTUALLY change? If they aren't open to your message, they aren't going to change anyway. Acceptance. Accept what they DO provide for your life. Many of us have heard that there is no such thing as a perfect friend. Friends can serve different purposes in our lives – we have the fun ones, the caring ones, the ones we can bicker with, & the ones we confide in. The same thing can go for any group in your life. When we accept them for what they bring to our lives, then we give ourselves freedom. Freedom to move on; freedom to focus on what IS important in your life. Freedom gives you ORGANIZATION! Your thoughts are no longer wrapped up with such negativity – they are organized & give you more clarity in your life. You aren't wasting time on needless things; things you can't change.
- As you accept others, it makes it easier to accept when others say NO to you because you will understand better why THEY are saying no.

2. Don't strive for perfection – NO ONE is perfect even if you perceive them to be, including organizers! **READ THAT SENTENCE AGAIN!** Now that you have heard it twice, let's piggy back on #1. When you are able to see things with clarity, things that are important to you are more obvious. And you can say no to those things that

you don't have time for AT THAT MOMENT. But when you also give yourself permission to NOT be perfect, you give yourself freedom to live. When you strive for perfection, you are only setting yourself up for failure. I have thought many times about getting back to my newsletter & business, but because I felt people expect perfection from me (those people include me!) I thought, I can't produce that right now. So I had to say NO (#1) to myself at needing perfection & realize it is OK to NOT BE PERFECT (#2). Do you see where this is leading? Happiness is the result; things tend to calm down in our mind, which allows us to think with clarity which produces simplicity & organization to our lives.

3. Take care of yourself or you can't take care of others. Many of you have also heard of my recent throat issues. Others are also aware of my migraines. These are all the result of me not being able to manage the stress in my life. Will I ever be able to manage it? I don't know, but again, I'm a student of life & I'm learning each day to do it better. But remember #2 = I'm not perfect! But what I can do is to take care of myself. This involves exercising, eating healthy, making time for what is important to me. When these things happen, I feel better & have more energy; when I feel better, I'm a better person not only for me, but those around me that need me. Here is an example of building upon what we have read up until now: Exercise. Make time for it; it might mean saying NO (#1) to something else or putting something off until later, such as checking your email. To me exercising should involve a 30 minute workout, but sometimes I might be unable to commit to 30 minutes in a row. Does that mean I shouldn't do ANY exercise if I'm unable to do it in a row? NO! Make it work for you – lose the idea of PERFECTION (#2). Playing ball with my son & running around for 10 minutes will count towards my daily exercise goal. And by viewing this in THIS way, you have now accomplished #3!

4. Manage your time. I thought it would take 3 months for me to be up & running again enough to put time back into my business... wrong! It took much longer & that is ok because we aren't striving for perfection (#2). WE are in control of our time – no one else. WE make our own schedules, but sometimes we view our time as much more than we actually have. We have heard about your eyes being bigger than your stomach when it comes to eating. That can be applied to our time. We try to fit so much in such a small amount of time. With that approach, a few things are going to happen. Either you going to do things without the attention that they deserve & possibly have to revisit the project again (i.e. cleaning out your closet. You think it will only take an hour. When it starts to take longer, you panic, rush & don't satisfy your own needs.). You can also set yourself up for failure. You start a project, realize you can't finish it & just stress even more. I urge each of you to carve out 1 hour. Come up with your ideal day, hour by hour. Include everything you MUST do (brush your teeth), need to do (do laundry, make dinner, etc.) & then you will see where your time falls for the things you WANT to do. It is putting a puzzle together of your day. If you work for an employer, some days might look different than others (weekday vs. weekends). But you will see the time you have to accomplish things & you can tailor your list to work within your day. I have a template for this. Pass my website along to 5 of your friends (copy me on your email to them for confirmation) & you can receive it.

5. Don't care about what others say about you or if they like you --- it is liberating & freeing. Not everyone will/ or does like you. When you let go of that, you give yourself permission to live your best life & things can fall into place – your thoughts, your home. Surround yourself with a network of people who believe in you & support you. It will empower you to have the positivity in your life.

6. Do what you love & love what you have. This is the only life you have, the only body you have; accept it. Again, this goes with #5. It is freeing & everything else will fall into place.

7. Some days will be good & easy & some days will not be. That is simple. On the good days, take advantage of it; on the bad days, give yourself a break to accept it!

8. Stop judging others. I have learned as a parent NOT to judge others – even those who aren't parents. If people want to know what you think or want your advice – they will ask (believe me!). Otherwise, you don't really know what is going on behind closed doors. So when we judge others, we hurt everyone. Don't assume because you have accomplished something, you know what is right for everyone. Again, I go back to parenting (because I'm living it!). Others will give you advice ALWAYS. Tell you what you are doing right, but mostly what you are doing WRONG! Wouldn't you feel better with others telling you – you are a great mom versus "If I were you, I would (fill in the blank)." If you ASK for their input, that is one thing, but when you don't ask & someone judges the way you are handling a situation, then that creates a barrier between you & that person – you didn't ask for it & he/she feels you are wrong for what you are doing. Do what works for you, your family, those around you & it might not always be the popular thing, but when you do what is right for you, the situation, you stay true to yourself. It also is an extension of #1 about accepting others.

9. **"Don't compare your worst to everyone's best."** - Marie Osmond. Organizing is a perfect example of that. If you compare, again, you set yourself up for failure. No two people are alike. If you hate to do laundry & your friend loves it, the chances are your friend will be caught up on their laundry, be organized with it, etc.

10. **Multi-tasking isn't for everyone or every situation** (cell phones & cars / those who like the reward of finishing something). For me, there are some things I am able to multi-task & others that I could, but choose not to because I don't feel I do my best or am not happy with the outcome when I do multi-task. I have no problem changing a dirty diaper while talking on the phone, but when I'm writing, I need to have peace & quiet even though I could have my kids around me when I'm doing it.

All of these things are decisions. The decisions we make show in our life. The great thing about humans is that we have the ability to make decisions to change our current status. So do you want to be happy, fulfilled, ORGANIZED? Who doesn't? Then decide to make the changes that support that in your life.

We have read this article so far for how we can project out into the world – acceptance, etc., but now read this article as if others are projecting this on to YOU. How wonderful would you feel if others accepted you for who you are, what you can give, didn't expect perfection from you, offered to give you help that you accepted? This is the basis for a simplified and ORGANIZED life. When we start living a life like this, all other things will fall into place INCLUDING ORGANIZATION!

Many people ask me – what is going on with your business (especially with the economy and the birth of my 2nd child)? With all this said, some changes to my business are due to things in my life:

- Will I / Do I still have the business – Absolutely yes!
- What about the newsletter? Right now it will be done on a quarterly basis. Will I always succeed? Probably not, but I will try. I hope to someday get back to a monthly basis.
- Will my newsletter be as perfect as I want it to (linking sections to the articles, having my affiliates all corresponding with the newsletters topics)? Probably not; see #2!

Talking to others about organizing is still one of my passions. But with the recent changes in my life, I must align my life with my current needs. I know you will continue to support these decisions as you have in the past. I thank you all for the ongoing support of my business.

Readers Share Organizing Tips...

October's Monthly Question: **What have you done recently that saves money and keeps you organized?** We had a great response to this question! Here are 2 of the responses:

- Brenda says "I Clip Coupons Weekly from the Sunday Paper and Mail. I organize them by category and carry them in a pouch while shopping. This saves money using the coupons. Also, since the coupons are organized, it saves time finding them with ease during your shopping trip.

Examples:

- Baby Items (Diapers, wipes, treats, food, ointments bath products & formula)
 - Giant Eagle Coupons (Only) - comes from the store
 - Food Items (ex. Cereal, Coffee/Tea, Condiments, Dressings, Frozen Items and Dairy)
 - Personal Items (ex. Shampoo, deodorant, razors, shower gel, toothpaste, mouthwash.)
 - Health Items: (Vitamins, Excedrin, Benadryl, Nyquil, Advil Sinus & PM)
 - Dog Items (ex. Food, Treats, Pets Smart and Pet Rx Coupons)
 - Store Coupons (ex. Kohls/Target/Toys R Us/Linens & Things/Bath & Body)
 - Restaurant Coupons (ex. Johnny's Wife's Place, Sunset Cafe, Pizza Hut, Eat N'Park)
- Happy Coupon Organizing!

- Jeanne says "I bought huge 2 1/2 gallon and 1 1/2 gallon "Montana" glass storage jars with sealed lids at Target to store bulk sugar, flour, tea bags, coffee beans, rice and various other items like cookies, peanut butter crackers, cereal, pastas, oatmeal packets, etc. I have ten jars now, neatly lined up on the counter. Not only do they look lovely, they organize all of these

wonderful items that are usually awkwardly taking up space in my cupboards due to their odd-shaped packaging. It frees up space in the cupboards, but also gives us easy access to items we use on a regular basis in really beautiful air-tight storage! Everyone loves how they look, too!"

June's Monthly Question: What is one thing you are going to say NO to? For those of you who send an email answering this question or sharing other organizing tips, we will post it in our next newsletter. You will also get 10% off any organizing service provided by **ORGANIZING BY AMY**.

Calendar – June/July/August 2009

Saturday, June 13, 2009 – *Youngwood Community Garage Sale.*

Saturday, June 13, 2009 – *Roboworld Exhibit starts.* Carnegie Science Center.

<http://www.carnegiesciencecenter.org/default.aspx?pagelid=377>

Sunday, June 14, 2009 – *Flag Day.* Hang your flag with pride!

<http://www.usflag.org/history/flagday.html>

Sunday, June 21, 2009 – *Father's Day.* Remember to celebrate all those fathers out there and those who are like fathers. *"Any man can be a father, but it takes a special person to be a dad"* ~ Proverb quotes

Saturday, July 4, 2009 – *Independence Day.* Take some time to view the Declaration of Independence & celebrate our country. <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration.html>

Sunday, August 2, 2009 – *Starts – NATIONAL SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE Week.* Do one thing each day to simplify your life. Visit www.organizingbyamy.com OR www.napo.net for more ideas!

Monthly Checklist – June/July/August

This section provides readers with a monthly reminder of things to do. There are so many things we have to remember. Some of those things can be done on a monthly and or yearly basis. Here is a reminder of what to do THIS month (each month will have a different list):

Yearly/June:

- Video tape your house inside out – literally. Store it some place safe for insurance purposes.
- When was the last time your pet had a bath?
- Clean your oven – use the self cleaner feature.

Yearly/July:

- Turn your mattress.
- STEELERS TRAINING CAMP!!!!

Yearly/August:

- Have a fireplace or woodburner? Have it serviced this month.

Monthly June/July/August:

- Women – SELF BREAST EXAM!
- Download pictures from digital camera
- Back up computer
- Change your furnace filter or clean the one you have.
- * This one isn't a monthly, but QUARTERLY – put and or change baking soda in your refrigerator and freezer. It cuts down on smells and food tasting funny.
- * This one is a chore AS NEEDED – put a Clorox™ Toilet Tab in your toilet. It will keep things fresh. Check on it every 3 months or so to see if it needs replaced.
- Use Jet Dry to clean your dishwasher inside out – literally. Store it some place safe for insurance purposes.

* Remember – These hotter summer months are best for organizing your cooler areas, such as basements, etc. Rita & I have had this conversation & I know she will be successful!

Monthly Special

In our featured article, we discussed time management & doing a daily template of your perfect day. **ORGANIZING BY AMY** can get you started. For \$10, we will have a 60 minute phone consultation and build your personalized template. Email organizingbyamy@comcast.net

Product Highlights

Here we like to highlight products/ideas that you should check out...

The Definitive Guide To Home Organization For Busy People. If it is for busy people, it should help you save time with organizing

<http://redhead6.abe008.hop.clickbank.net>

Organic Vegetable Gardening Ebook. Gardening saves you trips and time to the store and money on groceries. Organic concentrates on the best for your and environment. Although, in our area, we might be done with the gardening season, it is never too early to plan of next year. You will have all winter to read and plan.

<http://redhead6.resco.hop.clickbank.net>

The Menu In A Box 100 Day Meal Planning Kit. This kit will help you plan for your meals. Planning for meals can save you time and money. It is available as an eBook so you are also saving paper.

<http://redhead6.menuinbox.hop.clickbank.net>

Visit ORGANIZING BY AMY. We have many product sites that can be helpful in giving balance to you and your life.

<http://www.organizingbyamy.com/products.html>

Announcements

ORGANIZING BY AMY'S Newsletter welcomes all of those who are new. If you haven't responded yet, please be sure to let us for our own purposes, how you found us. This way we can tell what is working for our marketing.

I would like to take a moment to share our latest addition with my Organizing Family ---



'Unity is strength. Knowledge is power. Attitude is everything.' – Lance Armstrong

HAPPY ORGANIZING!

Amy Stanley

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