

HOME LIVING

Order in the house

Amanda Davey

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Once upon a time, Sarah Cottman was a very disorganised individual.

Despite having an ordered mind and running a successful small business, her Bayview home was characterised by mess, clutter and chaos, so much so that home life was reaching crisis point.

To make matters worse, Sarah and her three children all suffer from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, but about five years ago she decided to bite the bullet and reclaim her life, her sanity and her dining room table.

Slowly but surely she restored some semblance of order around the house and during this process of fundamental change, she surprised herself at how quickly she adapted to her new regime and how efficient she had become as a result.

"I was the most disorganised person you could meet," Sarah said. "So I bought a book written by an American professional organiser which explained that anyone can learn to be organised even if they are not born that way.

"Having ADHD doesn't help but I have learnt the importance of following really clear-cut processes.

"For instance, when I file, I refer to a map to enable me to find or store my paperwork with ease because people like me find it hard to stick to one particular filing system.

"What makes sense one day doesn't the next."

Today Sarah is so adept at leading an ordered existence that last year she started a new business called Heavenly Order, specifically designed to help others in her former predicament.

As a fully fledged member of the Australasian Association of Professional Organisers she is now in a position to offer her clients a "hands on" approach to restoring order to their homes and offices by providing them with ideas, structure, processes, balance and harmony.

"Creating order will never be second nature to me but now I can walk into anybody's home or office and reorganise it with the aim of increasing productivity and reducing stress.

"Disorganised people are doing themselves a disservice because it can be a very stressful way to live although it's amazing how many creative types think they shouldn't be organised because it's boring.

"Being organised just means you can retrieve anything you want in your home within 10 seconds, it's not about being neat and anal retentive," she said.

"I find that chronically disorganised people often have good brains and are highly intelligent, it's just that they haven't learnt how to eliminate clutter and bring order to their lives."

Sarah charges \$290 for the initial consultation, which usually lasts more than three hours, and \$80 per hour after that.

For a whole day, the cost is by negotiation.

Her plan of attack will include assessing your current situation, planning for order, creating simple retrieval systems and sorting, organising and discarding the clutter.

And if you need a further incentive to go forth and get organised, think about this. According to Sarah, you can reduce your housework by 40 per cent just by getting rid of your clutter. ☐pi9252 To find out more about Heavenly Order, contact Sarah on 999 77 135 or email info@horder.com.au

Or, if you would like to meet some of Sydney's professional organisers including Sarah, visit the Sydney Organising Expo, being held on Saturday, May 5, from 9am at the Sydney Community College Building, corner of Balmain Rd and Perry St, Lilyfield.



Sarah Cottman is a professional organiser - she restores order to cluttered homes.