

organize your paper clutter



presented by aby garvey

lesson 1

laying the foundation

WELCOME

Paper, paper everywhere! It's an amazing paradox: Right smack dab in the middle of the electronic age we find ourselves drowning in more paper than ever.

Paradoxical or not, the crisis is real. Even though these pieces of paper are just that—paper—the piles they create cause stress. That paper mountain growing on your countertop represents a loss of freedom, a loss of control, and a nagging feeling in your gut that something important isn't getting attended to. This paper, and the feelings it creates, make it hard to relax, focus, or even have fun.

Remember, it took a while for your paper clutter to build up; it will take a while to dig out, too.

Of all of the items in our home that need organizing, paper is one of the most difficult. Paper clutter is exhausting...and going through it is a *s l o w* process! Think of it this way: A ream of paper and a sweater take up the same amount of physical space. Yet, when organizing, a sweater represents one decision, where as a stack of paper the size of a ream can represent up to 500 decisions! (Assuming each piece of paper represents only one decision.)

Add to this the fact that the decisions that go along with paper aren't as straightforward as our decisions about *stuff*—do I use it, need it or love it? Often we aren't really sure if we need a piece of paper. If you've ever wondered, "If I get audited, will I need this?" then you know what I'm talking about. Complicating things even further, sometimes, when we know we need a certain piece of paper, we aren't particularly excited about the task associated with it. Do you enjoy paying bills? (I know I don't.)

If all our paper were created equal—as stuff we didn't like—that'd make it a notch easier. Unfortunately, though, this isn't the case. Buried among the stacks of bills, receipts and junk mail are items like magazines, artwork, and a ticket stub from the awesome concert we went to last month. These pieces of paper are treasures, and often, buried treasures.

The bottom line is this: Paper clutter causes stress because our paper represents things we need to do (such as pay the bills) or things we may want to do (use this coupon to get a new pair of shoes) or things we think we should do (donate money to the Heart Association) or things we'd like to do (read about the plight of the honey bee and figure out what we can to help) or things we want to remember (hold on to

this ticket stub because the circus was so much fun). Therefore, each piece of paper has a sense of obligation associated with it. A stack of paper nags at you, “You should be doing something about me...” which makes it very difficult to relax or even work in focused manner when you’re in a room piled high with stacks of paper.

But your future with paper isn’t all doom and gloom. You’re here in this workshop and we’re going to get this thing under control once and for all. Hooray! In a nutshell, my goal for you in this workshop is to equip you with the tools you need to dig out of your paper backlog and stay on top of your paper going forward. If you follow along with the lessons, you will have a system in place for handling the new paper that comes into your home, and you will know how to process your paper and set up systems that will work for you. What’s more, if you take action throughout this workshop, you will have come a long way in the process of creating new paper habits and causing the paper clutter in your midst to disappear. Ah...just the thought of clear, flat surfaces sounds good, doesn’t it? Really good.

Here’s how we’re going to get there:

Lesson 1 will lay the foundation. You’ll begin by understanding your current paper situation and the very good reasons for changing your approach to paper—both from a personal perspective and a more global perspective. You’ll also create some paper organizing goals and decide the outcome you’re after in terms of your paper. Next, you’ll take steps to slow down the flow of paper into your home. This will set you up for ongoing success in keeping paper clutter at bay.

In Lesson 2, you’ll learn a simple decision making process for handling your paper. This process will help you navigate through the daily mail as well as organize the backlog of paper in your home. With a simple process and series of questions to consider about your paper, you’ll learn how to confidently categorize it. You’ll also set up an area to sort your paper, complete with temporary containers so you can begin managing the daily inflow.

In Lesson 3, you’ll learn about storage solutions available for storing and organizing your paper. You’ll learn how to choose the best solutions for you, and set up your collection and action systems. You’ll continue to tackle your daily paper, and begin to work your way through your paper backlog.

In Lesson 4, our focus will be on your reference paper—paper you want or need to refer to regularly. You'll learn how to set up a household reference binder and continue to tackle your paper backlog.

In Lesson 5, our focus will shift to your archive paper—paper you want or need to hold onto for longer periods of time, but won't need to access regularly. You'll learn how to set up your archive storage systems, and continue the process of sorting and organizing your paper backlog.

In Lesson 6, we'll wrap up the workshop by discussing how to use, tweak, and maintain your systems going forward.

Keep this in mind: Throughout the workshop you'll be taking action—sorting and processing your paper. You'll learn how to create new paper habits—habits that will help you keep up with your paper and give you back your sense of control and peace of mind.

By the end of this workshop you will know how to stay on top of your paper, and have storage systems in place making it possible to put your paper away and just as important, retrieve it with confidence!

So welcome aboard! I'm happy to help you organize your paper—once and for all!

UNDERSTAND YOUR STARTING POINT

Where is All This Paper Coming From?

As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. If you really want to understand why you're inundated with paper, pull out the chart called "paper, paper everywhere!" that was included with the lesson downloads. Once your eyeballs stop spinning in your head, take a minute and digest the chart. Just look at all the different ways paper creeps into your home! It's no wonder paper is piling up on your flat surfaces! Let's take a look at each of these sources of paper inflow...

THE MAILBOX

This is no surprise, but your mailbox is one of the biggest sources of paper clutter in your home. Some of the items in your mailbox are welcome—items you're quite happy to share your home with. Your favorite catalogs, magazines, and coupons (for stores you shop at and for products you use) fall into this category. The most welcome (yet most rare) mail of all is the handwritten card or letter! For the most part, however, your mail is filled with things that you aren't particularly excited to welcome into your home—bills, coupons you'll never use, credit card applications, investment statements, donation solicitations, and junk mail, to name just a few. And if your mailbox doesn't give you your fill of paper, just look close by for the newspaper that's lying in your yard or on your front porch.



“Electronic items like e-bills, email, evites, and other forms of electronic communication, can become clutter, too. Just because this electronic “paper” isn't piling up on your counter—without proper systems in place, these items can be clutter just the same!”

Now...if the only paper that came into your home was via your mailbox, that'd be one thing. But the mailbox is just the beginning of the paper onslaught.

CHILDREN'S BACKPACKS



If your mailbox isn't cluttering your flat surfaces enough on its own, just wait until your kids get home from school, backpacks loaded to the brim with paper. Argh! You're certain to reach your paper tipping point with what's hidden inside that pack: sign-up sheets, permissions slips, homework, lunch menus, the class newsletter, long-term assignment sheets (which you have to keep track of, by the way), graded papers, and even sentimental pieces of paper like artwork. This little pack is loaded with things you must do and things you want to hang on to in order to track and honor your child's growing-up years.

If you don't have kids living at home with you, not to worry, there are plenty of other ways paper can get into your home—just take a peek inside your purse!

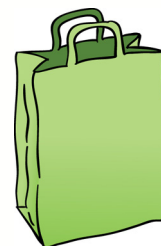


YOUR PURSE OR TOTE BAG

Stop reading and go grab your purse, briefcase, or tote bag you carry to and from whatever job you go to. Is there any paper lurking in there? I bet there is. Without any effort at all, your purse fills up with random bits of paper: receipts, business cards, birthday cards, appointment cards, shopping lists, carryout menus and store coupons, to name just a few. Plus, you may transport papers to and from work, adding to the paper clutter at home. But it doesn't stop there...

SHOPPING BAGS

The shopping bag is an obvious source of "stuff" clutter in your home, but be careful: paper clutter sneaks in this way, too. From spontaneous magazine purchases at the checkout, to warranties and user manuals, paper, like stuff, creeps into your home little by little via the shopping bag.



Are we done yet, you may be wondering? Almost. There's just one last category of paper to talk about, the paper that's generated inside your home.

INSIDE YOUR HOME

If you haven't brought enough paper into your home from the outside world, you'll still have plenty of paper with what is created inside your four walls. Grocery lists, to-do lists, chore lists, magazine clippings, phone messages, printouts from the web, printed emails, art projects, and recipes are all common sources of paper clutter created inside the home.



Wow...it's no wonder we have piles and piles: Every single one of these sources of paper is a source of decision—or often, indecision. Without a system in place for handling each of these sources of paper along with the decisions and actions they represent, in no time the paper piles up and paper clutter creeps in (and stacks up!)

You may wonder why I went into such detail about where your paper is coming from. How does that help solve the paper clutter problem? The idea is to raise your awareness about where your paper is coming from. Once you have a feel for this, you can do something about it. You can begin to make different decisions about your paper and let less of it in. As they say, knowledge is power.

“ If you want to eliminate your paper clutter, you have to do something different from what you’ve done in the past. ”



Recognize Your Points of Control

It’s important to realize that all paper is not created equal. Some of the paper that comes into your home is welcome—things like magazines you read, special pieces of art created by your kids, coupons for items you need to buy, flyers for events you want to attend, and so on. A lot of the paper that comes into your home, however, isn’t so welcome. But some of it is necessary. The unwelcome but necessary papers are items that need our attention like bills, permission slips, or soccer sign-up forms. The third category of paper is the unwelcome and unnecessary paper: the paper that you don’t need, or you don’t have time for. Junk mail, unwanted catalogs, and magazines and newspapers that you don’t have the time or inclination to read all fall into this category. But here’s the good news. Once you see the difference between these various types of paper—you can begin to take action and change your paper situation.

There are things we can’t control (papers your kids bring home from school, for example), but there are many sources of paper that we can control. At this point in the process, your goal is to keep the unwelcome and unnecessary paper out of your home, freeing up your time to focus on your welcome paper, your necessary paper—and those things in life that have nothing to do with paper at all. Do I hear family, friends, and recreational pursuits, anyone?

TAKE ACTION! IDENTIFY YOUR SOURCES OF PAPER AND YOUR POINTS OF CONTROL

Reading is good. Action is better. If you want to eliminate your paper clutter, you have to do something different from what you’ve done in the past. The first action step is simple: pull out the handout “paper, paper everywhere!” Your goal is to use this form to get the lay of the (paper) land in your home by understanding your sources of paper. Whether the landscape looks like a paper mountain or a paper molehill, simply follow the steps below to identify the sources of paper inflow and your points of control.

Step 1: Identify the sources of paper flowing into your home.

First, on the form, draw a line through any source of paper that doesn’t apply to you. Then, use the blank spaces to write in the source of any other paper that comes into your home.

Step 2: Categorize your inflow.

As mentioned above, some paper you have control over—you get to decide if you’d like to allow this paper to come into your home anymore. To do this, first categorize your paper sources of inflow as follows:

- * **Welcome / Unwelcome:** Next to each paper source, put a smiley face by paper that is welcome—you're happy to invite it into your home.
- * **Necessary / Unnecessary:** Next to each paper source, put a star by the necessary paper.

If you come across a category where the paper is welcome sometimes, but not always, put a smiley face next to it. Items like coupons can fall into this category. We're happy to receive coupons for items we want to purchase.

Step 3: Identify your points of control.

Now...the paper that is completely un-marked (but not crossed out) is your Unwelcome and Unnecessary paper. This is your most prominent point of control. You don't want it to come into your home and you don't need it to come into your home, so let's keep it out! This type of paper is likely sneaking in via your mailbox. In the next section we'll talk about how to slow the flow of unwelcome and unnecessary paper that is streaming in via the mailbox. But...what about the other sources, such as your purse or tote bag, shopping bags, and paper that is generated inside your home? We'll address this more in future lessons, but for now, keep in mind that unwelcome and unnecessary paper is sneaking in that way. Become aware of when you tend to pick up pieces of paper that you don't need. Once you're aware of it, you can begin to do something about it.

TAKE ACTION: SLOW THE INFLOW OF UNWELCOME AND UNNECESSARY PAPER

Now that you have a feel for where your paper is coming from and your points of control, let's do something about it. Remember, one of the primary reasons paper is overwhelming, especially when it is stacked haphazardly where it doesn't belong, is because much of it represents actions we have yet to take. Our stacks contain bills that have gone unpaid; wedding invites that we remembered to RSVP to, but wonder if it's still okay to send a gift a year after the wedding? There's the parenting article we meant to read, and what kind of parent am I for not giving this priority? Our stack is loaded with to-dos and guilt about what's still left to be done. Our pile of papers are essentially unmet intentions—things we meant to get around to doing, but didn't yet.



Your very first action step is to slow the inflow of paper to your home, as much as possible. Keep those obligations and intentions out! While you may be tempted to skip this step and start digging into those piles, please resist the temptation. To organize your old paper without slowing the inflow of new paper is like using a

thimble to bail out a sinking ship. It makes much more sense to plug the leak—prevent more from getting in—and then focus on bailing out. Here's how we're going to do it

Eliminate Your Unwelcome + Unnecessary Paper

You've been collecting junk mail and setting it aside in a box. Pull this out now, along with the form "paper, paper, everywhere!" Your goal for this lesson is to eliminate as many of these sources of unwanted paper as possible. Here's how to do it.

Eliminate Unnecessary Junk Mail + Catalogs

Your first line of defense is to remove your name from junk mail lists. There are a number of ways to go about doing this, ranging from calling each company to remove your name from their list, to using a junk mail removal service to assist you in the process. While you're at it, be sure to take your name off catalog lists, too! If you never buy from a certain company, why clutter your home with their catalogs? By keeping catalogs out of your home, you'll reduce the temptation to buy things you don't need, which can help in the physical clutter department, too.

As you go about slowing the flow of unwanted and unnecessary paper into your home, keep the following in mind:

- * Use your list and box of unwanted mail to help you figure out which lists to remove yourself from. Not all junk mail is truly junk. You may wish to continue to receive the weekly flyers from your local grocery store, for example.
- * Remember the variation of names that people use to mail you. For example, we get mail for Gerald Garvey, Jay Garvey and even Geraldii Garvey. To the publisher, these are three different people. So to effectively stop unwanted mail, all versions of Jay's name, the accurate and inaccurate versions, must be entered into the system.
- * Before deciding to stay on a coupon provider's mailing list, check to see if they have a website where you can print only the coupons you will actually use. Going this route has an added bonus over receiving paper coupons in the mail: You can download your favorite coupons as frequently as you like. I do this for our favorite restaurant which saves on unwanted paper and allows me to save 20% each time we go out to eat.

““ The less paper you have
come in, the less time you'll
have to spend dealing with
your paper. ””

- * Sometimes it will be necessary to simply pick up the phone and call a company to get off their list. If you don't find a way off a list via the service you are using, consider calling the company directly.
- * It will take approximately 2-3 months before you see the benefits of using many of the services above.
- * Remember, this is an investment in a future free from paper clutter! Take the time now to slow the inflow and know that in time you will reap the rewards of your efforts!

Reconsider Your Subscriptions

Do you receive any magazines, catalogs or e-zines that you once enjoyed, but don't have the time or inclination to read any longer? Now is a great time to reevaluate all your subscriptions. Which magazines do you still enjoy reading? How many magazines do you really have time to read each month?

Paper that comes into your home—magazines, catalogs, e-zines that you print out—can quickly become an obligation, something you feel like you need to pay attention to. When you have more reading material coming in than you have time to deal with, a magazine, which was once a source of relaxation and enjoyment, becomes a source of stress and obligation. If you're feeling overburdened by the volume of paper in your home, this is simple relief.

If you have years of magazine backlog that you intend to go through, I urge you to consider paring down on your subscriptions for a while. It doesn't have to be forever, just until you have your paper situation under control. (By the way, we will discuss how to handle magazine backlog in a future lesson.)

Get Your News Online

Do you get the newspaper? Do you have time to read it...or does it stack up for days and then make its way into the recycle bin? What about that community newspaper that appears on your front lawn every Wednesday? Do you read it? If not, call the publisher and ask to have your address removed from the list. If you aren't using it, why take the time to deal with it on an ongoing basis?

Consider E-Bills

If you have consistent email habits—you read and handle your email regularly and consistently—then e-bills may be a terrific paper clutter solution for you. Check with your bank and your creditors to see if e-bills are an option. If you don't have effective bill-paying or email habits, hold off on this one just for now. If your paper bill is your reminder to pay bills, consider e-bills for a future time.

Pat Yourself on the Back

Whew, nice job! Once you've taken action on the various categories of unwanted paper that you have control over, pat yourself on the back. This will pay huge dividends going forward as you gradually begin to notice that less and less paper makes its way into your home. Hooray!

At this point you have a good feel for where your paper is coming from, and you've begun the process of slowing the inflow. Now, let's switch gears and focus on the future. How do you want things to be? Let's set some paper organizing goals.

CLARIFY YOUR GOALS

Is it really necessary to set goals for how you handle your paper? Isn't that taking this goal thing just a step too far? I can certainly see how you might feel that way. But truly, I believe that before doing anything (and I mean anything), it makes sense to take a step back and figure out why you're doing the activity. This class is just the same.



What outcome do you want as a result of taking this class? Quite simply, you will find this class to be much more rewarding and you will accomplish more if you decide upfront what you want from it. How do you want things to be different at the end of the class from the way they are today? That's what we'll explore (and sort out!) in this section.

Let's start by discussing some reasons to change the paper situation in your home.

Reasons to Change**PERSONAL BENEFITS**

As you know, the consequences of living with paper clutter are far-reaching. Paper,

Let go of any bad feelings you have about your paper situation. Focus on the positive changes you're making now and keep the past in the past.

like no other form of clutter, is unsettling because so many of those pieces of paper represent our lives' necessities, obligations, or desires. Paper clutter is overwhelming because of the intention or obligation that each piece of paper can represent. When paper isn't where it ultimately belongs, it's a visual reminder that we aren't meeting those intentions. (If that isn't enough—paper clutter doesn't look very nice either.)

If you have paper clutter in your home—whether it's out on your flat surfaces, or tucked away in file cabinets and out of sight—it most likely leaves you feeling nervous, anxious, embarrassed, or out of control, or maybe stressed and upset. By clearing things out, you will not only make your home look more peaceful and more restful, but you will feel better, too. Nervous feelings will be replaced by confidence and control, stress will be replaced with calm. And clutter will be replaced by clear and tidy surfaces. You will be able to concentrate better and feel more relaxed in your home. Ahhhhh.

There is one more extremely compelling reason to establish new paper systems and habits, and that is conservation of your most valuable resource—your time. When you have an easy-to-use system in place for your paper, things become streamlined and efficient—saving you oodles of time.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Creating a new approach to paper can help the environment, too. Did you know that in just one day, over 50,000 acres of trees are cut down worldwide? In just one single day! What's more, according to *body + soul* magazine, on average each American uses 741 pounds of paper per year, which equates to seven tons of paper per person over the course of 20 years. These statistics are staggering. But the good news is this: you can do something about it! By changing your paper habits you will not only reduce the clutter and stress in your home, but you will also help save trees and protect our planet.

So as you're considering your own personal paper goals, keep the bigger picture in mind, too. What changes can you make that will help you, your home and our planet Earth? It's just one more motivating factor to create change.



TAKE ACTION! COMPLETE QUESTIONNAIRE 1

To help you clarify your paper organizing goals, fill out Questionnaire 1, "your paper organizing goals." This questionnaire will help you understand your current feelings

There are mixed reviews about whether removing your name from mailing lists will in fact reduce paper used for direct marketing. Some sources suggest that if your name comes off a list, the marketer will simply send more mailings to someone else who is still on the list. But you can positively impact the environment by reducing what you print at home versus what you read on your computer, and which magazines and newspapers you receive. ”

about the paper in your home, as well as how you want things to be. Once you have that questionnaire filled out, come back here to analyze your answers.

TAKE ACTION: CREATE A GOAL STATEMENT



If you've taken Organizing 101, the next two steps will walk you through the same process you used to create the goal statement for organizing your home. Read along again if you need a refresher, or simply go directly to create your goal statement, if you're all up to speed on setting goals. ;)

Once you've completed your questionnaire, step away for a few hours (or even a couple of days). Then come back and read through your answers. Do you have a good feel for what you want? If you feel just by answering the questions you can create a goal statement for organizing your paper, stop and create your goal statement now. If you're not sure how to pull it all together, follow these simple steps.

First, take out two colored markers or highlighters, a pen, a piece of blank paper and your completed questionnaire. Select one colored marker and circle all the negative words you have used to describe your current paper situation. Pay particular attention to questions 1, 3, 6 and 7.

Next, pull out your piece of paper and make two columns. In the left column write down each of the negative words you circled above. Then, in the right hand column, next to each negative word, write down a word or phrase that is the opposite. So for example, if you answered question 1 with a statement like "I feel overwhelmed and stressed," on your blank piece of paper you would write "overwhelmed" and "stressed" in the left-hand column. In the right-hand column, next to the word "overwhelmed" you could write "in control" or "on top of things" (or any other words that represent the opposite feeling of overwhelmed). Next to "stressed" you could write "relaxed," "at peace" or something along those lines.

Finally, pull out your second colored marker and search for the positive words you used to describe what you want in terms of your paper organizing. Pay particular attention to question 2. Add these words the list you started above. Okay, let's turn these words into a goal statement.

Writing a goal statement will help you take all the ideas you captured on paper in your questionnaire and distill them into a single sentence. This sentence will encapsulate what you want—your reasons and motivations for organizing your paper and the benefits you'll realize along the way and when your project is complete. You'll use this statement to stay focused throughout this workshop and beyond.

Keep in mind that the strategies and techniques for setting and achieving goals is a class in and of itself. (Keep your eyes open for the workshop *How to Achieve Your Goals and Create a Life You Love*, if you're interested in this topic.) Below are a few simple tips that will help you create an effective goal statement for your paper organizing project.

First, use this simple formula when you write your goal statement:

“ I am feeling (how), doing (what) by (when). ”

Here's an example. Your paper goal could be “I feel happy and confident when I see my consistently clutter-free counters and I am effectively using my new paper systems by December 31, 20XX.”

Then, consider the characteristics of effective goal statements:

- * **Personal.** Your goals have to be about you. If you begin your statement with the word “I,” you're all set.
- * **Present tense.** Write your goal statement as if the goal is already accomplished.
- * **Positive.** Avoid using the words *no*, *not*, and *don't* in your goal statements. If you are thinking things like “there is no paper clutter in my house” change it to “my house is organized and clutter-free. All my paper is put away and out of sight!”
- * **Possible.** You want your goals to be challenging but possible. If you have 30 years of paper backlog to go through, having it sorted, shredded and organized

by next Friday is really not possible (unless you call in an army of organizers to help you!). Sorting paper is time-consuming and tiring. So pace yourself and consider setting a goal that focuses on progress, such as “I spend 15 minutes a day handling today’s paper, and I spend one hour a week sorting and organizing my paper backlog.” Stretch yourself and set goals that are challenging, but set you up for success.

* **Compelling.** The more compelling your goal and vision, the more passionate you will be about achieving it. Don’t skimp on the adjectives that describe how good you’ll feel and how beautiful your flat surfaces will look when you’ve achieved your goal. Make your statement compelling and irresistible. Use the list of words you put together when analyzing your answers to describe how you’ll feel when your paper is organized and you have effective systems in place. Pick your favorite words from the list, those that clearly describe how you want to feel. Also remember the impact paper has on our environment. Sometimes it’s easier to get motivated to take action for a higher cause we believe in.

* **Specific + Measurable.** The best goals are specific. “Organize my paper,” for example, is rather vague because it isn’t measurable. The example above, “I spend 15 minutes a day handling today’s paper, and I spend one hour a week sorting and organizing my paper backlog,” on the other hand, is much more specific and measurable. You can easily track your progress and give yourself credit for making progress on days when you spend fifteen minutes dealing with your paper.

When creating your paper organizing goal, a single sentence just may not do the trick. Be as specific as possible, going into as much detail as necessary to make your vision crystal clear to you. Remember, you want to know when you’ve arrived at destination Organization.

Write your own paper-organizing goal statement using the formula above and the insight gathered by completing questionnaire 1 and analyzing your answers.



TAKE ACTION: MAKE PROGRESS FOR AT LEAST 15 MINUTES A DAY

At this point in the workshop, one thing is crystal clear: there is simply too much paper, too many good intentions, too many sales, too many coupons, too many committees, and too many things to remember, all delivered to you via your paper clutter. Since there is too much, you stack up your paper, in hopes that “tomorrow”

you will get a windfall of time to deal with it all. The bottom line is this: tomorrow is coming, but unless you do something different and say *no* to all your other obligations, you aren't going to have that windfall of time.

The way to stay on top of your paper is to deal with it little by little, the same way it comes into your home. I recommend that you spend at least 15 minutes each day throughout the course of this workshop dealing with your paper. During the first lesson, those 15 minutes will be spent doing things such as slowing the flow of paper into your home and setting goals, but these steps will help you create the habit of dealing with your paper each and every day. Making a daily commitment during this workshop will also help reinforce the workshop concepts, so the thought process will be more automatic for you when you finish the workshop.

To get started, decide when the best time is for you to handle your paper. The best case scenario would be after the mail comes, and if you have children, after the backpacks get home from school, too. But it's most important to pick a time that makes sense to you and fits your schedule. You can always change your mind if you discover the time you picked doesn't suit you.

THE TAKEAWAY

In Lesson 1 we covered a lot of ground! The big things to take away from this lesson are that there's a reason for all that paper clutter—paper is coming at you from all directions! But most important of all, you can do something about it. Take action on that unwanted and/or unnecessary paper by following the action steps in this lesson. When you do, it will be a notch easier to stay on top of your paper going forward!

Another big takeaway is to set goals for your paper organizing projects. These goals will act as your compass, keeping you motivated, inspired and on track as you begin to sort through your paper and set up your paper organizing systems.

In the next lesson, you'll learn the first two steps of the paper organizing process. You will use this process to sort new paper that comes into your home on a daily basis and dig out of your paper backlog.

Until next time,

