



**Linda M. Groat, M.A.**  
**Professional Organizer & Life Coach**  
**Simply Back to Basics**  
**Williamsville, NY**  
**716-631-5619**  
**E-mail: [Linda@simplybacktobasics.com](mailto:Linda@simplybacktobasics.com)**  
**Website: [www.simplybacktobasics.com](http://www.simplybacktobasics.com)**

## Linda's Organizing Tip for May 2007:

### Five Steps to Organizing Others

This is not a task for the faint-hearted. It is a tough sell, especially when the person that needs to do it the most, does not think they do! But with a little forethought, patience and advance planning, it can be a successful and rewarding process.

1. **Prepare the person:** Suggest in advance that you would like to tackle a certain area or project. Choose wisely, one that can be accomplished in a few hours and that has a clear start and finish, and that will be immediately noticeable and useful when completed.
2. **Choose a convenient time:** Make sure that you have the necessary block of time to begin and complete the task (although it sounds like a lot, three hours is about right amount for many projects). Write it on the calendar. If you are organizing with children or spouses, choose a time that does not cause them to have to make a choice of fun over chores (ex- all the neighborhood kids are outside playing while they are organizing, or when the Sabres game is coming on TV in a half hour, etc.)
3. **Pre-sort without requiring them to be there:** This is important, especially when working with children and others who may have less dedication to the task. Go through the area and separate it into broad categories. When I am organizing with clients, I make piles of similar items so that I it is relatively simple for my client to quickly process the whole stack. In this way, whatever decision has to be made about the items in the stack only has to be made once, as they are all similar. Processing goes much quicker with pre-sorting.
4. **Allow the person freedom to refuse:** If the person really is attached to something, or resists a change, then recognize that as a message that they are not ready to make that change. Forcing it is useless and can, in fact, harm future success. Instead, back away from that particular issue and focus on another area, idea or angle. Often working on issues that are less charged emotionally can lead to success in the overall goal, by coming at it from another perspective. Once people feel small amounts of success, they feel more confident (and less anxious) about making changes in other areas.
5. **Encourage and praise efforts:** Getting organized may be easier than staying organized, but it all is hard work. Planning, Purging, Sorting and Assigning homes to items is only the beginning of the process. Maintenance requires discipline, practice and reinforcement. Remember to do this in a positive way. It may involve posting of new procedures and locations of items, as well as verbal reminders.

Special suggestion for the mothers on my mailing list! Tell important "others" that instead of a gift or card, what you would like for Mother's Day is their service on an organizing task that you have been wanting them to do! I have some "small piles" all lined up for my mother's day "gift" ☺. Good Luck and let me know how it goes! I can post stories on my website!

For assistance with this or any other organizing task, contact Linda.

I welcome all feedback about these articles. Please feel free to e-mail me anytime. please forward to anyone you think might be interested. If you do not wish to receive my monthly tip on organizing, unsubscribe by sending me an e-mail with "No Thanks" in the subject line.

Previous month's tips can be viewed at [www.simplybacktobasics.com](http://www.simplybacktobasics.com).

This article may be reprinted or reposted on a non-exclusive basis as long as Linda Groat's name and contact information is included.

