

STAYWELL

Do you know how to catch a raccoon? From the book and movie "Where the Red Fern Grows", the tale is to drill a hole in a log and pound some nails on a slight angle around the hole. Place a shiny object, such



as a coin, inside the log. Raccoons are attracted to shiny objects and will

reach inside the hole to grab the coin or object. When the raccoon forms a fist with their paw it will not come out. The raccoon is so obsessed with the shiny object it will not let go, even though it can lead to the animal's demise.

This story is an excellent life lesson and can be applied to many things in life. Life can become so cluttered with things that it can be overwhelming. We tend to think we must do it all and eventually it can consume us.

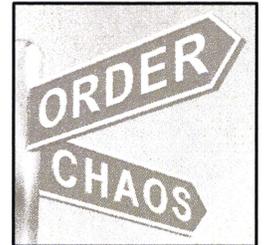
This can also be true with an event, trauma, or incident that upends our life, such as a death, personal hurt, an unrepentant act, or crime that has a devastating impact on an individual's life. These events can cause a person to wonder, why did this happen to me? This is a normal, human reaction to such events.



Sometimes the search for "why" has more of a negative impact on individuals and personal relationships than the actual event. Just like the raccoon, the inability to declutter or let go of something can lead an individual into dark places where he/she cannot see the light. The object or an incident the person is holding on to is so consuming the individual can't let go.

Decluttering

Whether it is a cleaning project, becoming more organized, or improving yourself, decluttering can improve a person's health and well-being. Here are some expert tips to help declutter your life.



- Start with the smallest decluttering task. Choose easy places to start to have that feeling of accomplishment.
- Do not start something that you will not finish. Many people like to start, but they do not finish because it becomes too big.
- Break the project down into smaller projects that can be completed before moving on to the next item.
- Prioritize what is most important. Are there items or events that can be excluded? Sometimes it is better to pick and choose rather than attempt to do everything at once. This is especially

true with kids. Help your son or daughter make choices and prioritize rather than giving the child more and allowing them to do or have everything he/she wants.

- You do not have to do it alone. Involve others, seek help from family members in prioritizing and the decision process.

Letting Go

Last year, I was fishing from a boat. I placed drift trolling buckets in the water off both sides to help the boat troll slower. After fishing we were going to take a ride around the lake. When I gave the boat full throttle it would bog down and not get on plane. We tried several times, but nothing improved. Then my son said, dad, did you know the buckets are still out? Do you want that? In order to move on and get on plane we had to pull the buckets. In life this is also true. Sometimes we need to pull the anchors that are limiting our progress. Here are some tips to help individuals let go of those things that might be bringing them down.

- Make the decision to let it go and decide when to let go. Things don't always go away on their own. At times we have to consciously decide to let something go and move on.
- Forgive yourself. Express your pain and your responsibility and move on. Sometimes being a survivor and/or victim brings on guilt. Guilt for surviving or feeling guilty because it happened. There has to be a determined effort to forgive ourselves.
- Accept that the other person may not apologize. We cannot control others only ourselves and our own thoughts.
- Accept that you may not know the reason why? This often consumes people. Make a



conscientious decision that the why is out of your control and decide how you will proceed. Don't hold on to something that is impossible to understand.

- Continually practice mindfulness. Be aware of what is present before you. It takes practice and continual reminding, but find joy in the present.
- Don't remain a constant victim. Give yourself permission to feel happy and accept joy and good things.
- Create affirmations or positive thoughts and experiences. Focus on them. Remind yourself of them often.
- Recognize the positive of letting go verses the guilt of letting go.
- Practice, practice, practice. Sometimes letting go can be easy and sometimes it is constant work. Moving forward helps, continually looking back does not.
- FINALLY, REMEMBER "LETTING GO" IS A CHOICE

Sources:

- <https://bestlifeonline.com/declutter/>
- <https://blog.nasm.org/behavior-change-and-motivation/learning-to-accept-and-let-go>
- <https://blog.nasm.org/behavior-change-and-motivation/learning-to-accept-and-let-go>
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Grudges are a waste of perfect happiness. Laugh when you can, apologize when you should, and let go of what you can't change.