



*January 2014 - In This Issue:*

**Quotable Quotes**

**Clutter as Emotional Landmines**

**Tools and Resources**

**Reflection**

**Choose To**

**Administrivia**

**Quotable Quotes**

"A life recorded is twice precious, first the experience itself, and then the memory of it full and sweet when we read it again later." ~ Unknown

"Live out of your imagination not your history." ~ Stephen Covey

"If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading." ~ Lao Tzu

Dear Jean,

Our featured writer this month is Sheila Hughes, one of my dearest friends. I met Sheila about 20 years ago as she enthusiastically volunteered to be our local ISPI chapter newsletter editor. What a lift she gave to our growing community with her fresh ideas and 'can do' attitude. Sheila and I crossed paths professionally again as we worked together for a couple of years and thus the blossoming of an idea creating a girls' travel year. Since 2002 and every other year, I have been blessed with the gift of sharing Sheila's adventure to travel the world. As part of a trio, I have experienced Sheila's creative genius and passion in Italy, Paris, Ireland, Southern France, Mallorca, and Scotland. Next year - it's Greece and a list that will keep us traveling for another 20 years. Her smile that shines in her eyes are the clue that she is onto the next great endeavor. Sheila is the motivation that sparks my creativity!

Sheila Hughes is the founder of Ruby Slippers Clique. With experience in photography, video production, script writing and instructional design, Sheila Hughes is the epitome of a creative genius- exactly what you'd expect when you cross Indiana Jones with a rocket scientist. Born in Albuquerque, NM, her mother was an artist and archaeologist and her father was a structural engineer for Sandia nuclear research. As a child, Sheila enjoyed fishing, camping and exploring. This early exposure to adventure was the launching pad for a life-long passion of travel and discovery. Sheila fell in love with photography in high school, dreaming of traveling the world taking photographs for National Geographic. While much of her professional career followed in her father's footsteps, Sheila remains wild at her core. In her spare time, she creates quilts, art journals and watercolors and travels the world taking photographs. Her newest endeavor is Ruby Slippers Clique:

an Internet platform to help others discover and celebrate their creative genius.

Thank you, Sheila!

In the spirit of sharing our gifts,  
Jean

## Clutter as Emotional Landmines: How to Navigate Through and Beyond Clutter *by Sheila Hughes*

Clutter is more than just 'stuff'. It can be a complex emotional attachment to the past, regret or guilt about the item or a person associated with the item, in a word 'nostalgia'. I learned this lesson while taking care of my father's estate when he moved into assisted living and again when he passed. I was responsible for sorting through his affects and the emotional landmines that were buried in the clutter. While there are plenty of books on conquering clutter, getting organized, I found an approach that acknowledges the nostalgia, embraces it and lets it go.



### De-Clutter Diary

I am an artist and quilter. I channel my creative spirit into 'art journals'. I like art journals because I get to try out ideas, techniques and experiences in a journal that can be shared or kept personal. My personal clutter problem is art supplies and fabric. In her book, *Throw Out Fifty Things*, Gail Blanke suggests keeping a journal of your 'throw-outs'. I decided to build on that idea and make it an art journal. I include photos, drawings, letters, journal entries, travel brochures, anything that I have collected for some reason. I find it to be very rewarding to capture the items that I find difficult to part with. The digital photo era has made documenting images easy. Another technology that has helped with my clutter control is the digital scanner.

### Nice and Neat

Most home printers have a scanner built in or a scanner might be available at a local print shop. I have both a flatbed scanner and I purchased a Neat desk scanner. The flatbed scanner is best for scanning family photos, certificates and awards. I use images for making memory quilts. However, the Neat desk scanner has been very useful for quickly scanning magazine articles, recipes and receipts. I used to have an 'in box' stacked high with magazines I meant to read, recipes, receipts and business cards I need to keep or travel expense reports. The Neat scanner is quick and easy to use. I can quickly scan and sort the various document into folders. This has cut down on desk clutter and I don't have to search my entire desk for a receipt. It makes taxes much easier too.

## Tools and Resources

### FROM THE BOOKSHELF

*This Year I Will...: How to Finally Change a Habit, Keep a Resolution, or Make a Dream Come True*  
by M.J. Ryan

A must read for anyone who has made a New Year's resolution and been disappointed by their inability to stick with it. It does more than encourage goal setting, it anticipates the obstacles and offers strategies for realizing your original intention.

*Throw Out Fifty Things: Clear the Clutter, Find Your Life* by Gail Blanke

This is my favorite book on the subject of de-cluttering. I have benefited greatly from the strategies in this book. The author has four rules of disengagement and a pragmatic perspective on how to tackle

clutter.

Organize Now!: A Week-by-Week Guide to Simplify Your Space and Your Life by Jennifer Ford Berry

Nice checklist format with timeframe for getting organized. A good companion to the Throw Out Fifty Things.

## THE INTERNET CONNECTIONS

[www.rubyslippersclique.com](http://www.rubyslippersclique.com)

[www.throwoutfiftythings.com](http://www.throwoutfiftythings.com)

<http://jenniferfordberry.com/>

## Reflection

Who you are vs. Who you were ...

Change is an inevitable part of life. The seasons change, the years go by and the things we once cherished gather dust. If you're ready to tackle that hall closet, the photo drawer or even that junk drawer in the kitchen, congratulations! I encourage you to journal your efforts. Start with a notebook or journal, maybe one that has been sitting on a shelf gathering dust.

1. Take a 'before' photo of your project.
2. As you begin sorting through the objects write about your feeling/emotions regarding the de-cluttering (regret, guilt, obligation, love)
3. Identify the items that are the hardest to part with and why?
4. If the item is hard to part with take a photo of it. Write in the journal when the item was last used, a story about the item or that you really liked how you looked wearing the item. Leave room on the page for the photo. It doesn't have to be a long story or description, but enough for you to acknowledge it's meaning to you.
5. Now acknowledge that you can let go of that object because it's memory has been captured. You can donate it or give it away now; recycle, toss, or consign. The memory is captured.
6. Take an after photo of your project.

## Choose To

Take baby steps ...Tackle one room, one corner, one drawer at a time ... If you become overwhelmed read one of the books suggested above ... determine the areas to de-clutter:

Hobbies - Something that you were excited about but don't do anymore?

Cupboards and Cookbooks - Are the recipes too exotic, too hard or have hard to find ingredients?

Bookshelves - Kindle revolution means you don't have to keep copies of novels.

Make up Experiments - It looked good at the store but it looks awful on you!

Ancient Technology - What about the outdated technology? Do you have cell phones and laptops that you can no longer use?

Remember your goal is to lighten your load physically and emotionally ... clear the clutter of the past to make your present happier and healthier.



## **Administrivia**

My Constructive Choices Audience...

- \* Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
- \* New managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
- \* Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, life their voices, and...
- \* Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - YES, it IS all about YOU!

Copyright 2014, All Rights Reserved Constructive Choices, New Mexico, LLC.

<http://constructivechoices.com>

Phone: [505-286-4079](tel:505-286-4079)