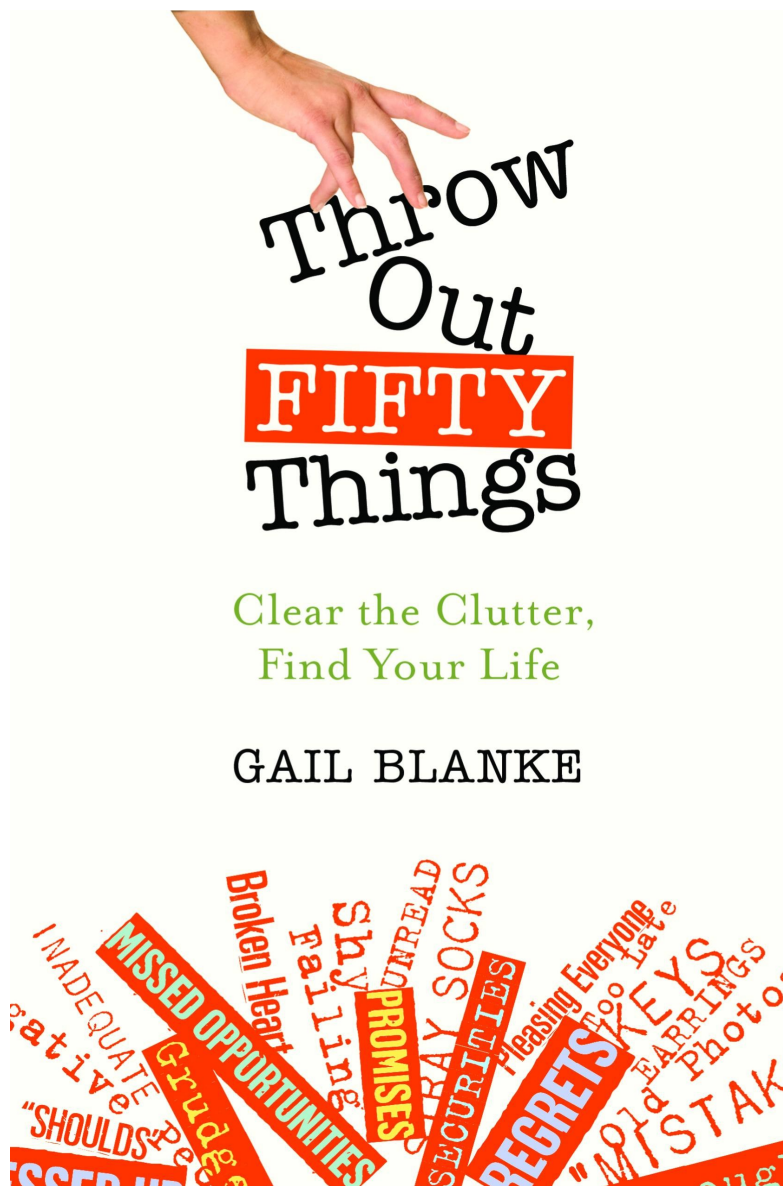


Throw Out Fifty Things presents: The Big Letting-Go Workbook



Getting Started

Are you ready to throw out fifty things? You must be if you've downloaded **THE BIG LETTING-GO WORKBOOK**. You've taken the first big step to clearing the clutter from your life, and I promise that you'll start feeling "lighter" immediately. Because remember, "You can't grow if you don't let go."

In **THROW OUT FIFTY THINGS**, I told you stories from my life and stories of people I've worked with. In this workbook (or journal,) it's your chance to tell your own stories as you write down all your throw-outs. Note all your feelings - your misgivings, your fears and your elation as you make your way to fifty. Who knows? Maybe you'll have a bestseller – or at least a good stand-up comedy routine – when you're finished. At the very least, this book will be your badge of honor. It will commemorate your step by step journey from cluttered to clear - from overwhelmed to energized. And then you'll be ready to step forward into the next great segment of your life - with all flags flying.

So turn the page, and let's get started. This is the beginning of the Big Letting Go.

Supplies

Before we get started, let's make sure you have everything you need. You'll want to have the following items on hand as you start to throw things out:

- Sturdy black garbage bags or cardboard boxes.
- Sticky-notes to label your bags.
- A waterproof marker to label your sticky notes.
- A box of gallon-sized ziplock bags, to store single items for giving away, and for small items like jewelry.
- Masking tape.

Now that we have our supplies, there's just one more thing to keep in mind as we move through your house: **THE RULES OF DISENGAGEMENT:**

#1. If *it* – the thing, the belief or conviction, the memory, the job, even the person – weighs you down, clogs you up, or just plain makes you feel bad about yourself, throw it out, give it away, sell it, let it go, move on.

#2. If it (see above!) just sits there, taking up room and contributing nothing positive to your life, throw it out, give it away, sell it, let it go, move on. If you're not moving forward, you're moving backward. Throwing out what's negative helps you rediscover what's positive.

#3. Don't make the decision – whether to toss or keep it – a hard one. If you have to weigh the pros and cons for too long or agonize about the right thing to do, throw it out.

#4. Don't be afraid. This is your life we're talking about. The only one you've got for sure. You don't have the time, energy or room for physical or psychic waste.

Now that we have our supplies and we understand **THE RULES OF DISENGAGEMENT**, we're ready to go. Before we start moving through the rooms of your house, take a look at the next few pages where I've included some checklists to help you keep track. You can list your throw-outs one after the other, or you can separate them as I did in the Appendix of the book, or you can come up with your own method – whatever works best for you. But it's important to keep track so you can see the progress you've made. And remember you can share your throw-outs and send words of encouragement to your "fellow travelers" on www.throwoutfiftythings.com. Who knows? Maybe you'll need some encouragement too, and someone's story will help keep you going!

If you need help deciding what to do with your throw-outs, (Where can I make donations? How can I recycle or dispose of everything properly?). You can find all that information in the **Resource Guide** beginning on page 253 of **THROW OUT FIFTY THINGS**.

Your Throw-Outs

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50. _____

THE PHYSICAL CLUTTER

Things I'm Throwing Out:

✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓

Things I'm Donating:

✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓

Things I'm Selling:

✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓

Things I'm Recycling:

✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓

THE MENTAL MESS

Things I'm Throwing Out:

✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓

THE SPECIAL FINDS

Things I'm Keeping and Why:

✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓

GRAND TOTAL: _____

Part One: Getting Rid of the Physical Stuff

Chapter 1: Your Bedroom

This might sound funny, but I want you to try something. Leave your bedroom and shut the door. Now before you open the door again, I want you to forget that it's your bedroom. I want you to imagine it's the first time you've ever seen it.

Now open the door and go in. What do you see? How does it feel? What kind of energy does the room have? List some of the first throw out candidates that come to mind:

Walk into your closet. Open all of your drawers. Take a look inside your jewelry box. Examine all the knickknacks and decorations. Sit, lie, stand, on the furniture. (Hey, it's your bedroom.) Do all of these things represent who you are, how you feel about the world? Which things just don't make the grade?

How did it feel to get rid of all that clutter?

How many things have you thrown out so far? Keep track on your master list, as well as in each section as you go.

Your Total: _____

Is your energy starting to build? The more you do, the more you'll want to do. And although throwing stuff out is a little scary at first, eventually, you'll find you don't want to stop. On to the bathroom!

Chapter 2: Your Bathroom

The bathroom is a little easier, isn't it? I bet I already know which things you're going to throw out. *Expired medications?* Get rid of them! *That makeup from your old look?* Toss it! *Old half-full shampoo bottles that you'll never use again?* Trash them!

Remember as we go through every room, you're deciding not only who you are but who you want to be. You might remember my bathroom story about the "blower" I was required to use to clear my lungs after my "surprise" heart surgery. I don't know why I kept it for two years. I certainly don't plan on having another bypass surgery. So I threw it out. That was a big deal for me. The bottom line is: keep the things you need to take good care of yourself, but let go of those things that drag you back into some old negative memory or feed your fears.

Okay, so what are you throwing out in that bathroom?

And how does it make you feel?

Your Total: _____
Your Running Total: _____

Let's move on to the kitchen. I bet we'll find lots of stuff to throw out there!

Chapter 3: Your Kitchen

Our family loves to cook, so the kitchen plays a huge part in our lives. We spend a lot of time there – cooking, eating, talking, and just hanging out together. It has to look good and feel good. And that means there can't be a lot of extraneous stuff around that blurs our creativity!

A lot of wonderful things can happen in the kitchen. So get rid of anything that would get in the way of that. Heave Ho!

Before we go any further, we've got to go into that drawer in the kitchen. You know that drawer. And I know you don't even want to open it. (Mine was so full I had to yank it open.) Make a list of everything you find there. (See, this is another opportunity for a stand-up comedy routine...) Now circle everything that could be thrown out. Not much left, is there? Hah! I knew it.

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Describe how you're feeling about the kitchen now that you're "distilling" the space. Be specific.

Your Total: _____
Your Running Total: _____

Chapters 4 & 5: Your Living and Dining Rooms

Let's try our bedroom trick in your living room. Go outside. No, really. Pretend you're a guest just stopping by. What do you see in the living room? What's your first impression of this room?

Imagine the same thing for your dining room. You've been invited to a dinner party in your home. What do you notice first when you sit down at the dining room table?

The most important question to ask regarding both rooms is: how does the furniture make you feel? Warm, cozy, relaxed? Or, ill at ease and up tight? Now, I'm not saying you should give away all your sofas, televisions, and tables. But if they don't make you feel the way you want to feel, and you can afford to take advantage of some great sales, why not? Or maybe your furniture just needs to be rearranged a bit. That's something we rarely do but it always helps. Take a fresh look.

Here's the bottom line: don't allow anything to remain in either of these two rooms that saps your energy, curbs your enthusiasm, makes you wrinkle up your nose or brings back a not so great memory. These rooms are meant to create new, wonderful memories. Let go of anything that could hinder that.

Now that you've cleared the clutter in these rooms, maybe it's time to have some "real" guests over. Invite your friends, sit in your "new" living room or serve them in your "new" dining room. Tell them about all the clutter you've cleared. I bet they'll go straight home and start tossing out stuff in their houses!

Your Total: _____
Your Running Total: _____

Chapter 6 & 7: Your Attic and Your Garage:

I find attics and garages particularly challenging. They're usually filled with lots of old memories. Some are good and some are bad. But of course, you don't have to throw away everything just because it's old. We all have things that make us happy because they remind us of good times. Keep them. "Comfort *things*" can be as comforting, as "Comfort food, don't you think?" Not everything fits in our houses. That's why we have attics and garages in the first place, right? So gather up the things that don't remind you of good times, or that remind you of bad times, or that don't remind you of anything at all and are just taking up space. That stuff has got to go. So what have you found?

Here's your chance to use the color-coding method I talked about in the book. Make your three bags and label them: trash, donate, or sell. And you know what to do with them when we're done...

I bet you have a lot of items that would be great to donate or sell at a tag sale. Go back to your list above and either highlight or circle with different colored pens, which items you're going to sell and which you're going to donate. Remember to check the **Resource Guide** in **THROW OUT FIFTY THINGS** to find great places to donate. Or if you want to throw an amazing tag sale, my friend Sally Carr will tell you how to do it, beginning on page 76.

I know that going through all this old stuff can unearth some powerful feelings and some great (and not so great) memories. Re-read the story in the book about Jane who cleaned out her mom’s attic. It starts on page 63. Now, how about writing down a few of your own stories? Get ready to laugh...and cry.

I'd love it if you'd share one of your stories on www.throwoutfiftythings.com. Or share a story with someone you're close to. As you know from reading the book, hearing other people's stories can be inspiring. But sometimes it's our own stories that move us the most...

Let's see how we're doing so far.

Your Total: _____
Your Running Total: _____

You're really building momentum, aren't you? We've gone through your whole house! Feels great, doesn't it? I know your spirits are lighter. When I finished going through my house, I felt as if an enormous weight had been lifted from my shoulders.

We're almost ready to go to work on that mental clutter, but first we have to make a quick stop at the office.

Part Two: Your Office: Paring Down the Professional Clutter

Chapter 8: Clarifying Your Brand

Chapter 9: Keeping What Works, Eliminating What Doesn't

Chapter 10: The Phoenix Rises from the Ashes

We all know people at work who have a lot of junk in their offices. They are notorious. Maybe it's the guy from accounting who has financial papers piled all over his desk. Or maybe it's what's-her-name over in production who has every knickknack from every office function she's ever been to. Or maybe it's you!

Before we decide what needs to go, let's ask a few questions.

First, what's your personal and professional brand? Who are you at the core and how do you want people to perceive you?

Now the next question is: are you living up to that brand? If not, how can you get there? Remember the "Michelangelo Method" I talked about? It's critical to take away everything that does not reflect who you are and where you're headed. Which things do you think you should toss?

You're starting fresh. What are your new goals for the future?

Remember: *your greatest work is ahead of you.*

Your Total: _____
Your Running Total: _____

Part Three: Attacking the Mental Mess

**“When we throw out the physical clutter, we clear our minds.
When we throw out the mental clutter, we clear our souls.”**

You’ve read about the different categories of emotional clutter that I, my friends, and my clients have struggled with. I hope that you’ll use the book as a springboard to dig deeply into the negative and irrelevant things that you’re holding on to—or that might be holding on to you! And once and for all, let them go.

Remember to keep track of what you’re tossing. We’re on our way to fifty, my friend.

Chapter 11: Letting Go of Feeling Inadequate, Irrelevant, and Just Plain Not Good Enough

“Review this statement every morning: I will not compare myself with others, nor them with me. I will appreciate myself and others for what I and they contribute.”

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- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Chapter 12: Letting Go of the Type of Person You Think You Are—or Aren’t

“You and you alone get to decide and design who you are, what you’re good at, and even how others perceive you.”

- ✓ _____

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- ✓ _____

Chapter 13: Letting Go of the Regrets and Mistakes of the Past

“Perfectionism, like martyrdom, is highly overrated. Take a look at the people you like best, respect most, or just like to hang out with. Are they perfect? I doubt it.”

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- ✓ _____

Chapter 14: Letting Go of Being Right About How Wrong Everybody and Everything Is

“We can get so focused on the small win...that we totally lose sight of what might have been a thousand times more important.”

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Chapter 15: Letting Go of the Need to Have Everyone Like You

“No matter how terrific we are, not everyone will buy our act. It’s just not possible. And it doesn’t matter. So let’s throw out thinking we’re just not good enough if even one person thinks we’re mediocre. Okay? That’s a deal.”

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Chapter 16: Letting Go of Thinking the Worst

“Look back into your life; look back to yesterday or this morning. Something happened; somebody said something; what did you make it mean? Probably not something good, right? Take a look at the times when you made yourself needlessly unhappy--all because of the negative interpretations you made up about whatever situation you were in. From now on, you’re going to assume the best, not the worst. And I promise you’ll have a much better chance of getting what you truly want, no matter how big or small it is.”

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Chapter 17: Letting Go of Waiting for the Right Moment

“Now is the time for us to let go of thinking that we’re just not ready;

that we have to perfect our act...Whenever you hear yourself say, 'Maybe I'd better wait for...' – hold it right there. Speak up anyway. Present your plan, declare our passion, walk up to the plate anyway. Remember, courage comes with action. And you're ready to act."

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Chapter 18: Letting Go of Needing to Feel Secure

"Our choices are to hunker down, wrap ourselves in what we already know, and wait for things to go back to the way they were, or step into the unknown with all flags flying – and grow, adapt, and flourish." It's time to move forward.

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Chapter 19: Letting Go of Thinking You Have to Do Everything Yourself

"Abandon your old conviction that you're alone, that the *only* one who can get it done is you, that you have to figure out everything yourself." Make a list of those situations where you've always thought you had to do it all by yourself. Throw them all out. Make a list of the "angels" who have shown up in your life. Anticipate that there will be more. *Be an angel.*

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- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Your Total: _____
Your Running Total: _____

Chapter 20: Making It to Fifty: The Celebration

You made it! You did it. You got to 50 (and maybe more)! How does it feel? Good, I hope!

What was the hardest thing for you to throw out? _____

What was the easiest? _____

What made you feel the proudest? _____

The most energized? _____

You deserve a round of applause, a 21-gun salute, and a parade in your honor! Okay, so maybe I'm getting a little carried away but here's the thing: now that you've made it to fifty, a kind of wonderful momentum takes over; the throwing-out thing becomes a habit, an ongoing mind-set. And then something really good happens: you take control of your life. You start living it, it stops living you. That's something to celebrate!

Part Four: Stepping Into the Clearing

Chapter 21: Your Vision for the Future

Chapter 22: Taking Energy from Your Defining Moments

Chapter 23: Being Unforgettable

Chapter 24: Find Your Song – and Sing It!

Now the only questions are: Who are you *now*? Who would you like to *become*? What's your vision for the next great segment of your life? And, what song are you going to sing to help you get there?

“A defining moment is an occasion when found something in yourself you didn't know you had, or got you had, and pulled it out. And as a result, you changed an outcome from negative to positive... It's always a moment after which you never think of yourself in quite the same way again. We all have them.” Take a look back into your life for those moments and write them down. You'll see that a pattern will emerge. And the pattern is called, “courage.”

Share your moments with someone you're close to. Listen to theirs. Post them on www.throwoutfiftythings.com.

Chapter 25: Your Declaration to the World

On the last page of the book, you'll see an invitation to make your declaration to the world. It's time for you to do it - and it's time for you to complete these sentences - and say them out loud.

- I'm _____ and I'm the one who _____

_____ and nobody does it better.
- My vision for myself and for the world is _____

- The toughest and most important thing I'm going to let go of to make sure to make sure that happens is _____

- And my song is _____

Remember when you're done to visit www.throwoutfiftythings.com and share your throw-outs, your revelations, your stories, your declaration and your words of encouragement to everyone else out there who's trying to let go of the past so they can grab hold of the future. We're starting a movement, remember? Imagine the collective energy we'll unleash. The positive power surge we'll create. We can change the world...

For more information about how to donate, dispose of, recycle, sell, store, or swap the things you're letting go of, refer to the **Resource Guide** in **THROW OUT FIFTY THINGS**.