

Weeding the Garden, Clearing the Clutter

By Carolyn Koehline

I have a friend whose garden was becoming a tangle of weeds. She knew she needed to deal with it but kept putting off the task, completely overwhelmed. Then one morning she woke up with the thought, “I’m just going to focus on revealing the beauty in my garden.” Equipped with that phrase to guide her, she found herself so inspired she transformed her garden in one day.

I specialize in a different kind of weeding. For nearly twenty years I’ve been a *Confronting Clutter* specialist, supporting people in weeding out the unhelpful excess from their homes and schedules as well as their heads and hearts.

We live in a fast-paced culture that teaches us a lot about how to accumulate and not very much about how to let go. We are told that more stuff will make our lives easier and better, and that the faster we move the further ahead we’re going to get. With the pressure to keep moving and keep busy, it’s easy to accumulate piles and time-wasting activities and to build up a lot of negative thought patterns and stuffed emotions along the way.

I teach people that developing a practice of weeding out periodically helps your life to grow better. Stopping to assess what is helpful to you now in your life, and what is draining your energy and getting in your way helps you get clearer on who you are and how you want to be spending this precious gift of life. I invite them to forgive themselves for the current state of things, and to do their best to inspire themselves with a vision. I ask, “If you need to weed out the clutter, what are trying to make space for?” And I often use journal writing to help people clear the mental and emotional clutter that underlies the confused tangle of weeds in their homes and schedules.

I think my friend was onto something. Like weeding, clearing clutter can seem like an overwhelming and dreary task. Just thinking about it can get you checking your Facebook page, opening the refrigerator, or going out shopping. But what if you started with this journal prompt instead?

How can I go about revealing the beauty in my life?

Explore that for ten minutes. Notice what you find yourself imagining weeding out. Then notice yourself starting to do it, revealing more and more beauty as you go. And remember, unlike my friend, you don't need to do it all in a day. Often a little weeding at a time works the best of all.

Carolyn Koehline is a licensed mental health counselor in private practice, a clutter specialist and a journaling instructor. She has written two books, *Confronting Your Clutter*, and *The Bear's Gift*. To purchase these or find out more about her offerings go to: <http://www.ConfrontingClutter.com>. She can also be reached at: Carolyn@confrontingclutter.com.