



SHIFT FROM

SURVIVING

TO THRIVING

Hello...

My husband and I moved 9 times in the first 11 years that we were married. We became expert at taking apart our flat-pack IKEA furniture and often hauled load after load in laundry baskets rather than packing tidily in boxes. It was quicker this way. We were broke students or repaying student loans in this season of life which, along with the frequent moves, and living in small spaces, prevented us from cluttering our lives with too much stuff.

Since then, despite my husband's struggle to get rid of anything, and my children's freedom (within boundaries) to decide for themselves what is valuable and deserves space in their lives, I am a chronic declutterer so have managed to keep our home fairly organized and streamlined.

But clutter does not only come in piles of paper or heaps of unfolded clothing. It does not only show up in too many toys or an overabundance of kitchen gadgets.

And clutter is in the eye of the beholder. If your dusty floor-to-ceiling book collection, the hodgepodge of eclectic art adorning your walls, or your second wardrobe of vintage clothing brings you joy and aligns with your bigger life vision, then I'd argue it is not truly clutter at all. No matter what someone else thinks.

I believe that clutter is any excess in life or emotional baggage we haul around that weighs us down, distracts from our purpose, or robs us of joy and mind-body-spirit health.

Over the years, as we settled in to raise our family and put down roots in our community, my life got full. Maybe even overstuffed at some points. With comparison and perfectionism and trying to keep up. With pain and fear, trying to be a good girl, and neglecting my need for rest.

I have needed to do a lot of hard, messy work to heal and let go of the emotional or mental clutter that kept me bound.

There is a lot of talk online these days around how to and the benefits of shedding the excess to live with more intention. And I love it all. But if you do not examine the underlying motivation that drew you to a life of too much in the first place, chances are you will find yourself right back in that space all over again.

“The unexamined life is not worth living, but the un-lived life is not worth examining.”

Andrew Klavan

Let's really live, shall we? If you desire an uncluttered life, step one is admitting that your life is full to the brim and overflowing. Step two is getting honest about why.



7 Reasons Your Life is Cluttered

1. You are hungry or lonely

You regularly neglect your basic needs, leaving yourself at risk of making poor, unfiltered decisions. You refuse to deal with the grief about burying your dad and end up online shopping at midnight again with the credit card bills to prove it. You restrict your eating to the point that your stomach hurts and compensate by buying more furniture that you cannot afford. What you really need is to make the effort to build some good friendships but that feels hard and scary so instead you cuddle up with Netflix and 5 kinds of Haagen Dazs and eat until you feel sick and heavy with shame. All forms of excess or clutter.

2. You are numbing and running

You are in pain or in fear but not yet ready to deal with it so you run and numb. Drugs, sex, alcohol, hiding out with TV or social media, over exercising, obsessive cleaning, shopping, binge eating... you've tried them all. Is the credit card debt worth it? Does that closet full of trendy clothes that you don't even like that much make you feel better about your life, for real? Does your family life feel calm and loving when instead of seeking help for your pain and addiction you stuff it down until the dam bursts wide and you spill rage all over your family? It's time to stare fear in the face.

3. FOMO

Fear of missing out has you signing up for one more class, buying one more book or course, scrolling for yet another hour instead of going for that walk and getting into bed. It is a bondage that whispers to you that everyone else's life is better, more exciting or refined. That you cannot rest or you will fall behind. If you don't stay constantly watchful you will miss the next big thing and be left out of all the excitement. Or you could just decide to opt out and craft a life that shifts you from mere surviving to joyful thriving.

4. You are too busy or comfortable with the familiar

Your busyness can be another form of running and numbing (see point 3); getting honest about what is and is no longer serving you and committing to change requires you to slow down for a bit and do some hard work. You are comfortable with the familiar and the thought of slowing down and creating physical and emotional white space in your life feels terrifying. You justify your unhealthy choices because they are normal - all your friends live like this. But "normal" has robbed you of joy so jump off that hamster wheel as though your life depends on it. It does.



5. You fear the future

You have known struggle and lack and have a hard time letting go of stuff or living within moderate boundaries; you might need it again. There might not be any more tomorrow. Even when something is broken or ragged you cannot let it go. You dream of freedom and a life of creativity but stagnate as you hold on tight to who you used to be. You hide instead of risking, pull back instead of reaching out. Life is scary and you don't really trust people because, after all, you've been hurt before. You need to release what was to make space for what will be. There is beauty and provision and opportunity yet to come.

6. You live in the land of comparison and always find yourself lacking

You look outside yourself for validation and constantly compare yourself to others. You always come up short. You see the cute coffee mug and tea towels in your favorite Instagram feed and end up spending way too much money at Anthropologie. You read a new popular book about a blogger/homesteader and all of a sudden you're googling how you can raise chickens in the middle of Montréal. You were content in your home and life until your cousin came to visit and your eyes opened up to all that is shabby and wanting in your life. You never speak up to share your ideas at work because they're probably ridiculous anyways. But you are not meant to be a replica of anyone else; just show up and be imperfect but amazing and beautiful you.

7. You have not learned the power of "enough"

You deep-down believe that you need to perform, perfect or acquire to be worthy of love and acceptance. You are stuck in black and white, all or nothing thinking. 90% well done is not enough, it is failure. Your kids are amazing but have some struggles; you suck as a mom. You work your butt off loving your family and serving your community but still you can never keep up or please everyone; you are not enough and never will be. You are adopting healthier eating habits but went on a weekend binge; you always fail so why bother trying again. All lies! You will never truly live an unshackled life until you make peace with enough.

So now that we have discussed 7 possible reasons WHY you are carrying around unwanted emotional or physical baggage, let's turn to HOW you can offload it and keep it from creeping back in...



How to use these worksheets

I created the VIPER acronym as a way to help you learn and remember the 5 strategies I offer to help you shift from surviving to thriving. From chaos to calm.

VIPER may seem like a strange acronym for me to use but hear me out. A viper is focused and strategic, right? They don't expend a lot of energy rushing around which means they have energy reserved for what is most important to them. And while I would not want to emulate a snake in all respects, these are admirable qualities!

I suggest looking at your calendar for the week ahead and blocking off 2-3 hours to slowly read through this PDF and fill out the worksheets. Take your time. If you truly want to bring about lasting change in your life, then slow and steady is the way to go.

The first worksheet (p.6) in this set outlines the 5 strategies of the VIPER acronym. The following worksheet (p.7) is left blank so that you can print it out and after synthesizing the ideas in this PDF, you can use it to make notes about how you will apply each strategy of the VIPER acronym to your life. Make it practical and specific.

Page 8 is meant to be used as a brainstorming exercise when you begin to craft your Life Vision. Certainly you could go far more in depth, and I encourage this in my [classes](#) and with certain coaching clients, but this worksheet is meant as a quick and super simple starting point.

Use page 9, the Just Let it Go worksheet, to get started identifying some areas of life that make you feel cluttered or weighed down. I recommend doing this when you have some time to get quiet and listen in to what your intuition is speaking to you. Usually we already know what it is that we need to let go of but have been ignoring that inner voice out of fear or stubbornness.

Pages 10-12 are the Shift Your Thoughts worksheets designed to help you learn to pause and take control of your thoughts. To learn that thought leads to emotion which leads to action.

Viktor E. Frankl said "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

This is what I want for you. Growth and freedom to craft a beautiful life of purpose, health & JOY.

My worksheets offer a simplified method for learning to take control of your thoughts. But simple can be powerful. [You may want some 1:1 coaching sessions to practice Shifting Your Thoughts.](#)

Print out copies of the blank worksheet and when negative self-talk or temptation or even a desire to quit show up, pull out your worksheet, pen in hand, and work through each of the steps. It is important to actually WRITE your responses, not just think them. Writing clarifies your thinking, forces you to be more precise, and provides a record for tracking your growth.

I believe that if you actually put these seemingly simple strategies into play in your life, with a measure of consistency, that your life will change drastically for the better. Mine did.



V

Craft a clear and compelling Life **Vision** to guide you. Choose 3-5 words to describe who you want to be or how you want to feel in this life of yours (see p.8) and refer back to them daily as part of your morning routine. Create a vivid, detailed mental picture of what that would look, sound, even smell like. Whenever you have a decision to make, ask yourself if it will move you closer to or further from your Life Vision.

I

Identify what baggage or clutter needs to be released in this season to move you closer to your Life Vision. We don't want to just organize our stuff; we want to get rid of anything that is no longer serving us. Practice listening to your intuition – and then taking action even when it feels hard. Remember that clutter can be physical or emotional; use the Just Let it Go worksheet on p.9 to get you started.

P

Learning to practice **pause** is required if we want to live intentional, clutter free lives aligned to our bigger Life Vision. Our thoughts lead to emotions which lead to action, for good or for bad. When we learn to pause and then Shift Our Thoughts we take control of our lives and tame the chaos in a powerful way. Use the Shift Your Thoughts worksheets on pp.10-12 to help you learn to practice pause.

E

Learning **enough** can set us free from the constant pull to acquire, compare, or perform. Spend some time journaling or contemplating how you might shift from surviving to thriving if you practiced “enough.” I am enough. I have enough. This simple day is enough. This one glass of wine or bowl of ice cream is enough. Rehearse this whenever you are tempted to disregard the healthy boundaries you have set for your life.

R

Establish 5-10 self-imposed rules to end the constant wrestling of “should I or shouldn't I.” Boundaries beget freedom. Some examples of rules to help you thrive: I maintain a minimalist wardrobe and limited bookshelf space; I always drink 16 oz water before your morning coffee; I accept a max of 1 volunteer position at a time. There is no more debate because the rule is in place and you know your WHY (Life Vision).



V

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Basic Life Visioning Sheet

How do I want to feel?	Who do I want to be?
What do I want to do?	What do I want to have?



Just Let It Go

Things I am afraid of (especially that are not in my control)	Other people's responsibilities or my efforts to change other people
Stuff on my to-do list that is weighing me down	Who I used to be
What I "should" do or like	Wounds from the past I'm still carrying around
Ways that I compare myself to others	Unkind words or thoughts I speak about myself
My clutter or addiction(s)	Unhealthy relationships



Shift Your Thoughts

Situation	Situation
Thought	Thought
Feeling or mood (1 to 3 words. Rate intensity 1 to 10)	Feeling or mood
Action	Action
Outcome	Outcome



Shift Your Thoughts Example 1

Situation	Situation
I had an argument with my husband. It was while I was making supper and everyone was hungry.	I had an argument with my husband. It was while I was making supper and everyone was hungry.
Thought	Thought
I always mess up. I am not good enough. This is never going to change. I am afraid we will end up divorced one day.	I don't like the way we treated each other. I made a mistake but I'm growing and learning. Life is a journey.
Feeling or mood (1 to 3 words. Rate intensity 1 to 10)	Feeling or mood
Unloved 7/10, sad 6/10, mad 7/10	Sad 5/10, compassionate (toward self and other) 7/10
Action	Action
I go looking for sugar in the kitchen and overeat. I don't want to but feel I have no control.	I go outside for a 20 min walk because moving my body helps clear my mind and helps me breathe deeply. I review my Core Desired Feelings then return home, apologize and ask if we can try again. We hug.
Outcome	Outcome
My stomach hurts and now my moods are worse than before. I sabotaged my health goals again.	We feel connected again and I feel proud of how I am learning and growing.



Shift Your Thoughts Example 2

Situation	Situation
I am dissatisfied with my life, lacking in clear purpose or mission. I want and need more.	I am dissatisfied with my life, lacking in clear purpose or mission. I want and need more.
Thought	Thought
What's wrong with me? Maybe I have no real gifts to offer. Maybe this is the best it'll ever be.	Hmmm...I want more or different. I am in transition and need to get curious for a while about my next season of life.
Feeling or mood (1 to 3 words. Rate intensity 1 to 10)	Feeling or mood
Worried 8/10, embarrassed 6/10, defeated 5/10	Hopeful 5/10, curious 4/10, excited 6/10
Action	Action
I waste (hide out) hours a day on social media comparing and seeing all the ways that my life sucks.	I take kind, thoughtful action: I pull out my journal and spend 20 minutes getting my thoughts down on paper; I schedule an R&R&R* day for later this month; I spend another 15 minutes just breathing and doing a mindfulness meditation. *Rest, Reflection & Reordering
Outcome	Outcome
I spiral deeper into shame, comparison and perfectionism (trying to aggressively control my environment due to fear).	I feel engaged and calmer. I feel less tense because I'm choosing joy today instead of focusing on the future and what I cannot necessarily control.



Parting Words...

Before you rush onward please take a moment and ask yourself: do I truly want to shift from merely surviving to joyfully thriving? Am I ready to make some changes to declutter my life?

If your answer is yes then I invite you to set aside a chunk of time this week to brew a mug of tea, pull out these worksheets and walk through them mindfully, step by step. Give it just two to three weeks and if you actually put these to work I am certain you will notice a change in how your life feels. I'd love to hear some feedback!

Keep in mind that habit formation feels like hard work at first. It absolutely requires effort. Yet slowly but surely, through consistent conscious effort, our new healthy habits become unconscious competence. They become a natural part of who we are. I love that.

You may do better with layered accountability as you seek to bring about positive change in your life. You may find this accountability via a coach or nutritional consultant, a walking partner or financial advisor, as examples. You may get an extra burst of motivation if you tell the truth about your life goals to a small group, your partner, or a forthright friend who will help you stay the course.

Each week in the beginning, and once a month later on, I encourage you to pull out this PDF and review it all over again. In this way, you will keep these strategies and your goals fresh in your mind so that you stay on track rather than letting life pull you right back into the familiar ruts of old mindsets and behaviors.

I invite you to come check out the [other free tools](#) available on my website as well as [resource recommendations](#) for living with purpose, health and joy.

You are also welcome to join my free [Live on Purpose Facebook community](#) if you are looking for support in living "imperfectly on purpose."

And of course, if you are in need of further [Mind-Body Support](#) use the contact form at the end of the page to set up a chat to discuss your needs and how we might work together or look through the [ALIP SHOP](#) for a mini-course, mindfulness journal, or other resource that might feel like the right next step for you.

Just before I go, I want to share a beautiful quote with you that a reader of my blog shared with me: "We won't be distracted by comparison if we are captivated with purpose," Bob Goff.

You get to decide who you want to be and build a life that feels right-sized for you. You do not have to fit anyone else's mold; your worth is not wrapped up in what others think about you. What matters is that you live your purpose – or that you craft a Life Vision that gets you excited about showing up to it each day. Ditch the clutter and live on purpose.

Krista xo

