

INTRODUCTION

# A Sacred Approach

**C***learing Clutter as a Sacred Act* grew out of my twenty-five years as a psychotherapist, clutter coach, trainer, journal keeper, and journal therapist. This book is also informed by my own struggles and experiments as a human being on this planet, and how I've found ways to access the support I've needed, inside and out, to navigate my life.

Life is messy and challenging. It doesn't fit into tidy packages. And it's constantly changing. So if you have some clutter, it's not evidence that you're broken or unworthy.

If you've identified some clutter that it's time to clear, it's also not surprising if you've been avoiding it. Many of us do. Clearing clutter can present some unexpected challenges.

This book addresses the mixed emotions we often feel toward those things we're looking to give up, as well as the fear and excitement that can arise when we're creating space

for something different or new. Approaching this challenge in a sacred way honors the depth and complexity of the task.

Before we get started, I want to define some terms that you'll encounter frequently throughout this book. In fact, I'll let the words *Clutter*, *Transition*, and *Sacred* define and introduce themselves.

### CLUTTER

*"I am a metaphor. I'm also solid and real. I show up in homes, heads, hearts, and schedules. I am the problem that sends you in search of help. I evoke humility because I represent so concretely the choices you've made, the experiences you've had, what you've done, and what you haven't done. You might get overwhelmed when you look at me. I'm seen as a door-blocker and an embarrassment behind the scenes. But there's more to me than that. I hold clues to what needs a goodbye and what is still waiting to happen. I'm mixed in with treasures. Even though people tend to avoid me, they often find that, when they turn toward me, good things can happen. I'm often more willing to be released than people suspect."*

### TRANSITION

*"I'm a reminder that clearing clutter is a process that can take you to someplace new. I make sense of messiness, discomfort, and goodbyes. I know that feeling lost and stuck are just part of a bigger unfolding. I'm about spring coming after winter and new beginnings coming out of*

*endings.”*

## SACRED

*“I am a stance that respects the whole mix of who you are and the choices you’ve made. I connect you with endless hidden sources of energy and inspiration. I’m not about judging whether you’re worthy. I’m interested in how simple rituals and intention can help make this endeavor more meaningful and more possible.”*

Many people don’t experience clutter clearing as a sacred act. Often the process is accompanied by harsh words and cruel self-judgment, pressure, and panic. But when you begin that way, it usually leads to unfortunate decisions and bigger messes than you started with.

I offer this book in the hopes that it will steer you away from the negative, self-defeating aspects of clutter clearing and lead you toward the clarity, self-acceptance, and lightness that the process can provide when it is treated as sacred.

As you engage with this book and take stock of what you’ve accumulated, you’ll be encouraged to weave intentional gestures of love and devotion into the process. You’ll be exposed to techniques that can help you tap into inner and outer sources of courage and guidance, so you don’t feel so alone.

You'll see how, at times, it can be important to approach clutter clearing with preparation and intention. Other times, it helps to do it on the fly, inserting it into the flow of your life.

Whenever you engage in clearing your clutter as a sacred act, it's a chance to make peace with your own imperfections and with life's ambiguities. It is an opportunity to decide what deserves your time, space, attention, and other resources. It is also an opportunity to strengthen your ability to face life's changes and to practice the essential art of letting go.

## Tips on Navigating This Book

There are many ways to travel through this book. You might work through it chronologically from beginning to end, engaging fully in each suggested action. You can also open it to any page, read a poem or essay, or try out a writing process. You might use the book as a daily meditation, an occasional inspiration when you feel stuck, or as a constant companion. It's also quite possible—and totally fine—to start and restart the book several times before taking it on fully. If you lose it for a while in your clutter, it's possible it will reappear when you're ready to dive in deeper. This book and its underlying philosophy are all about helping you discover and apply the approaches that work best for you.

From *Clearing Clutter as a Sacred Act*, ©2019 Carolyn Koehline

With that in mind, here are some tips for reading and engaging with *Clearing Clutter as a Sacred Act*:

- ✧ As you read my words and write your own, notice what intrigues you.
- ✧ Notice anything that brings a feeling of lightness where there's been heaviness.
- ✧ Notice what brings clarity where there's been confusion.
- ✧ Use this book any way you like to help get some movement where you've been stuck.

No matter how you engage with this book, I encourage you to hold your own unique clutter-clearing process as sacred.