

## Finish what you Start

Today we are going to tackle the most important rule of home organization: FINISH WHAT YOU START. I know something about FINISHING—or rather I know something about NOT FINISHING what I start. Let me give you an example. Overcome by a rare burst of energy, I decide to clean my closet. (Realize this is simply a dramatization. I did not have a burst of energy, nor did I clean my closet recently.)

I begin taking clothes out and laying them on the bed. I come across a dress that no longer fits (and hasn't since I was in fourth grade). Of course, I should wash it before I give it away. But one dress doesn't make a full load, so I leave part of the contents of my closet on the bed and start sorting laundry. That's when I remember I don't have any detergent so I decide to make a quick trip to the grocery store. I figure I may as well grab a few other things while I'm there, so I start making a list. Just thinking about groceries makes me hungry and anyway, it is getting close to suppertime. I ransack the refrigerator and find an assortment of leftovers that are no longer eatable (and may never have been eatable). I toss a few of them into the garbage, which is now full, so I decide to haul it to the garage. The telephone rings. I leave the trash bag in the hallway and answer the phone. A friend says cheerfully, "What have you been doing all day?"

Suddenly I am overwhelmed. It's suppertime and I have no supper. I have stacks of clean clothes all over my bed, heaps of dirty clothes all over my floor, the beginnings of a grocery list, a partially cleaned refrigerator, and a smelly trash bag sitting in the middle of the hallway. You can see how NOT FINISHING could lead to complete chaos and utter exhaustion.

Now let's examine more closely what FINISHING WHAT YOU START would mean in every day life:

It means the holidays aren't over until the decorations are put away. (This is how Christmas in July got its start.)

It means supper isn't over until the dishes are washed and put away. By these rules, I'm often "finishing" yesterday's supper just as I'm preparing to cook today's. I have to; I need the dishes.

It means the laundry isn't done until the clothes are washed, dried, folded, AND put away. I don't know about you, but my laundry hasn't been officially DONE since I was in elementary school and my mother did it for me.

Fix-it projects aren't completed until the tools are put away. The sweeping isn't finished until the broom is put away. The grocery shopping isn't done until the groceries are put away or eaten, whichever comes first.

Instruct your children that they aren't really done with their bath until the towel is back on the towel bar. They aren't finished with their homework until it's safely back in their backpacks. They aren't even done eating an apple until the core is in the trash.

If you can convince the whole family to FINISH what they start, you will never again have to set aside an entire afternoon to pick up tools, homework, brooms, and apple cores. Or they may do like I have; decide to start fewer chores.

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