



JUDITH ANN KIRK, ORGANIZING RESOURCES

Beyond the Trashcan

What did you throw away today?

This is the best clutter reducer in
your home and office.
You could always put it on your
desk and call it the
In-Basket.



What did you throw away today? If you are like most people, you will have to think for a moment before you answer that question. Over the years, our tendency to buy and ultimately *throw away* has increased. Though Americans represent a small portion of the world's population, we produce over half its waste. In one day we generate enough trash to fill the New Orleans Superdome *twice*. Every day — two times! (Just google “trash to fill superdome” and see what happens!)

The idea of being wasteful makes most of us uncomfortable. Yet, we continue to *waste* because we cannot think of anything better to do with leftover *stuff*. We must be cognizant of wastefulness and become

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educated to the potential of recycling. The basic principle of recycling is for people to take responsibility for the waste they create. Used material is a resource not a nuisance. Recycling benefits everyone. It save time, money and energy.

- Most of us have things tucked away in the back of a closet, in the attic or garage—forgotten. These items could be put to use. Hoarding is wastefulness. As long as something is in storage (out of sight, out of mind), it is doing no one any good. When you have a need, start searching your stash. Better yet, start clearing the clutter. Then you know what you have that is useful and what can be recycled.
- On a larger scale, we can help communities save by recycling paper, magazines, cardboard, cans, bottles, plastic and electronics. Set up a recycling system that works for you. Many consumer products would cost less if our nation as a whole recycled. Paper makes up about 25% of our garbage, much of which could be diverted through recycling programs.
- Recycling conserves resources. Statistics show that 64% less energy is required to produce paper from waste rather than using virgin wood pulp. In the case of office paper, the equivalent of almost three barrels of oil is saved for every ton of paper recycled. The manufacturing process from used paper, rather than from trees, requires half the amount of water with 60% less air and water pollution.
- Finally, creating what you want from what you have is a rewarding form of self-reliance. Discarded materials are free. Much as we need to initiate large-scale efforts to recover wasted resources, each of us can develop a reuse reflex.

When you begin to examine your home, closets, desk, garage, inside your car or any of the other corners where treasures have accumulated, you need to have a discerning eye. Every possession has the capacity of bringing pleasure as well as the potential of becoming joyless clutter. Be mindful of recycling and re-using. It works for all of us.

America Recycles Day **November 15**

One day to educate.

One day to motivate.

One day to make recycling bigger
and better 365 days a year.

Get Involved!

Think Recycling!

→ During spring and fall cleanup look for opportunities to make someone else happy. Pass on special items to family or friends or donate to the library, church, school, hospitals, nursing homes or prisons.

→ Have a garage sale to reap a small payback. Do not worry about keeping track of the receipts. Generally the IRS is not interested in personal sale items. Chances are you won't be making a profit on anything you are selling.

→ Eyeglasses and cases are collected by the Lions Club. Drop these used items at any optician, eyeglass store or in the front of most post office buildings.

→ Food - Donate to your local food pantry.

→ Packaging peanuts, bubble wrap and shipping boxes - Bring these items to any local MailBoxes Etc. or other shipping location.

→ Women's Clothing - How can a woman who is struggling to get on her feet in the competitive job market go on interviews without the appropriate clothing? [Dress for Success](#) can help with your donations.