

Spring Cleaning for Your Soul

By Michelle LaBrosse, PMP[®], Chief Cheetah and Founder, Cheetah Learning

May is here and with everything going on in the world, I think it's time for Spring Cleaning of a different kind. Instead of sorting through old files and going through your closets, how about taking a look at what's weighing you down in your life and what's holding you back?

Project Management is your perfect companion for Spring Cleaning Your Soul because PM keeps you focused on what you need to do to move forward. It's the ultimate accountability partner, nudging you with milestones and reminding you what you agreed to accomplish. So, think about what's holding you back, and then write a project plan to get rid of those obstacles and move on down the road.

Here's my Top-Five List of things we all need to get rid of:

1. **Grudges.** Are you holding a grudge for something that happened 10 years ago, and you can't even remember exactly what happened? Pick up the phone or write an email and call a truce. Let this be your "Grudge be gone!" project. You'll feel 10 years younger after just two or three grudges are lifted. And it will help you approach future projects with a clearer mind.
2. **Anger.** Are you mad at the government, your next-door neighbor's dog, or that grand-standing co-worker? Ask yourself if this anger has done you any good. Then figure out how you can channel your anger into a positive project. Maybe you can get involved in your local community, so you can make a difference and not feel like what's happening in the world is beyond you. As for the dog, treats always work wonders. Ditto for people. A pan of brownies just may bring about world peace – even if just for a few minutes.
3. **Fear.** I think the biggest thing holding back the economy right now is fear. If we all shift our mindset from reactive to proactive, things will get better. Fear is a virus and so is hope. Let's spread more of the hope around and get a hope virus growing exponentially. Risk Management is a fantastic way to rein in your fears – check out the free worry-o-meter tool under Cheetah Learning's free Project Management Tools.
4. **Woe is me.** Turn "Woe is me" into "WOW is me." Maybe you've lost your job or taken a pay cut. Yes, that stinks, but only as long as you let "Woe is me" be your badge to the world. "Wow is me" looks for the opportunity. What kinds of companies are hiring now? How can you beef up your skills? How can you position yourself differently? When you change the lens you're looking through, you can see solutions instead of obstacles. Yes, life gives us obstacles, but we all have the power to come up with the ideas and the attitude to overcome them.

5. **Time wasters.** What are the ways that you waste time? For some of us, it's sitting in front of the TV or for others it may be surfing the web aimlessly. Identify your biggest time wasters and then choose three ways that you can better use that time. Maybe it's a bike ride, a walk or volunteering for a local charity, or taking on that project you've put on the back burner to "someday." Whatever gives your life more meaning, spend your time there and stay away from life's empty calories.

Okay, once you have done some *Spring Cleaning for your Soul*, then, you can sort out the clutter in your workspace or home.

Use the "5 S" approach to keep your life running smoothly:

Sort - Only have items in your work area that you use on a daily basis. Everything else gets put away in its place. Create filing systems for quick retrieval – for both paper and electronic based information. If you find that you often get piles, the best way to stop them is to go through the piles and see what is in them. Once you know what is in them, then you can create a file, folder or designated space for those items.

Straighten – Have a designated place for all moveable items, such as desktop organizers. Everything is labeled in macro-work areas, and there is a logical workflow for shared office machines, such as copiers and printers.

Shine – Everything in the area looks like "new" condition and operates perfectly. Recycle bins and waste baskets are emptied nightly.

Standardize – This includes visual controls for common areas, such as how to use the copier, and wall planning calendars.

Sustain – Have a daily and weekly system to keep up with the improvements that you have made. Give yourself the time to do the maintenance necessary to keep your space in top condition.

Wherever you Spring Cleaning may take you, remember that when we get rid of "dead weight," either literally or figuratively, we are lighter, more agile and can move quickly. You can't dance with lead weights on your feet. So, lighten your load in your life and leap ahead to what's next!

Chief Cheetah Podcast Is Yours for the Downloading

Want to hear what Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, and Chief Cheetah has to say about *Spring Cleaning for Your Soul*? Download our podcast at <http://podcast.cheetahlearning.com/podcastgen/> and hear the words straight from the Cheetah's mouth.

About Cheetah Learning and the Know How Network

The Know How Network is a monthly column written by Michelle LaBrosse, the founder and Chief Cheetah of Cheetah Learning. Distributed to hundreds of newsletters and media outlets around the world, the Know How Network brings the promise, purpose and passion of Project Management to people everywhere. Visit www.cheetahlearning.com to learn more about Cheetah PM, the fastest way to learn about Project Management and get your PMP. You can also get your career in gear with [CheetahWare](#), free Project Management tools from Cheetah Learning.

About the Author



Michelle LaBrosse, PMP®, is an entrepreneurial powerhouse with a penchant for making success easy, fun and fast. She is the founder of [Cheetah Learning](#), the [author](#) of the [Cheetah Success Series](#), and a prolific [blogger](#) whose mission is to bring Project Management to the masses.

Cheetah Learning is a virtual company with 100 employees, contractors, and licensees worldwide. To date, more than 30,000 people have become “Cheetahs” using Cheetah Learning’s innovative Project Management and accelerated learning techniques.

Recently honored by the Project Management Institute (PMI®), Cheetah Learning was named Professional Development Provider of the Year at the 2008 PMI® Global Congress. A dynamic keynote speaker and industry thought leader, Michelle was previously recognized by PMI as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the world.

Michelle’s articles have appeared in over 100 publications and web sites around the world. Her monthly column, the [Know How Network](#) is carried by over 400 publications, and her monthly newsletter goes out to more than 50,000 people. Her radio program, [Your World Your Way](#), is a weekly broadcast that is an inspiring and practical look at how Project Management fuels success.

She is a graduate of the Harvard Business School’s Owner President Manager’s (OPM) program and also holds engineering degrees from Syracuse University and the University of Dayton.

She lives in Nevada with her family and likes to rejuvenate in Alaska where you'll often find her kayaking, hiking, and riding her motorcycle.

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