DOWNSIZING & DECLUTTERING WITH COMPASSION

A Lifetime of Memories

Helping caregivers honor the past, preserve dignity, and create space for what comes next.

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OUR HOUR TOGETHER

Today, we will explore

- Why things mean so much
- How loss of control affects decisions
- Clutter, stress, and safety
- Small steps and a village of support

MY STORY / MY WHY

From caring for people to caring for their transitions

SOCIAL WORK	1998- Earned my Social Work degree at the University of Northern Iowa.
HOSPICE CARE	Learned firsthand that change, loss, and letting go are deeply personal.
REAL ESTATE	2012- Built a career helping people navigate big life decisions involving home.
THE GAP I SAW	Families needed more than a moving truck—they needed time, guidance, and compassion.
WHY IMPACT MOVE MANAGEMENT	2026- To protect dignity and choice while easing the physical and emotional work of downsizing.

“We are not just moving belongings. We are honoring a lifetime of memories.”

THE MEMORY BOX

What do you see?

A recipe card. A photograph. A teacup. An old letter.





THE STORY BEHIND THE STUFF

“To you, it may be a teacup. To someone else, it is forty years of Sunday mornings.”

FOUR MEANINGS OF POSSESSIONS

Why we hold on

- Identity — this is who I am
- Memory — this helps me remember
- Security — this is familiar
- Legacy — someone I love may want it

WHEN LIFE CHANGES THE RULES

Imagine this is your life

You have spent decades making a home. Suddenly, everyone has opinions about what you should do with it.

A SERIES OF LOSSES

Control can shrink with age

- Driving and mobility
- Health and daily routines
- A spouse, friends, or familiar community
- A longtime home and personal choices

LOSS OF CONTROL

“Sometimes what looks like stubbornness is grief, fear, or the need to have the final say.”

AUDIENCE REFLECTION

A moment in their shoes

“Your family says you must move, that most of your belongings cannot come, and that they will decide what stays.”

WORDS THAT CREATE COOPERATION

Change the conversation

Instead of “You don’t need this” → “What makes this special?”

Instead of “We have to get rid of it” → “What matters most to keep?”

Instead of “I’ll handle it” → “What would you like help with?”

CLUTTER AND WELL-BEING

The invisible weight

More visual decisions. More things to manage. Less ease moving through the space.

WHERE CLUTTER CAN TAKE A TOLL

Not just an eyesore

- Attention and decision fatigue
- Stress, guilt, or overwhelm
- Social withdrawal or embarrassment
- Fall hazards and blocked access

CLUTTER AND ENERGY

“The goal is not an empty house. The goal is a home that supports the life being lived.”

CLUTTER AND ENERGY
THE INVISIBLE WEIGHT OF CLUTTER

How does this room feel?



Clutter can create a sense of overwhelm even when the home is full of love and memories.

- Notice the visual noise, the crowded surfaces, and how much the eye has to process.

CLUTTER AND ENERGY

THE SAME ROOM, DIFFERENT ENERGY

What changed besides the stuff?



When the room is more orderly, the same space can feel calmer, safer, and easier to enjoy.

Warmth, personality, and comfort remain—only the excess has been reduced.

CLUTTER IS NOT ALWAYS HOARDING

A compassionate distinction

Hoarding disorder includes persistent difficulty discarding, distress, and significant interference with living spaces or functioning.

WHEN HOARDING IS A CONCERN

Help without harm

- Do not secretly discard possessions
- Lead with safety: exits, stove, pathways
- Collaborate; avoid shame and threats
- Bring in appropriate trained support

STEP 1 · PICTURE THE DESTINATION

Begin with the life ahead

What would help this next home feel familiar, comfortable, and truly yours?

STEP 2 · CHOOSE A GENTLE BEGINNING

Small wins matter

- One drawer
- A linen closet
- Duplicate kitchen items
- One 20–30 minute session

STEP 3 · SORT WITH INTENTION

Give every item a path

- KEEP
- GIFT
- SELL
- DONATE
- RECYCLE / DISCARD
- DECIDE LATER — with a date

STEP 4 · HONOR THE MEMORY

Keep the story

- Photograph meaningful pieces
- Write or record the story
- Give objects to willing recipients
- Make a small keepsake collection

STEP 5 · CELEBRATE THE SMALL WIN

Progress, not perfection

A clear chair. An open hallway. One completed drawer. One meaningful choice.

CAREGIVER SCENARIO

What would you do first?

Mom is moving from a three-bedroom home of 45 years into a two-bedroom apartment. Every mention of downsizing ends in conflict.

GATHER YOUR ARMY OF SUPPORT

You do not have to do it alone

- Family & trusted friends
- Care team and social workers
- Move manager and packing professionals
- Movers, resale, donation and hauling partners

MAKE A SIMPLE SUPPORT PLAN

Give each helper a role

Decision partner • Memory keeper • Logistics lead • Packing support • Donation and resale coordinator

DECISION PARTNER

The Patient Guide

- Support choices about what stays and what goes
- Ask thoughtful questions without taking over
- Respect boundaries, emotions, and the need for breaks

BEST FIT: Patient, compassionate, and respectful

Who can help without making the decisions for them?

MEMORY KEEPER

The Family Historian

- Listen to the stories behind meaningful items
- Photograph keepsakes and record family memories
- Help pass cherished objects to the next generation

BEST FIT: Curious, sentimental, and a good listener

Which stories would you hate to lose?

LOGISTICS LEAD

The Project Manager

- Create a timeline and track the next steps
- Schedule movers, pickups, appointments, and help
- Assign tasks and monitor deadlines and expenses

BEST FIT: Organized, dependable, and communicative

Who could keep everyone moving in the same direction?

PACKING SUPPORT

The Helping Hands

- Pack and label belongings with care
- Separate items by approved destination
- Help unpack and make the next home feel familiar

BEST FIT: Energetic, careful, and willing to follow directions

Who likes practical tasks and can follow a clear plan?

DONATION & RESALE COORDINATOR

The Resource Connector

- Identify appropriate donation and resale outlets
- Coordinate tag sales, consignment, and pickups
- Track sold, donated, and distributed belongings

BEST FIT: Resourceful, practical, and detail-oriented

Who knows how to find the right home for an item?

IMPACT MOVE MANAGEMENT

Where we fit

- Downsizing and floor planning
- Sorting, packing, and move coordination
- Tag sales, consignment, donation, and removal
- Unpacking and resettling into a familiar-feeling home

A NEW CHAPTER

“We are not erasing the past. We are making space for the future.”

TAKE THIS HOME

Your one small step

“This week, I will begin with one kind conversation or one manageable space.”

QUESTIONS & CONVERSATION

Thank you

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MOVE MANAGEMENT

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