

Clarifying “Want” from “Need”

I recently had a friend challenge me to give away all of my books. She said, "You don't really need them. They're just taking away space. You'll probably never read any of them again. You can always go to the library. You can make money selling them. When was the last time you read one of those big coffee-table books anyway? And look at that big stack of books you haven't had time to read!"

Compelling arguments all. She really had me going. My book collection is one of my prized possessions. I felt threatened. As an organizer, I counsel people to create space, to give away what they no longer need, to make some money by selling off their stuff and by just being practical. I help folks decide to get rid of their stuff by looking at it from a different perspective.

So I applied this concept to clarify my own situation. What I found was – I want my books for self-expression. I want my books to remind me of who I am, who I want to be and the who-what-where-when-how that moves me, inspires me and feeds my soul. A book on a shelf that says “This is me” is energy-giving. A book that no longer does is energy-robbing. Books that have stopped inspiring me (or maybe never did) or serving as a useful reference are weeded out with the cathartic joy of a committed gardener.

Yes, a want can be just as significant as a need. And in some cases, even more important.