

# **Organizing Your Book Collection**

Your book collection can be a living embodiment of you: your beliefs, your pleasures, your hobbies, your passions and even your past. I'm finding that most of the books that stay on my shelves are classics.

Perhaps, like me, you have an addiction to bookstores that fills up your reading queue and makes you feel guilty for not reading fast enough. More on organizing queues another time. For now, let's organize those books.

Why do you want to do this? Usually, to reduce the space to make room for more books and avoid spending money on a new bookcase. Sometimes, it's because you've accidentally purchased a book that you already own. Or you've got books you want to reference or re-read and cannot find them.

## **Setting Criteria:**

Every six months or so, I cull through my books and am astounded to discover how some just don't speak to me like they did in 1964 or 1975 or 1997. My life changes and my interests, responsibilities, passions and curiosities change accordingly. (For instance, I've recently shed books about baseball, self-help, rock & roll, politics and humor. Most of my college textbooks have bitten the dust too.) Knowing what books I *do* have clarifies my life and helps me see who I really am. And who I am no longer.

## **Creating Categories:**

**Alphabetical:** By title, author's first name, author's last name or publisher.

**Chronological:** Shelve in the order that you bought the books: by date, decade or life event.

**Genre:** By subject matter. This isn't always easy to do, but I've found that sometimes the subjects end up blending together as my worldview changes.

**Size:** I have a bookcase which prohibits placing those monster size American Heritage coffee table books on the top shelf. So I put them on the bottom shelf to anchor the bookcase and locate all my other history-related books with them. I've even broken it down into a local and national history sub-categories

**Numbers:** If the Dewey Decimal System worked for you, create your own numbering system.

Color: Color-code your books with stickers or markings to make them easier to spot on a shelf.

Environmental: Nothing says that your books all need to be in one place. In fact, it can help to have some books located in the areas where they'll be used. I keep my business books in my office; cookbooks in the kitchen; manuals and repair books in the garage; and dog-training books with the dog's stuff. Also, some folks set their "adult" fare out of the reach and eyeshot of younger demographics.

### **Resolving Indecision**

Our Downsizing page can help you unload the books you've culled out. If you can't quite part with a book, remember you can always get them from the library, re-buy them affordably at Powell's, borrow a copy from someone else or give them to someone who needs and would really treasure them.

Your comments, questions and – most importantly -- your tips are always welcome. Contact me anytime at [jeff@simpleclear.biz](mailto:jeff@simpleclear.biz).