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Mess, Stress, and The...

Purple Rain Challenge



I was 14 when I first learned how a clean home affects your mental health. My mother was a cleaning lady and took great pride in her work. She would tell me, *"You know you've done your job well if your client walks in the door and feels like a Queen."*

That imagery stuck with me. It wasn't just about scrubbing floors – it was about creating a space where people could breathe easier, create, and actually relax.

I wanted to make people feel great, too. Over time, I saw firsthand how a clean, organized space could bring calm, clarity, and even joy. But here's the thing – if a tidy home makes us feel so much better, why is it so hard to keep clean?

I'll tell you why.

Because life is messy. And I don't just mean the dishes-in-the-sink, laundry-mountain kind of messy – I mean the *chaotic, never-enough-hours-in-the-day, I-have-five-unread-texts-and-no-energy-to-reply* kind of messy. Cleaning is often the first thing to fall by the wayside. And let me be clear: it's not laziness. It's executive dysfunction, burnout, and exhaustion. So... stop blaming yourself for not being perfect.

The problem is, the longer we avoid cleaning, the more stressful it becomes. And before you know it, you're avoiding eye contact with that pile of dishes like it's a toxic ex. It's a vicious cycle.

Why is cleaning so good for mental health, and why is it sometimes so hard to start?

Let's break it down.

How Cleaning Helps Your Mental Health

1. Less Stress, More Calm

Ever notice how a messy space makes you *feel* messy? Suddenly you're snapping at your family for breathing too loud, the mail piling up makes you irrationally angry, and you're one inconvenience away from full-blown rage monster mode. Been there.

Clutter is like background noise for your brain, constantly reminding you of things left undone. Cleaning clears not just your space but also your *mind*, making it easier to relax.

2. Instant Mood Boost

Even doing one tiny thing – making the bed, wiping the counters – gives you a *win*. That sense of accomplishment? It triggers dopamine, the feel-good chemical in your brain.

And listen, I know getting up to do the dishes after a long day is *not* fun, but waking up to a clean sink? *Chef's kiss*.

3. Breaks the "Overwhelm Cycle"

When life feels chaotic, cleaning is something you can control – and it doesn't have to be all or nothing. Just one small task can create momentum, making everything feel a little more manageable.

Honestly, whenever I start panicking about money, my first instinct is to clean. Does it put cash in my bank account? No. But somehow, once the floors are mopped, my financial crisis feels *less* like the end of the world.

Why Is It So Hard to Start Cleaning?

1. It Feels Overwhelming

Your brain sees the mess as one giant, impossible task instead of a bunch of small, doable ones. So, what do you do? *Nothing*. Because if you can't clean *everything*, why bother cleaning *anything*, right? Yeah... that logic doesn't really hold up.

2. Your Brain Wants Instant Rewards

Cleaning doesn't give you that quick dopamine hit like scrolling TikTok does, so it's easy to put off.

Oh, but those TikTok cleaning videos? *I could watch them all day!* Watching someone else speed-clean their house in 30 seconds? Inspiring. Actually, getting up to clean my own? *Less inspiring*.

3. Executive Dysfunction Takes Over

ADHD, anxiety, burnout, exhaustion – sometimes, getting started feels impossible... until you trick your brain into it.

You are not lazy, but you do have to remind your brain who's boss!

The Purple Rain Challenge

Here's my hack for when I *really* don't want to clean. It's called the **Purple Rain Challenge**.

The song *Purple Rain* is exactly 8 minutes and 40 seconds long – just enough time to belt out some off-key Prince while getting stuff done. I hit play and see how much I can clean before the song ends.

And let me tell you, it's shocking how fast an "all-day" task suddenly becomes manageable. I'm usually done before Prince even finishes his epic guitar solo.

Try it. Pick your song, set a timer, and get moving. You might just trick your brain into feeling like a *cleaning legend*.

Because at the end of the day, cleaning isn't about *perfection* – it's about creating a space that helps you function, breathe, and *feel good*. *DW*

Angela Rantasha is the owner of Sota Cleaning Co. in downtown Alexandria and is the self-proclaimed Queen of Clean of Douglas County. When she's not with her team providing clean spaces for people to enjoy, you can find her on the patio drinking wine with her friends, paddle boarding Lake Darling, or camping at one of Minnesota's beautiful state parks.