



# Year of No Clutter

*Eve O. Schaub*

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## Year of No Clutter Eve O. Schaub

Eve has a problem with clutter. Too much stuff and too easily acquired, it confronts her in every corner and on every surface in her house. When she pledges to tackle the worst offender, her horror of a "Hell Room," she anticipates finally being able to throw away all of the unnecessary things she can't bring herself to part with: her fifth-grade report card, dried-up art supplies, an old vinyl raincoat.

But what Eve discovers isn't just old CDs and outdated clothing, but a fierce desire within herself to hold on to her identity. Our things represent our memories, our history, a million tiny reference points in our lives. If we throw our stuff in the trash, where does that leave us? And if we don't...how do we know what's really important?

Everyone has their own Hell Room, and Eve's battle with her clutter, along with her eventual self-clarity, encourages everyone to dig into their past to declutter their future. *Year of No Clutter* is a deeply inspiring--and frequently hilarious -- examination of why we keep stuff in the first place, and how to let it all go.

## Year of No Clutter Details

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Author : Eve O. Schaub

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## From Reader Review Year of No Clutter for online ebook

### Rebecca says

(3.5) Schaub is like Gretchen Rubin with a sense of humor. Although the two books are similar in scope and tone, this is more successful than her debut, *Year of No Sugar*. Here Schaub faces the possibility that she has inherited a family tendency for hoarding and tackles her house's clutter-filled "Hell Room." From one February to the next she enlisted her daughters' help sorting things into piles and came up with a regular route of consignment shops, thrift stores, and libraries where she could drop off carloads of donations. Bigger projects included a photo book of 100 of her daughter's artworks and a rag rug incorporating many beloved articles of clothing.

I enjoyed the nitty-gritty details of how this family organized and got rid of things because I like big tidying projects and putting everything in its rightful place, whether that be the recycling bin, a crate in the attic, or a charity bag. (If you detest such projects or have a Hell Room of your own, your response might go either way: the book could be cathartic and motivating for you, or it might be a torment nearly as bad as tackling the clutter yourself.)

But what I most appreciated was how sensitive Schaub is to all the issues that can be tied up with stuff, especially OCD, nostalgia, and indecision. If we lose the physical proof of our memories, will we lose our past?

I was holding on so tight to things that the circulation was draining from my hands. At what point, I wondered, do we hold on to our past so tight that we risk strangling it to death?

And that's where this line of questioning all goes, right? Fear of self-annihilation. Fear that we—our memories—the things that tell us who we are—will all go, just as we too will one day go. Letting go of our Stuff is a little bit like death ... According to recent polls, Alzheimer's is the number-two most feared disease, second only to cancer. I believe this is caught up in our sense of self: the fear that one day we'll forget so much that we'll no longer be sure we ever existed at all.

Inevitably, Schaub has to take a position on Marie Kondo, which ends up being, basically: her philosophy is impressive and aesthetically desirable, but not achievable for your averagely sentimental householder.

We all anthologize our lives to one extent or another: photo albums, yearbooks, collections of old letters, or saving one's wedding dress...these are all the activities of a curator rather than a user. Although Marie Kondo disapproves, I'm not about to stop collecting my own life. It has been a source of pleasure for me ever since I can remember; it helps define me.

The book does go on a bit, and could easily be cut by a third or more. I think the year-challenge format encourages Schaub to repeat themes and activities and use more examples than are truly necessary. She's also a very emphatic writer who relies too heavily on italics and exclamation points. But it's a breezy and enjoyable book that encouraged me to think about what I hold on to – I'm not as much of a book hoarder as I once was, but boxes of mementoes, including cards and letters I've received, are particularly hard for me to cull.

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## **debbicat ?~Traveling Sister says**

I can really relate to much of this. This is a woman's story of how she wanted to let go of some of her clutter. I have plenty of it myself. Unfortunately. My spouse would really like for me to release a lot of it. I've bought about 4 books..paid good money for...on how to declutter. None really helped.

I liked this one tho. And its funny and inspiring. It helped me "let go" of a box of CD cases - yep, the ones that the CDs used to be in that still have the jackets. I long ago either purchased those favorite ones in iTunes to listen to on my phone, or at least, placed all of those CDs in one of those big CD binders to keep them all together. The box of CD cases sat in the top of the closet for years. Taking up a lot of space. I would look at them and just walk away. At least while reading this I realized there just was no need to keep them. Silly you say? Maybe. But, I am a bit of hoarder a heart. I get it.

It felt good. I think I will add some more items from the top of the closet next week. I like seeing that empty space there.

Many thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for giving me a digital edition of this book to read in exchange for a review. I am going to keep it up. Eve is someone I can identify with. The struggle is real! Highly recommended. Helpful and entertaining.

4/24/17 UPDATE and re-read. Because this is now available on Hoopla as an audiobook. YAY! Great narrator so far. This time I hope to tackle "the room". UGH! Summer is almost here. Maybe I can do it in two months. And my poor husband has been so patient. I need to play him the audio part of what Eve's husband says in the preface. Maybe he will find hope that I really can let go of some of my most sentimental pieces. Maybe.

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## **Lisa says**

I think Eve O. Schaub is a good writer. She's witty. Her jokey tone really works. So I'm sorry to give this book only 2 stars. I thought it was going to be so much more. But it is essentially Schaub giving you a play-by-play of every item she takes out of her large, hoarded room and what it either means to her or to hoarding in general. I am not a hoarder. I am the anti-hoarder. I am so anti-hoarder that I enjoy reading books about minimizing your already very pared-down home and life. I delight in getting rid of things like extra plates and mugs and even possibly very useful items in favor of just having less. I guess I thought a book called 'The Year of No Clutter' would be a drastic downsizing and an intense removal of even the tiniest shred of clutter, my personal dream scenario. But it wasn't that at all. It was a book about a hoarder coming to terms with her hoard and going tiny piece by piece and bringing us along on her journey. Now this may be just the ticket to like-minded people. But I am of an entirely different mind. I lean more towards living in a yurt with exactly the same amount of table-settings as there are people in the yurt, so this just felt like an exhausting hoard of words to me, albeit funny ones.

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## Deanna says

Intriguing. On a spectrum from uncomfortable to disturbing. Well written. I'm inclined to say courageous.

Much of the last third had me squirming, thinking I knew where this was going to go and being aggravated in advance. But this turned out to be an interesting, somewhat enlightening memoir that has stayed with me.

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## Dana says

Eve Schaub has a secret room that no one outside of the family is aware of. Always firmly glued shut. Most people, if stumbled upon the room would surely gasp in horror. What does this room contain you may wonder? Dead bodies (well, mostly not), gruesome monstrosities? Well perhaps only to Marie Kondo (famed organizational expert). You see Eve's aptly named "Hell Room" is packed to the brim with clutter.

*"So it goes with my roomful of belongings: most of the objects in there have at one point or another brought me something positive: happiness, joy, satisfaction, or simply a connection to various memories. Collectively, however, they morph into something entirely different: something heavy and obstructing and unclean and mortifying."*

And so begins Eve's very ambitious project of The Year of No Clutter. Of finally getting through this room and making it livable again. I think the subject of clutter and the fear of letting go of objects is something that so many people can relate to. Eve explains it rather on point when she says *"Each object was a teeny-tiny reference point to a moment in my life, big or small- like a million stars in the sky, each one connecting in an invisible line back to me."*

Eve's Year of No Clutter was an indulgent read for me. How often can we pick up a book that we identify so precisely with? Seemingly every page I was raising my hands in the air going

As a pack rat/clutter prone/sentimental person myself, Eve's struggles were aching familiar.

I found The Year of No Clutter to be very well written, with Eve coming across as an authentically personable and humorous friend. I was disappointed that there was no before and after picture at the end. However the author does stress at the end of the book that the story ended up being more about the journey than the destination. Which is perhaps why a before and after picture was omitted.

I also found that while this book was all about a woman's organizational journey, there was actually not a lot of advice on how to get rid of and reorganize your own personal hell room. This book is definitely more about Eve's personal journey and growth rather than an actual organizational how-to book. Nevertheless I still got great enjoyment out of it. **4/5**

*"That's the whole meaning of life, isn't it? Trying to find a place for your stuff."* - George Carlin

**Buy, Borrow or Bin Verdict: Buy**

Check out more of my reviews here

Note: I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review.

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## abby says

Author Eve O. Schaub lives in a home that wouldn't win any Martha Stewart awards, but that isn't exactly *messy*, either. Or at least, that's what the casual observer would think. But Schaub's home hides a nasty secret than infects many American households-- the secret junk room. The largest room of her home, clocking in at over 500 square feet is packed to the gills with things. Including a dead mouse. For reasons. But Schaub is determined to change her pack rat ways and declares a year of no clutter.

America has a fascination with hoarding and decluttering, and I'm no exception. I have all the related tv shows programmed into my dvr. I enjoyed many of the personal stories and cluttered anecdotes the author provides throughout her book.

But I wasn't particularly inspired by *Year of No Clutter*. The author never really sets forth parameters of what a year without clutter *means*. No set guidelines for achieving her goals, or even a hard statement of what those goals are. As far as I can tell, the author just spent a year sporadically going through and puttering around her junk room. At the end, she had a sort-of-less-messy room. Yippee.

The author seems like a fun person, and her writing style is fun and engaging-- but there's no meat to this book. Read *Coming Clean* instead.

2.5 stars.

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## Karen says

Year of No Clutter by Eve O. Schaub

Eve O. Schaub is a serial memoirist who wrote in 2014, *Year Without Sugar* in which her family didn't eat any added sugar. Then on New Year's day ate a reeses peanut butter cup. The author writes about cleaning the largest room upstairs called the Hell room that always has the door closed because she is embarrassed. The room is filled to capacity with no pathways or carpet showing. She writes about a dead mouse in a box that she saved because she wrote a story about that mouse. She admitted having mouse droppings in the room as well as cat urine from a now deceased cat. The author writes humorously mostly describing all the different odd stuff she saves and has accumulated that are in that room that she is giving herself a deadline of one year to clean.

She writes that when people asked her when answering questions when she was talking about her *Year Without Sugar* she hated answering that her next book is about clutter. Although, she thinks the two topics have important things in common. Too much sugar, too much clutter and that they are both a modern problem. She is a saver. She is afraid to throw anything away or donate it that she will regret it. In her

circumstances the longer you are alive the more you acculturate. Many times throughout her thoughts are to try and incorporate what Maria Kondo's ideas. Keep only the things that truly bring you joy. Thank the things that you are getting rid of for what use you have gotten from the stuff.

So Eve O. Schaub picks a day to start cleaning Hell room with her fifteen year old daughter named Grace. Armed with the idea that when you try to keep everything, control everything, you end up losing it all. I tend to agree with this statement. I have too many clothes and I never feel like I have enough. I have made several attempts too get rid off garbage bags full of clothes to donate and I still have too many clothes so that it is hard to find anything. I am getting better with each attempt to down size, but I still keep buying more and I don't need anything else. I get the same feelings of if I donate most of what I have I might regret it because I may wish I still had a certain item. I recently got rid of my first edition, signed copies of my books. I have rebought certain books that I loved, slowly. I do feel better with less books. Some I will never replace. I had so many books that I doubled up on shelving them so it was hard to find a certain book I couldn't find it. It took my son and my husband three days to donate my book collection. They worked all day making trips with my husband's truck filled with my books they were running out of places to donate them, too. I do sometimes have to rebuy some again and some just can't be replaced. For the most part I am happy that we have more space and I can find my books now.

The author writes about being a collector v hoarding. She writes about examples of hoarders that have been in the news. She also writes about impressive collections. It all comes down to having your collections having their own place where they belong and not invading your living space. You can keep things as long as you have a place to put them away and that your stuff doesn't interfere with your living space.

She explained over the course of a year how she decided what she kept v what she donated and what she threw out. With humour she gives plenty of examples of different scenarios. There are a lot of different situations that come up when you are trying to sort things and downsize. I will give an example: say your parents are moving from their house to a furnished apartment. They ask you what you would like whether it be furniture or family heirlooms or your childhood stuff. More decisions to make. Over the year the author has changed and learned to trust in her decisions.

Publication Date March 2017.

Thank you to Net Galley, Eve O. Schaub and Source books publishing for my copy for a fair and honest review.

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## **Esil says**

In a way, Year of No Clutter is a book about nothing of great significance. The author has a large room in her house that she refers to as the "Hell Room" that had become the depository stuff of all sorts – symbolizing her inability to get rid of anything. She spends a year decluttering the room, while analyzing why she has so much trouble getting rid of things. In today's world, it's hard to figure out why such a book matters, but it nevertheless resonated for me...

My husband and I bought an old house in need of much work close to twenty years ago. At the time, we had just had our first child and were both early in our careers. Some work got done on the house, but it quickly became our personal chaos. There was little time to sort through the things brought into the house that we

had amassed as students or the things we accumulated as young parents. So things got shoved into closets, the basement and our own “hell room”. Fast forward to a few years ago when we finally were in a position to fully renovate the house. The first step was to empty the house, which turned into quite an enterprise. I had no idea we had accumulated so much stuff or why we had a compulsion to keep so much. But what started off as a daunting task turned into what I now think of a really liberating experience. By the end, we had pretty much pared down our possessions to what we truly use or what has sincere sentimental value. I even got rid of all my old diaries -- and I have no regrets. I love the ways in which we improved the house with the renovation, but I also equally appreciate that I no longer live in a state of perpetual clutter. And now, I’ve become a jealous guardian of clear space – one of the only significant exceptions is the bookcase shown in my profile.

I never went through the mental exercise Eve Schaub goes through of figuring out why getting rid of stuff felt so mentally liberating. So it was interesting to read Schaub’s reflections – her thoughts on why she had a tendency to keep everything, why it was so hard to go through things and make decisions about what to keep and what to toss, and the sense of accomplishment that came with getting through the exercise. Again, in the real world, these are silly problems. But I have to admit that I was heartened to see that I wasn’t alone.

Thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for an opportunity to read an advance copy.

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## **Kathleen says**

I started reading *Year of No Clutter* on a weekend when I had time to relax and start a new book. In the first 24 hours, I...

\*Read the first chapter

\*Put the book down

\*Went to the boxes of photos and mementos I brought back from my dad's house and organized them by type, labeled the boxes, and finally put the boxes away in my closet.

\*Resumed reading half of the second chapter

\*Put the book down

\*Took out the trash and the recycleables

\*Turned on the TV to watch a show, deleted 20% of what had been stored on the DVR

\*Resumed reading after the show

\*Put the book down

\*Made a pot of spaghetti

\*[Okay, the spaghetti interruption was just b/c I was hungry, but then I] Finished the spaghetti, immediately put all dishes in the dishwasher and ran the cycle even though it was only 3/4 full (which I never do)

\*Resumed reading

\*Sorted all of the mail that had been accumulating in the bin for weeks

\*Started to organize the boxes in the dining room that have been sitting there since I moved six months ago



It took me longer to read the first four chapters than it did to finish the rest of the book. I am so conscious of my parents tendencies that last month when I mistakenly bought a 4-lb. bag of sugar and then discovered an existing 4-lb. bag of sugar already sitting in my pantry, I went into a panic. *"OMG, I have it!! I'm turning into my dad!! It's starting!!"*

I enjoyed reading Year of No Clutter for a couple of reasons. First, it's a cautionary tale. I clearly have hoarder genes and need to be careful not to let things go to the point where it becomes an overwhelming secret shame. Second, I have been avoiding sorting through a lot of the attachments she is dealing with. While my situation is not at the same level (I would have no problem saying no to the question, "Do you want this piano?"), I need to stop comforting myself by comparing myself to people who have a bigger clutter problem, and to find a way to just let go of \*things\* without feeling like I'm throwing away the sentiment behind it. That is just garbage. Literally.

If you have a battle with clutter, you may enjoy the book for the simple fact that you can relate at some level. I don't know what neat person would think of it, because I have so few of them in my life and absolutely no insight on the thought process of neat people. I envy them, but I do not understand them. I suspect unless you or your loved ones struggle with clutter, you may not enjoy the book as much because it probably seems like a trivial problem to "normal" people. The book sometimes feels like a series of "Here's how crazy I am..." sidetracks, which are often times funny, but sometimes either fall flat or are ick-inducing. Other times it feels like the author is trying to justify keeping things, rather than doing what she set out to do - which is clean out the clutter. I won't spoil anything for you about how the year ends and how she defines success or defeat, but if you stayed interested enough to read this entire review without being completely annoyed, you'd probably really enjoy the book.

Thank You to Netgalley, the publisher and the author for providing me with an advance copy for review. A more personal review appears on my newly-resurrected blog, [www.dchawkeye.com](http://www.dchawkeye.com).

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## **Mischenko says**

Year of No Clutter is a story of one women's journey to clean up her hoarding habits. It's gotten to the point where her life is literally cluttered with clutter.

I felt like I could relate to her in certain ways. It's so easy to be in her position when you're not able to let go of material things. Little did I know, some individuals get bad enough that medication is necessary. It's a branch of OCD.

"Who knew? The United States is... hoarding hoarders."

Do books count? Yikes!

I found the book to be funny at times and emotional, however, It didn't keep my total attention. I would recommend to people who've struggled with hoarding or those who have family or friends that are hoarders.

4\*\*\*\*

Thanks to netgalley for a copy in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Arlena says**

Title: Year Of No Clutter

Author: Eve O. Schaub

Publisher: Sourcebooks

Reviewed By: Arlena Dean

Rating: Four

Review:

"Year Of No Clutter" by Eve O. Schaub

My Thoughts...

This is a true story of how Eve who had one horrible secret and that was that she was a collector of things which turned out to being a hoarder [collector vs hoarder]. What may be a surprise to many but this is so true of a lot of us that just start out collecting things as we will see from Eve's standpoint that she had over 500 square feet [secret Hell room] of things that she has keep because it seemed like everything meant so much to her life. So, Eve decides to start a 'Year of No Clutter.' Now how will this turn out for her? How will she dealt with what to keep, throw away or send to charity? Has all of this stuff given her 'happiness, joy, satisfaction, or simply a connection to various memories?' I know a lot of people can identify with this book including myself! So, as I read this read I kept waiting to get more advice on how to get get of my clutter but it seemed like this read was more about 'Eve's personal journey and growth [her memoirs] rather to the actual organizational how to guide book.' Now, I will say it was quite a interesting read [humorous at times] even though it wasn't quite what I thought the novel would be about. I will say I was given some inspired ways to tackle some of my problem areas in my home. By the end of the read Eve did let the reader know that after a year just what she decided to keep, threw out and donate using plenty of scenarios giving the reader some interesting stories. I did learn from the read this wasn't just about her being the only hoarder in this family, for her husband and father had some of these issues to.

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## **Rachel (TheShadesofOrange) says**

### **3.5 Stars**

An entertaining and honest memoir about a woman who spends a year decluttering her home. The audiobook is a great companion while you do your own spring cleaning.

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## **Emma Sea says**

very entertaining. Schaub's prose just flows, so it was a pleasure to read. Even though I totally want to get into her house with garbage bags and gloves and just throw it all away. A good book to read before I start to clean up and decide what I want to keep and what I can happily live without.

P.S. Her kids sound fantastic. She's clearly a great mom.

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## **Louise Wilson says**

Eve is a hoarder. She keeps everything that has meant something in her life. She is not as bad as the people we see on the tv programmes whose rooms are all full of clutter, who have to climb over things to move around in their homes. Eve's clutter is mostly in the largest room that they now call the hell room.

I found this an interesting insight into hoarding. How the author dealt with how she decided what to keep throw away and send to charity. There was also some humour to this book.

I would like to thank NetGalley, Sourcebooks (non fiction) and the author Eve Schaub for my ARC in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Hannah says**

That was so great to read, unexpectedly so because I don't remember why I requested it. But Eve Schaub is witty and honest and has a great way of describing her life.

Eve Schaub has a problem with clutter, as in she has too much of it; although it is mostly confined to what she calls her hell room, she still decides to try and declutter after she realizes how the clutter is slowly overtaking her life. Her whole family has hoarding tendencies and she really does not want to end up like the hoarder whose house she visits early in her project. With the help of her two daughters she sets out to change the way she approaches clutter without losing the nostalgic tendencies at the core at her personality. I do not quite know why I enjoyed this book so much but I did, whole-heartedly so. I don't really have a problem with clutter; I have actually moved twice with nothing but a suitcase, giving away most of my stuff (yes, even giving away all the books I bought in college - twice (after undergrad and again after postgrad) - although to be fair, I do regret that a bit). The only thing I collect now that I will be staying in the same place for the foreseeable future - are books and more books and those do not count as clutter, thank you very much. I am a bit on the messy side - as much as you can be with as little stuff as I have - again, books lying around everywhere doesn't really count. So I couldn't particularly empathise with her situation, but she still made the book very worthwhile and fun to read.

Eve Schaub has a great voice and the timing of her self-deprecating jokes is impeccable. I do love this subset of memoirs written by women living in the Northeastern US states - the world they depict is so utterly foreign to mine and still something that sounds absolutely lovely, even if they seem to live in a bubble that they don't seem to see. The world Eve Schaub describes just seems so absolutely wholesome without her being condescending; she realizes that she is privileged and uses humour to show that she doesn't always take herself too serious.

This was just the book at the right time for me and I really enjoyed every second I spent reading it.

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I received an arc of this book courtesy of NetGalley and Sourcebooks in exchange for an honest review  
Thanks so much for that!

