

# Rebellious Wellness <sup>over</sup> 50

## Declutter Your Life, Make Way for Happiness



### Episode 89: Declutter Your Life, Make Way for Happiness with Tracy McCubbin

**Gregory Anne:** Welcome back everybody to another episode of Rebellious Wellness Over 50. Today I'm talking with Tracy McCubbin, who is a Declutter expert, decluttering expert, and I have a confession to make here on the ethers,

I have never, Marie Condoed, I have not bought the book. I don't know anything about it except she's a decluttering expert. Yours is a different approach. You're

coming from it from different angles and more of the psychology of people that might be tend to clutter or keep things.

So Tracy, welcome. Thank you for being with us.

**Tracy McCubbin:** Thank you so much for having me.

**Gregory Anne:** So I wanna start with your book, which is called "Make Space for Happiness, *how to stop attracting clutter and start magnetizing the life you want,*" which is an interesting concept, the magnetizing piece, because we know that if a magnet is across from its perfect polar, Opposite it will attract. But if there's something in the way, even if that perfect side is there, if there's something in the way, it'll do this. Right? Trying to, you're trying to put 'em together and they just keep not getting together. So I guess what you are saying is that clutter in some ways is keeping people from attracting the things they really want in their lives.

**Tracy McCubbin:** Exactly. That's such a good description. The way that I always thought of it too is that we all have these little parts of us that we think are missing. Right? I didn't get enough love. I don't have enough self-confidence. I don't have enough self-respect and so.

When I was in client's homes, especially after the pandemic and everyone was shopping like, like it was the end of days , you know, it was almost like I saw these sort of visions of like, oh, I'm trying to suck this sweater in cause it's gonna make me feel better, or I'm gonna buy this anti-aging, they'll get me started on that term, and we were trying to magnetize these things, exactly that. We were trying to pull these things into us to fill those holes and that wasn't working. And so when you figure out what's sort of missing and what you're trying to do instead and go, oh, you know what, self-respect. I'm actually not taking into account this career that I built over all these years, or that I was a mother,

my kids have left the house and maybe going out and being of service is gonna help me. So what I tried to do in the book was show people what they think is missing, cuz I don't think it's really missing inside of us, and then how the stuff doesn't fill it. But what are the other things we can do to fill those missing parts of ourselves?

**Gregory Anne:** You tell an interesting story. Well, a number of them, but one that stuck with me in the book was about a woman who had a storage unit. And she asked you to come help, uh, get rid of the things in the storage unit. It had been the

things that were in her mother's home. So you expected furniture and all these kinds of things.

And basically what it was was boxes and boxes of Precious Moments. I, I'm gonna call them ornaments, tchotchkes. She had been told they were valuable, and so she kept them thinking she could sell them and she was paying for the storage unit. But tell us the story of what really was going on.

**Tracy McCubbin:** Yes. That was such an interesting job, the storage unit was 10 by 20. It was huge. And it was full to the brim. And I think by the time she'd called me, she'd had it for five or six years. Wow. So the amount of money that had gone out and she was married to a lovely, still is to a lovely man and they really wanted to start a family.

And so this, the money that was going out for these storage units became a real point of contention. I mean, I think. I remember correctly, it was like something like 2 or \$300 a month. So it was not insignificant. But because her relationship with her mother was so fraught and turned out that her mother had narcissistic personality disorder and there were all sorts of things, but there was some thing, some wound inside of her that felt like if she could sell these tchotchkes, That's even a nice word for them.

And make some money back. She would get something back. She would get a little piece of her mother's love. And I think that's where I talk about that very famous Oprah quote where she says, you know, forgiveness is not expecting the past to be any different, but understanding that you can be different moving forward.

And I'm paraphrasing, but you know, no matter what she did, that relationship was gonna be the way that it was. And so how does she reconcile? And so what I think when she realized A, the things were not valuable, she had to pay my company to take them away.

And the thing that was so kind of beautiful about the full circle is that that love and that acceptance and that family was standing right in front of her. It was her lovely husband. And so when she could get right with that and let all that go, they could start on a family.

And there like literally was this lovely man standing in the middle of the room.

And I'm like, there he is. So I think that when people think that this stuff is gonna do something different,

**Gregory Anne:** I have a practical question because many people listening to this, um, over 50, over 60, are dealing with parents. Remnants, I'm gonna call them remnants homes, stuff in the homes. Some parents do the thing and they get rid of things before, they're planning,

they don't wanna have the kids have that burden. When you talk about these tchotchkes, and I read a story in the New York Times, this man said his mother used to send him, porcelain frogs or lizards or something because she loved them and she thought he would love them, and then he ended up, do we literally put them in the dumpster?

It's hard. To do that kind of thing.

**Tracy McCubbin:** It really is hard. So one of the things, this is such a great question. One of the things I'm trying to normalize is that having conversations about what things are really worth before someone passes. So you know, where did this come from? Is this really a family heirloom?

You know, the family lore around stuff. It's so, you know, this was brought over by my mother, mother's mother on around the ca you know what all the things. So normalizing those conversations. Also, we have the internet now. Get an appraiser, find out what something is actually worth. The tools are out there to get that information and instead of watching Antiques Roadshow and thinking that you have the lottery ticket, really get the information.

I always say to people, just because something's old doesn't mean it's valuable. A lot of things that I come in contact with were mass produced. National Geographics aren't valuable. They're not, give 'em to a kid's art class, give 'em to a teacher, fantastic.

But you're not gonna sell them. So I think people need to do the research and, one of the missions of my company when I help people declutter is that we keep as much out of the landfill as possible. So we donate it, we give it away. I mean, they're amazing.

These buy nothing groups now where people just put up and that like a lot of those tchotchkes that we can't get rid of. We have a couple organizations in LA that do

kids art projects, so they'll take that and break it up into tile for Mosaic. Hmm. So there are ways, and if it's. So, yes, short answer, let's not all throw it in the dumpster.

You may have to do a little bit of work., I wanna make sure that people, um, don't get hung up on making sure something goes to the right place like that, sort of its own thing. Like well I can't get rid of it until it goes to the right person. What I'm saying is trust. When you let go of it, it'll end up where it's supposed to be.

One of the best stories that illustrates this. I had a client whose husband had been very sick, would not deal, wouldn't tell her what things were worth, wouldn't tell her, and he had very specific, he was in the movie business, so it was some very, very specific stuff.

And he could have given her the information, like, call this guy to get rid of these camera things. And he really didn't do her any favor. We cleaned out the house, the garage, the storage unit. And one of the last things she had was this painting. And it always makes me laugh because it's true, but it was literally a painting of dogs playing poker.

**Gregory Anne:** Oh, that painting

**Tracy McCubbin:** That painting. She's like, Ugh. And I was like, well, what about this? And she's like, well, I hate it. I've always hated it his brother painted it. I hate his brother but it hung in every house we ever had. Like I feel so bad and we had this conversation about, you know, you have so many other things that fill you with happiness and fond memories.

Like, you hate this thing, let's let it go. She was like, okay, this is really hard. So we drove to the thrift store to drop it off and we were pulling it out of the back of her car. And this young man came running up like gleefully and he's like, is that a painting of dogs playing poker? And we were like, yes.

And he was like, I'm directing my first play and it's my senior thesis and I need it for a set piece. Oh my goodness. And we were like, here you go. And he ended up giving her tickets to the play and you know, well, that's wonderful stuff. So if it's difficult for you, You know, know that there's probably somebody out there that wants for free.

**Gregory Anne:** Yeah. I think of a, there's a local place that helps., Have an on-campus, um, bunch of small apartments for people that are transitioning. They might be homeless now. They're feeling better and they're gonna help them by letting them stay there. And they have a huge garage that you can go and put things in for the people that are then going to get their own home apartment share.

They need paintings to go on the wall. They need lamps. They need all the ugly chairs. We don't like that aren't exactly pieces of junk. Right. But we maybe got a new chair and we don't need that many chairs. Exactly. So even selling it is one thing, but like you said, let it find a home

**Tracy McCubbin:** I work with a couple organizations who help, young adults who are aging out of the foster care system into apartments. So they'll call me and say like, oh, we just moved four people into an apartment. And I'm like, I got a whole kitchen. I have a warehouse. So we sort through all the donations. I'm like, I got plates, I got cut mugs, and they're good stuff and it's in good condition.

There's that idea of how much time it takes you to actually sell something and look if it's too much, bring in as estate sale company. But also be realistic about what you're gonna get.

And is it worth your time? I had this lady, the other day who, she was in her seventies and she was so great and she had this breakfast room table and they were remodeling the house and making some changes so that they could age in place. She was like, oh, it's so hard to get rid of this breakfast room table.

I mean, I paid so much money for it. I paid, I think she said \$2,500. And I was like, well, how long have you had it? And she's like, well, my second kid wasn't born, so that was 72. And I was like, okay, let's amortize. I do that all the time.

You ate every breakfast at this table for 40 plus years, like you got your money's worth.

And understandably, there are also people who are in a position where that \$25 that they can sell it for is gonna help. Yeah, great. But be realistic about how much you're actually gonna get and the time it's gonna take. Because I think a lot of people hang onto that stuff thinking, well, somebody's gonna pay,

\$5,000 for it and no. A big, big part of my business is helping people relocate their parents, help them clean out houses after somebody's passed away. And, I think for

those of us, I'm 57, my mom's 80. she's starting to do this every time we go visit. She's like, here, take this , you know, drive a car, take this. And, but I think it makes her happy to see us take it and use it now. So I, I'm okay with that.

Mm-hmm.

**Gregory Anne:** That's sweet. Well, speaking of the people with parents that are decluttering and stuff, Many women in the empty nest situation, new to the empty nest, maybe weren't clutterers, maybe weren't collectors, but they suddenly find themselves with this empty space and maybe they felt like, well, I could never indulge my collection tendency for glass ornaments, or whatever.

So they start buying things. Tell us about that.

**Tracy McCubbin:** Yeah, it's such I'm just seeing it, especially after the pandemic really. I'm sure you've discussed this on here, but all the studies around longevity say one of the most important components is connectivity. Friendships, like,

my still today, one of my best friends, we've known each other since we were four years old. If a week goes by that we haven't text or called, we're like everything okay? You know, it's, it's this friendship. She knows my family, I know her family, you know, so that as we age is so important and sometimes when women either retire, so they're not in the workforce in the same way, or their kids are gone, or they sort of start to lose those connections. And what I see them replacing it with is shopping.

It's either the online shopping, which is an addiction. I'm sorry. Yeah. Let's say it what it is. You get a hit a dopamine when you put it in your cart. You get a hit a dopamine when the UPS guy drops it off, but that dopamine doesn't last. So you'd start buying more and more and more. And then also there's sort of this idea that when you go to a store and you're shopping and the salesperson is helping you, they're paid to be friendly.

Right. They're

**Gregory Anne:** some don't actually get that though, .

**Tracy McCubbin:** Yeah, that is true. But this idea that you sort of, that you're getting a human interaction. So what I say to people is, do you have enough human interactions in your life that aren't transactional? I did a consult just this week with

a lovely woman who was retired and her husband had had health issues and COVID was really hard.

They couldn't go to church for two years and she was self-admittedly, she's like, my shopping has gotten, I don't even leave the house and I'm buying new clothes. And you know, one of the first things I said was, can you go back to church? Like, can you wear a mask and go back? And she's like, yes.

And then she said something about playing Majong and I was like, Can you play Majong again? Just once a week, once every two weeks. And so I think for women, especially when our role has been taking care of others, when our role has been raising a family or supporting someone's career or taking care of people in the workspace, and all of a sudden you have that empty space.

It's just be mindful that you're not filling it with shopping.

**Gregory Anne:** Now what, this is a generic question that is probably, um, only in specificity you could answer, but what do you do if you're not a collector or clutter and you live with one, you are married to one or sharing a home with one ?

I am,

**Tracy McCubbin:** this is, I joke all the time. I'm like, marriage counseling is included with my services. You know, the important thing to remember is that someone is very cluttery, they probably heard it their whole life. So how do you have a conversation without shaming them? Right? Like going into it with my way is right and your way is wrong.

Yeah. So the conversation I always start with is, our home is a tool and is it working for us? Can we find what we need? I just give this example because my partner, who we met later in life is messy. He's not cluttery, he's just messy, which feels cluttery to me. And when we were first together, he would lose his car keys all the time, every day, lose and lose and lose them.

I'm like, if you put 'em in this one bowl, that's the key bowl. We all put our keys in here. every day. That's where they are so I think it's having the conversation of the why of decluttering as opposed to you're wrong, I want it my way.

That like, look, this is, if our kitchen counter isn't covered with 10,000 gadgets, we can cook a healthy meal, and also sometimes in that situation, if it's possible to

give the person their own space to be cluttered, . He has an office that I just don't go in.

I just don't go in it. And he works and creates and is amazing and it's all good, and the door shuts and I don't see it. So I think that, but I think it's coming from that place of not understanding that my way is right and your way is wrong, but maybe as a community it will work better.

**Gregory Anne:** This conversation is happening right after the holidays and since I got your book a couple months ago and started reading and seeing you on Instagram, I was getting all your little messages and people who saved birthday cards and Christmas cards, and so I was pulling out all the stuff for Christmas and it was, we were having company, but it wasn't like Christmas card delivery season.

It was early, but we wanted people to think we got a lot of cards just like letting people in on a little secret. Actually, I just wanted to decorate. We put them around a window. So luckily I had a whole stack of old Christmas cards and I picked out the nicest one. But because you were in my head, I was like, I don't need to keep that one and I don't need to keep, but nonetheless, I took them down now and there are a couple with a picture of the person.

I'm gonna keep that because they're sweet and I, you know. But again, it's almost like those tchotchkes, like. Throwing them in the garbage just feels I did it. I did it yesterday. I did a whole bunch of them. You'd be proud of me. But I still have the desire to keep a card when I get a card from a friend cuz we don't get a lot of mail.

What do you say to that?

Well that

**Tracy McCubbin:** is interesting cuz there is something about, we don't get a lot of mail anymore. So now they've become sort of much more precious than they were. You know, I, I say, Have a box, have one nice pretty box that you put, the really special ones. The ones where someone took a time to write you a note.

You know, as opposed to the ones where somebody just scribbles a thank you. Yeah. Or it's a happy birthday. Yeah. But sometimes it's nice to find those. I had a girlfriend call me recently and she had, I think she told me she had three, maybe four banker's, boxes of letters that she had been

moving and dragging. And in our fifties, I've known her since college and she was like, you know what? I finally thought, let me go through these. Cause I don't, I dunno if she was keeping 'em to inspire or write her memoirs or what. She was like half of them, I don't even remember who the person was. I don't even remember the event they were talking about.

She got it down to, I think a box and a half of things that she's like, when I'm 90 and sitting on my rocking chair, I will wanna reread these. So I think that it's always a sort of a pendulum, right? Of like keeping everything, letting everything go, hitting that sweet spot of this makes me feel good, but it's not overtaking my life.

That's the other thing too. That's the other thing is do you have a place to store it? That's why I say get a pretty box and put all your things in it and you know where to get them. You know, and then that opens the door, which I'm sure so many of your listeners. Um, when we get into photographs, you know,

**Gregory Anne:** oh, nevermind, , , I have a tub the size, like I could sit in it and it's full of photos, many duplicates that I occasionally will grab a handful of and get rid of, and then they're also on my phone.

And yeah, that's,

**Tracy McCubbin:** I have taken no one of my favorite things to do when I'm either sort of waiting at the airport or I'm on a plane is I will just go through my phone and delete photos. Like when I'm sort of sitting somewhere where it's like, I was getting my car washed the other day and it was an hour, and I was like, let me just delete.

Also, I had to do it because my phone was yelling at me.

**Gregory Anne:** Storage?

**Tracy McCubbin:** Yeah. . .

**Gregory Anne:** Yeah. That happens to me too. So there's another. Aspect of your work that may not lead to cluttering, but I thought it was interesting in that same vein of empty nesters filling their lives with something. You said, in Los Angeles where I'm based, we joke that people arrive and immediately rent a house

they can't afford, lease a car they could never buy, and put new boobs on their credit card. It's a world of projection. So talk a little bit about how, and does that lead to just, do people continue? I mean, if you run outta money, I guess you can't keep shopping. But what is that about?

**Tracy McCubbin:** You know, it. I think LA specifically too is a place where people come to reinvent themselves and so they think that they need all these trappings, and they need all this stuff and I've gotta drive the right car.

And I, I've gotta do all this. And I think it's interesting though, in kind of a post pandemic world where, you know, we're not going out as much as we used to and all of a sudden you're like, I haven't seen. when's the last time I was in someone else's car? Like, you know, I think that stuff really starts to lose

Its ooph and when I help people clean out after someone has passed, it's so interesting because this stuff actually starts to become a burden. That the stuff that they left behind and what do I do with this? And we don't want this. And then as you're going through a house and friends and neighbors are coming through, um, and you're like, oh, it's the relationships.

It's the relationships. That's what we should be collecting. The experiences and the relationships and look, I'll just say it, the people with more stuff are not happier, just not, they're the same amount of unhappy, happy, same, hard things happen to themselves, like protecting yourself with all the stuff.

It's not gonna make you happier. And I will say this because this is your audience. I live in LA I have a big celebrity clientele I work with, you know, older actresses, models. They're aging. Everyone's aging. They may have different fantastic genes, but they're still aging.

And so this idea of anti-aging and it's not like, yes, I love it, good moisturizer or sunscreen, of course, but this idea that you are going to somehow get ahead of it, you know that you're gonna not participate in that process. You're gonna And I think if you spend so much time focused on the not and the anti that you're missing where you are in the world and the wisdom that you bring.

You know, I think that as women we're just so valued about that. Of course, look you wanna be healthy and you wanna do all that stuff, but they can't see their accomplishments and the difference they've made in the world cuz they're like, oh, my arms are wobbly on the bottom.

**Gregory Anne:** I talked about that in my New Year's or end of the year letter to my people was really about, first of all, it's not New year, new you, that's fine as a concept, but really it sort of makes something wrong. And the idea of going into the new year for me is, yeah, there are things I wanna leave behind, but I want to really check in with what went well.

what can I bring with me? What characteristic did I develop? Or what thing did I overcome? And I think that anytime of the year is a good practice, especially if we see ourselves slipping into that. Well, I don't wanna do videos because I have wrinkles on my upper lip. This is me speaking, right.

I just gotta get over it. I don't spend a whole lot of time worrying about it. I'm not obsessed with it, but it is a thing there and it is because of society. And now it's even worse because of social media.

**Tracy McCubbin:** And everyone's got filters. I mean, I had a moment. I am getting married in March for the first time.

**Gregory Anne:** Yeah, good for you.

**Tracy McCubbin:** And were very excited. And so my niece, my eldest niece is gonna be wearing the dress that I wore to her father's wedding. So it, it's so full circle. And then, and her sister's gonna wear the dress she wore and it's all great. So this was a, I mean, it was 17 years ago and I was like, Ugh.

I was giving it to her and I was like, let me just try it one last time. Let me just make sure. And I just couldn't. I just couldn't zip it up like my rib cage has lived that has nothing like, that's not weight, that's just gravity. My ribs have changed. Yeah. And I couldn't zip it up. And it was like I had to go lay down.

And when I realized was I was taking this moment of sort of feeling sorry for myself about this thing that doesn't fit anymore. And it was taking me out of being present with my family who live in Salt Lake. So I don't see them all the time. The, the joy of the fact that my niece is wearing this dress and her father and we're all celebrating and you know, I have a dear friend who always says this when I'm like, oh, I feel so old.

Oh my God. She's like, well, better than the alternative. And

I'm like,

**Gregory Anne:** I say that I'm with you a hundred percent another year on this side is always a good day.

**Tracy McCubbin:** Exactly. So I think that we are sort of trained to think that this stuff won't happen to us. A client of mine who's a actress, is Patricia Heaton, and she's letting her hair go gray.

And I'm like, amazing. She looks fantastic. And she's like, so focused on the charity work she's doing and all this other stuff, and it's like, that's just great. My best friend just let her hair grow gray. You know, it, it's, I think it's great. I think it's. .

**Gregory Anne:** Yeah, my sister did. She has really nice salt and pepper.

This is what I got. I mean, it, it's great. I'm not complaining, it's just that it's pretty white, but that's okay.

**Tracy McCubbin:** It's fantastic. .

**Gregory Anne:** Yeah. Thanks.

And so the other thing that I wanted to talk about is what kind of, what can you give the audience at large some tips on how to know if they're getting past the point?

Uh, I used to be, uh, in this moderate zone and now I'm sort of creeping over into the too many tschokses zone?

**Tracy McCubbin:** That, uh, that's great. So a couple things to pay attention to. Can you neaten up a room like. your office or the kitchen in 20 minutes or less, can you kind of put everything back in its homes and let's say you got a call from a friend and they're like, oh, I'm running an errand and I have something I wanna drop by.

I could be there in 20 minutes if you can, if it takes you more than 20 minutes to sort of put a room back together. That's a really good litmus test for the stuff is getting at the upper hand also,

Are you finding yourself not going into rooms? Like is there a guest room that you just don't even go into? Is there a garage you don't, you know, park your car in?

Are there, you know, sort of start to pay attention? Like how do you use your house? What's working? Ultimately our homes are a tool.

They're a tool I've said this forever they're a tool to rest us and replenish us and keep us warm. And so if it's not working, like if you find yourself ordering in or going out to dinner every night because the kitchen is just too many stuff, too much stuff on the counters, it's not working for you. So instead of.

sort of going down, I'm a bad housekeeper, I'm lazy. Why is it not working? And most of the time it's because there's too much stuff. There was a little chatter on social media the other day about like, well, if you're a minimalist, you should only have this, you have too many bowls and coffee cups and you should only, and like in our house, there's two of us that drink coffee.

We have eight coffee cups. You know, really we could get away with two, but we also live in California where there's a drought. So I only do dishes once a day. So we have more than one cup of coffee a day, . So, there are these rules, but then there's also what works for you. So I think it's, I think it's paying attention to how a room works.

You know? Do you find yourself sort of avoiding like, ugh, I can't, I don't go in there, I don't wanna deal with that. Are you not putting your clothes away and getting dressed out of the laundry basket ? There are a lot of tips and I think the other thing as we age to remember,

I get so many calls from people who are like, you know, my husband was just diagnosed with early Alzheimer's. Neurologically, we're starting to change less stuff is easier to manage. It's just easier. Like if you don't have a bunch of stuff, you're not moving it around.

You're not fixing it. So as we get into the aging process, simplifying Makes a lot of sense.

**Gregory Anne:** It sure does. I hadn't thought of that. And I think too, when we started the beginning of the call, the emotional, you always look at the emotional component it sounds like, to why this is happening and it must be harder as we age.

Our emotions are, I would say, more sensitive let's say, as we like seventies, eighties, we may not be as resilient emotionally or, and so that may not be the time

to try to get your parents or your, whoever you're helping to start releasing some of these things that you're eventually gonna have to deal with.

Cuz they may feel more like, this is all I have, right? This is me, these are, these things are

me.

**Tracy McCubbin:** Yeah, definitely. I mean, I do consult with people and there's some that you. Just wait until they pass. This is gonna be too hard. One of my all time favorite New Yorker cartoons is that there's an old man and a young man and they're facing a garage and the garage door is open and it's wall to wall, to wall to wall stuff.

And the man with the cane, old man goes, the caption says, someday, son, this will all be yours, . So, you know. . Sometimes that may be the case, but also sometimes, um, I think it's interesting to realize with aging parents that they can't do what they used to do, so sometimes they need help like that's a big part of the process.

Oftentimes it's like I just can't do it anymore. And you know, the value of having someone help you is you don't have to do the physical part. My team comes in and we hold things up and we put 'em in boxes and we move it around. So sometimes, um, I see this a lot about people who want to downsize.

You know, they're in their seventies, they're in their eighties, they're like, we need to move somewhere where we have a little more care. We don't wanna deal with the yard anymore. But they literally, I don't know how I'm going to do this. I don't know how to get from point A to point B. So it's in that downsizing process.

If they can see that, then we can move you. And so I think you have to be sensitive to understanding what they're going through. And it's hard sometimes. I've had so many clients we're downsizing them or someone's passed away and they're like, there just goes my life. You know?

Which is why, I mean, we did this woman beautiful home. Her husband had just passed, and she was like, that was a trip. That was a thing we did. And, but you know that why in this period in our life, why relationships are so much more important. It just so happened at the moment when she was seeing all this stuff go to the auction house,

a friend of hers popped over and they were able to chat and oh, they greeted their kids together. So I think in that, we need to lean on that.

Mm, that's

**Gregory Anne:** a really great point. You do a lot of things on your services page. Let me just tell people your website is the letter D uh, the number, the letter D clutter fly like the creature.com.

So declutter fly. If you're interested in using Tracy's services that's a great way to start and you actually do a virtual decluttering.

**Tracy McCubbin:** I do anywhere in the world. . Yep. I do. It's very successful. It tends to really lean into more accountability and helping someone come up with a work plan. But there where people have held things up, but I'm like, go stay. Go stay. So it definitely works. We also travel.

I have a big enough team that I travel all over the country, so if a project is big enough, I also have referrals in other places. But yeah, we are still taking clients. We're busy. It's great. I have a fantastic team. Fantastic

team.

**Gregory Anne:** I'll bet. But just enough and not too many cuz that would sound like clutter.

**Tracy McCubbin:** It's so funny, I have clients who've been with me since day one. I've been in business 16 years now, and they're like, I remember when it was just you and your station wagon. I'm like, oh, wow.

**Gregory Anne:** Now, did you grow up with this inclination to have sort of neat, uncluttered spaces or is this something that you develop later?

**Tracy McCubbin:** No. Uh, Part of my story is I grew up with a parent who has hoarding disorder. My father has very, very, very severe hoarding disorder. So, uh, control of my space was very important to me. And I also was on a journey where I saw his attachment. And now later in life now I understand it's a disorder. The alcoholic doesn't choose the booze over the family, even though it feels that way. Right. And I also grew up with parents, with grandparents who were depression era and, you know, the famed yogurt cups and margarine tubs and rubber bands.

**Gregory Anne:** Rubber bands and silver foil and .

**Tracy McCubbin:** My grandparents were all farmers. And sort of watching that with the depression era, then how it showed up in my dad. So it's always been there. I think growing up with my dad also made me realize it's not about the stuff.

It's not about the stuff. I've seen the extreme of it, and I, I do wanna say to people because I think a lot of people listening might be thinking this hoarding disorder is usually something somebody's had for their whole life. And it gets worse as emotional trauma happens, but it also can get worse with aging.

Sometimes memory loss, sometimes physical, you can't do things. If an older person is really being affected by their hoarding, it's worth it to take them to a doctor because oftentimes everybody gets so focused on the hoarding that they're sort of missing the cognitive decline.

So if that's something that you're worried about in yourself or worried about in your parents, , I would reach out to doctors. I would start to get some mental health or just go see your regular doctor because you know it, it's not safe to live in that environment. Right. It's not healthy,

The mold, the silver fish, you know, the dust. It is something, but oftentimes in older people, hoarding disorder, will come up and it's actually a sign of cognitive decline as opposed to the disorder.

**Gregory Anne:** Interesting. And there is that program, that television program called Hoarders or something, which gives people a pretty, if you're not familiar with hoarding disorder, that's a pretty real view of what happens.

**Tracy McCubbin:** And if that's something that somebody's worried about, they can go to my website and reach out to me. I have a lot of information about it. There's some books and some websites. And so if this is something that people are worried about, please, please feel, free to reach out to me and I can kind of help 'em navigate.

**Gregory Anne:** That's great. That's really great. So Tracy, I just wanna make another plug for your Make Space for Happiness book for everybody. It's a really easy read. The stories are great, as I said earlier on, and you might recognize yourself in one of the stories of the chapters that say like, oh, you know, let me just take a look.

All of this in service of aging, in full expression, as healthy as possible, living a life that feels good as opposed to feeling trapped or diminished in some way by stuff, right?

**Tracy McCubbin:** Exactly that. You know, one of the things, especially when we help people downsize, one of the greatest things they say is, I just wanna be able to lock the door and go visit my grandkids for a week.

I wanna go take that cruise and not worry about all this stuff. So that's exactly that, it's overplayed at this point, but it's about living your best life. Yeah. And if you're bogged down with all this stuff, you're not. Really with people in our amazing, this amazing period.

Like, I just want you to have freedom and you to have freedom and do what you wanna do and not be managing the stuff or not be beholden to it, you know, now in, I think in, you know, post fifties but sixties, like it's time to slow down the acquiring.

**Gregory Anne:** And there's always so much more to acquire. Oh, according to the marketers.

According to the marketers, we don't have enough yet. And I know that's another, I could get you going on that, but I won't. In interest of time, , thank you so much. This has been really informative and fun and uh, I'm really glad that our paths crossed. Thank you, Tracy.

**Tracy McCubbin:** Thank you so much for having me on.

**Gregory Anne:** You're welcome, people. I'll be back next week with another fabulous guest.