

ORGANIZE 365®

# RESEARCH STUDIES

*The*  
STATE *of*  
HOUSEWORK  
& HOME

**ORGANIZATION**

*in the* **United States**

# ABOUT ORGANIZE 365®

## LISA WOODRUFF

Lisa Woodruff is a productivity specialist, home organization expert, and founder and CEO of Organize 365®. Lisa teaches and motivates the head of household to organize their home and paper with functional systems that work. Lisa is the host of the top rated Organize 365® Podcast where she shares strategies for reducing the overwhelm, clearing the mental clutter, and living a productive

and organized life. She has authored several Amazon bestselling books and is a sought-after trainer and speaker. Lisa has helped thousands of women reclaim their homes and finally get organized with her practical tips, encouragement, and humor through her blog and podcast at Organize365.com.

### ORGANIZE 365® VISION

Through research, targeted surveys, and data analysis, Organize 365® will bring to light the organizational needs of the homeowner. Podcast conversations and book thought leadership will shape and develop the discussion about the “stuff” in American homes.

As the trusted leader in home and paper organization, Organize 365® will be the go-to resource for busy women, future professional organizers, home organizational brands, and the media.

Organize 365® will help the head of household “finally get organized” with home and paper organization courses and products that combine teaching and application of practical organization principles.

### LISA WOODRUFF

Lisa founded Organize 365® to help others reclaim their homes from the clutter. Over the past decade, thousands of people have accessed Lisa's easy-to-follow teaching and Organize 365®'s systems to learn the skills of functional organizing.



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## ORGANIZE 365® MISSION

Organize 365® helps the head of household, in all phases of life, learn the skill of home and paper organization in one year with functional organizing systems that work. By acquiring these skills, they are free to pursue their passions and gift the world with their unique, God-given talent.

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# OVERVIEW

Over the past twenty years, gender roles in the home have changed very little, yet the social environment and technological factors have changed drastically. Women are still considered the primary caregiver and homemaker, often by default rather than decision. For women, their responsibility, roles, and task loads have increased across the board. During that same time period, women have taken on more paid work outside the home, but there is little documentation of change inside the home. Women have been encouraged to be “more productive” but there is little, if any, training available for how to improve productivity at home.

Despite a growing focus on personal and workplace productivity, there is a dearth of information on productivity in the home and around housework. In 1989, Hochschild released her book *The Second Shift* announcing that women did far more housework than men. Although it was well known at the time, this book demonstrated the gender inequality around housework and child care.

Then, in 2013, the Pew Report released information on the way Americans were splitting time between paid work, housework, and child care.

Women have increased their time doing paid work, but caring for a home (not counting childcare) remains a part-time job in the United States requiring an average of 26 hours per week per household.

**WOMEN HAVE INCREASED THEIR TIME DOING PAID WORK, BUT CARING FOR A HOME...REMAINS A PART-TIME JOB IN THE UNITED STATES REQUIRING AN AVERAGE OF 26 HOURS PER WEEK PER HOUSEHOLD.**

Despite the lack of rigorous research, there is a general sense (at least from women) that women carry a disproportionate load in running their households. Eve Rodsky addresses this dynamic in her book *Fair Play*. Rodsky looks at 100 household tasks and gives families a shared vocabulary and tools for dividing the tasks. Rodsky identifies that any given task has three parts - conception, planning, and execution. In order to successfully “own” and complete a task,

the responsible individual must carry out all three parts.

Starting around 2017, there is a growing acknowledgement of the burden on women to manage the “mental load” of the household. In some circumstances, the phrase “emotional labor” is also used to describe this previously invisible workload. In 2017, Hartley wrote “Emotional labor is the unpaid job men still don’t understand” when describing asking her husband to do the work of finding and hiring a housecleaner. Similar to Rodsky, Hartley elucidates that there is a burden on women to recognize the need for housework and to take the initiative in getting it done. Many times, women are told “just tell me what you need or how I can help” - and that is the exact problem where women shoulder the mental load and emotional labor.

Furthermore, unless these domestic and household tasks are generally unpaid and invisible within the family. Occasionally, families will elect to hire outside help for some of their household tasks, but even then, someone must hire, direct, and pay these assistants.

Learn more about  
Organize 365® by visiting  
[organize365.com](http://organize365.com)



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“...WOMEN DO **2.6 TIMES** THE AMOUNT OF UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK THAT MEN DO.”



According to Carpenter in *Money Magazine* (2018), “A new report from the United Nations estimates women do 2.6 times the amount of unpaid care and domestic work that men do. Childcare, cooking and cleaning, even things like picking kids up from school or taking elderly parents to the doctor — these tasks disproportionately fall to women.”

In order to better understand the state of American housework and the role of gender and generation on the perception of housework, Organize 365® sponsored research in early 2021. The survey was designed to explore the primary barriers and obstacles that prevent individuals from reaching their housework and organizational goals.

## INTRODUCTION

Women in the 21st century are not able to live life to their full potential and they struggle to reach their goals on a daily or weekly basis. Organize 365® has a hypothesis that this may be due to a lack of organization in the home. Organize 365® believes that every woman has a unique purpose and personal gifts that only she can share with the world. By better understanding how housework and paper management affect women, learning the skills of organization can free them to focus on their contributions outside of the home.

Organization is a teachable and learnable skill; therefore, anyone can learn how to be organized. Organize 365® is sponsoring and conducting quantitative research to understand what is happening with women in their homes in 2021. Over the last 50 years, there has been a lack of research into the role of women at home and in housework in general.

To remedy this, Organize 365® has initiated empirical research collecting current data to understand what is currently happening among women in 21st-century households. In this first survey, four major questions were addressed:

1. What is the state of housework in contemporary America?
2. What is the emotional impact of housework in contemporary America?
3. What are the barriers and struggles related to reaching housework and home organization goals?
4. How does paper affect household organization?

The initial data collection was conducted during February and March 2021, and some of the results are highlighted in this publication.



# METHODOLOGY

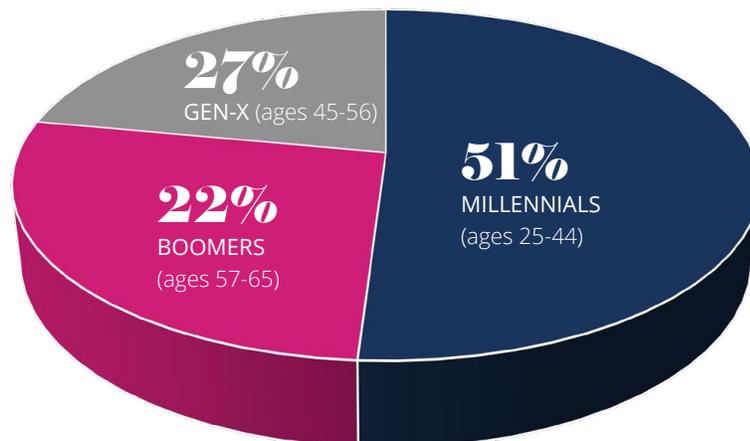
**This custom research was jointly designed by Organize 365® and The Center for Generational Kinetics and conducted as a national survey in the United States in early 2021. The IRB was obtained through Harrisburg University.**

A total 1,505 US participants aged 25-65 were surveyed. The sample was weighted to the U.S. Census for age, geographical region, gender, and ethnicity. A 500 person female oversample was used to ensure a diverse cross section of women and a statistically relevant sample.

An online survey of twenty questions was distributed to participants via a ten minute survey. Survey results were kept anonymous and not linked to any specific participant.

Figures in this publication are statistically significant at 95% confidence level and the margin of error is +/- 3.1 percentage points.

## RESEARCH SAMPLE BY GENERATION



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Full sample: 1,505 participants, with a 500-person female oversample

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GENERAL  
POPULATION  
SAMPLE  
(1,002 participants)



48%  
MALE



52%  
FEMALE

FAMILY  
DYNAMICS



60%  
MARRIED



40%  
UNMARRIED



57%  
HAVE CHILDREN



33%  
NO CHILDREN



68%  
EMPLOYED



32%  
UNEMPLOYED

# RESEARCH STRATEGY: NATIONAL QUANTITATIVE STUDY

The survey was designed to address four major questions:

- 1. The State of Housework** - to explore and uncover the definition, concept, approach, and perception of housework in contemporary America.
- 2. The Emotional Impact of Housework** - to understand and evaluate the emotional impact that housework has on an individual, including the significance of outside influences and expectations.
- 3. Barriers and Struggles** - to explore the primary barriers and struggles that prevent individuals from reaching their housework and organizational goals.
- 4. The Weight of Paper** - to understand the prevalence, impact, and disruption caused by each of the five paper categories in the home and test the significance of implementing specific organizational solutions to each of these paper challenges.



For questions about *who* handles the housework, men and women answered separately identifying the person who *typically handles* cleaning the home, home maintenance, tasks of daily living, and home organization. Because each gender answered separately, the totals do not add up to 100%.

For other questions, participants were able to select their top two to three responses, so again, totals may not add up to 100%.

# KEY FINDINGS

The study demonstrated several key findings about the state of the home in the 21st Century. A national survey of US men and women clearly shows that women hold themselves responsible for household tasks more often, and feel relief rather than relaxation when the tasks are completed. Household tasks are difficult to measure because they have multiple components that have previously not been well identified or defined. This initial research into the gender and generational differences around these household tasks provides a starting point for updating our understanding of household work levels.

- Women carry most of the load for housework and more often report a negative impact on their lives as a result of their household responsibilities.
- Women are more likely to do tasks “as soon as” they need to be done, while men have a higher threshold for deferring.
- Lack of motivation and exhaustion is most often what prevents people from completing some household tasks; and this is more true for women than men.
- Most women (86%) think organization is a **learnable skill**.

For women an organized home is mostly about appearance where for men it is more functional (being able to find things) or a mood (being able to relax). This lack of shared agreement on vocabulary and outcomes is likely a driver to the reason for the frustration and resentment among people who share a home.

Housework has a significant emotional impact for Americans. Women are both less positively and more negatively impacted by housework than men.

The results for each kind of housework will be described in the following pages. As the research evolves, it will be prudent to continue to define and explore these different kinds of housework tasks. Organize 365® will be conducting more research and presenting future findings on each of these kinds of work.

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86%

OF WOMEN THINK  
ORGANIZATION IS  
A LEARNABLE SKILL.

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For the purpose of this particular study, housework did not include any childcare. According to the 2020 US Census, only 40% of households had children under 18 years old (census.gov, 2020).



**75%**  
OF AMERICANS  
THINK THAT  
HAVING AN  
ORGANIZED  
HOUSE IS A SIGN  
OF CONFIDENCE.



# HOUSEWORK DEFINED

When creating this survey, Organize 365® and CGK identified a void in consistent definitions of housework. For the purpose of this study and to facilitate meaningful discussions, the following four definitions of housework were developed and defined in the survey.



## **Cleaning Your Home**

includes tasks such as sanitizing the bathroom, sweeping or mopping floors, and dusting.



## **Home Maintenance**

includes tasks such as appliances, indoor or outdoor repairs, and lawn care



## **Tasks of Daily Living**

includes tasks such as errands for your home, grocery shopping, paying bills, and laundry



## **Home Organization**

includes tasks such as mail, papers, drawers, pantry, closets, and garage

# CLEANING YOUR HOME

Cleaning your home is defined as “anything a house cleaner or cleaning company would do while cleaning your home.” This includes tasks that remove dirt like vacuuming, dusting, wiping countertops, mopping floors, and sanitizing the bathroom.

## WHO CLEANS THE HOME?

As generations get older, females have more responsibility for housework. Housework is often shared or divided in younger generations. The following graphs illustrate who bears the burden of housework, as answered by females in the research group. The top 3 of 4 possible answers are recorded here (me, spouse/partner, everyone, or hired help).

### MILLENNIALS



■ **3%** SPOUSE/PARTNER

■ **8%** OTHER (EVERYONE)

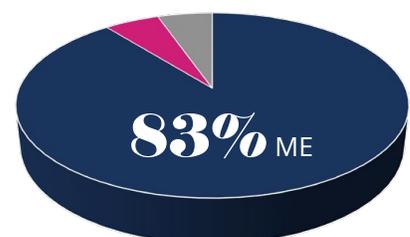
### GEN-X



■ **4%** SPOUSE/PARTNER

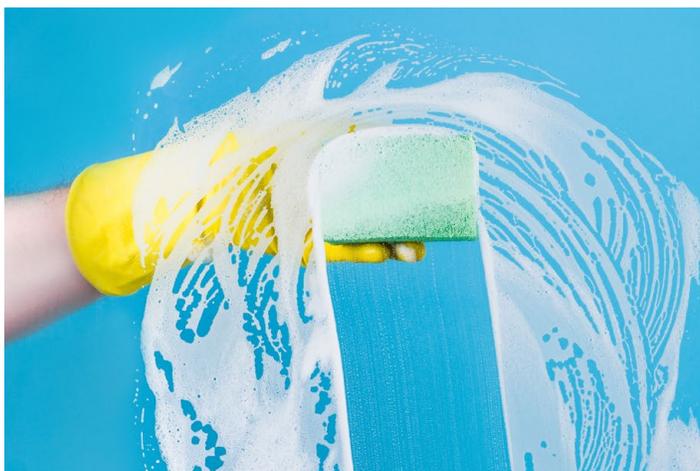
■ **8%** OTHER (EVERYONE)

### BOOMERS



■ **5%** SPOUSE/PARTNER

■ **5%** OTHER (EVERYONE)

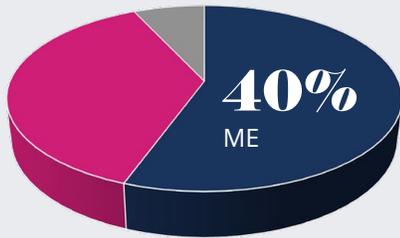


## HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOUR HOME IS CLEAN?

When questioned, the general population was given four possible responses: accomplished, relieved, relaxed, and in control. **Males reported feeling accomplished (34%) and relaxed (29%). Females reported feeling accomplished (42%) and relieved (33%).**

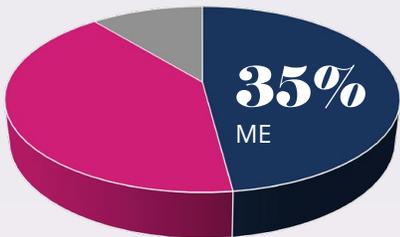
FEMALE  
RESPONSES  
BY GENERATION

MILLENNIALS



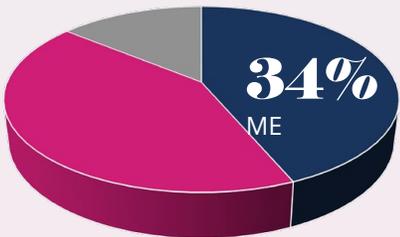
- 27% SPOUSE/PARTNER
- 5% OTHER (HIRED HELP)

GEN-X



- 30% SPOUSE/PARTNER
- 8% OTHER (HIRED HELP)

BOOMERS



- 33% SPOUSE/PARTNER
- 11% OTHER (HIRED HELP)

HOUSEWORK TYPE 2

# HOME MAINTENANCE

Home maintenance tasks are the tasks that a landlord or property manager would be responsible for in a rental property. These are tasks like painting, fixing broken items, appliance maintenance and repair, and lawn care. This can also include home improvements, renovations, and additions.

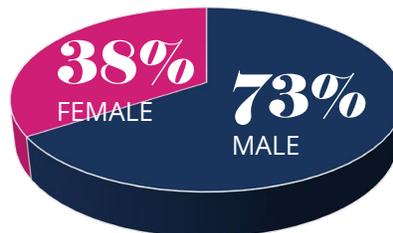
How do you feel when your home maintenance is complete?



Men are more often the point person on home maintenance. This is the *only* household task in this study where men have the majority of the responsibility. However, home maintenance is the *only* household task where people hire outside help on a significant basis.

## Who is responsible for home maintenance?

Me:\*



Distribution of workload:\*

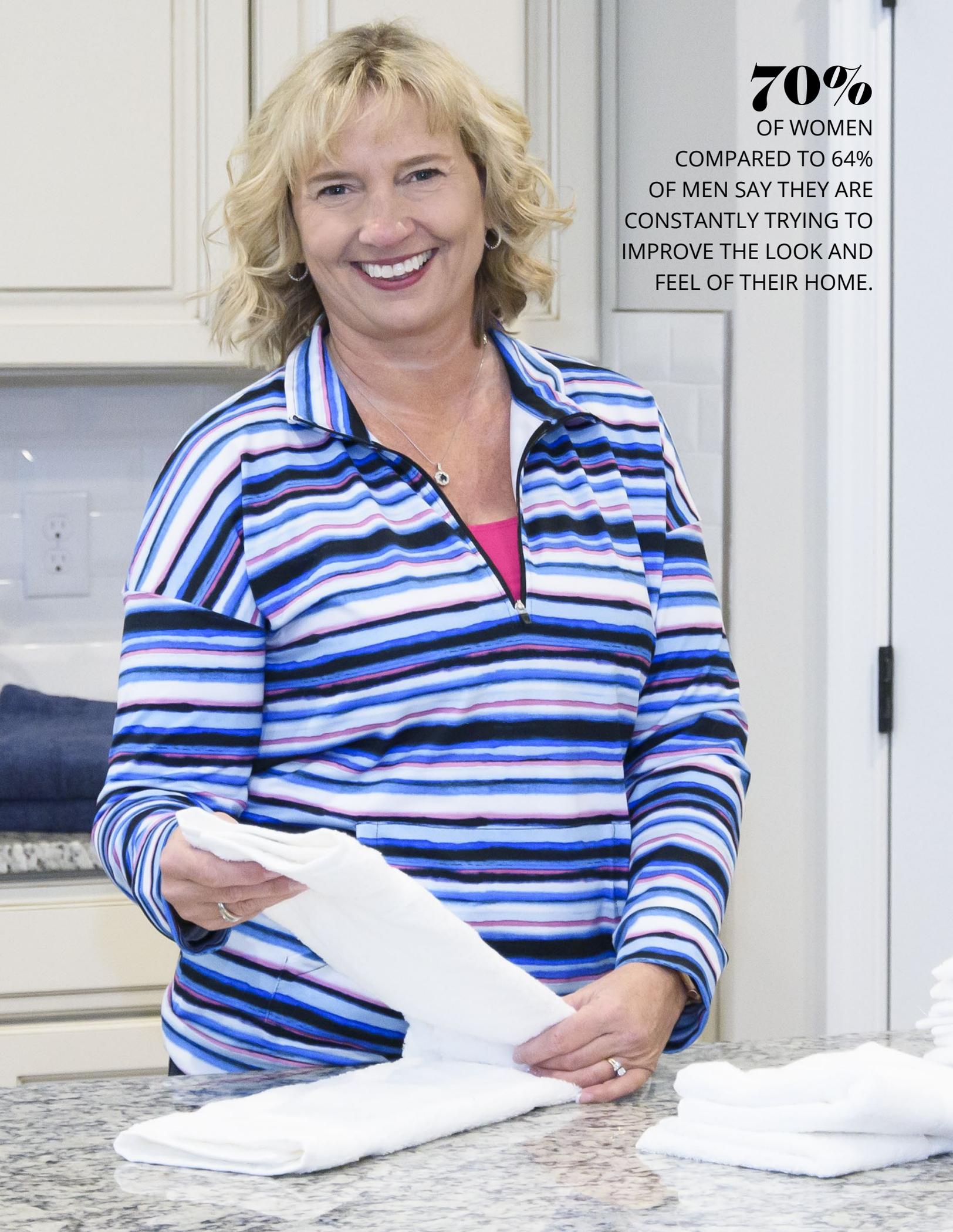


\*Information gathered from the general population sample



**63%**

OF WOMEN PUT  
PRESSURE ON  
THEMSELVES TO  
COMPLETE THEIR  
HOUSEWORK



**70%**

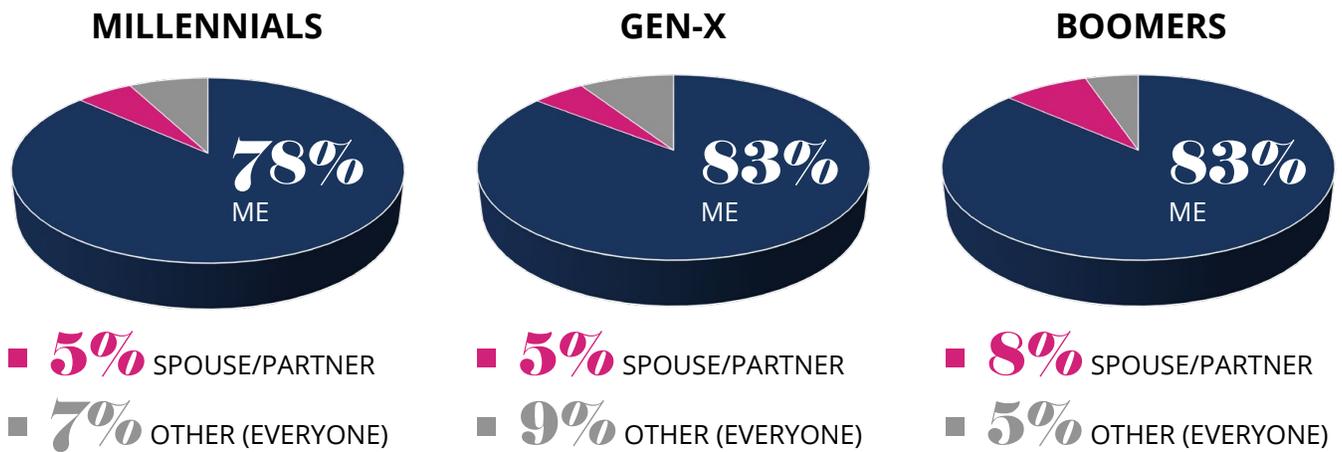
OF WOMEN

COMPARED TO 64%  
OF MEN SAY THEY ARE  
CONSTANTLY TRYING TO  
IMPROVE THE LOOK AND  
FEEL OF THEIR HOME.

# TASKS OF DAILY LIVING

Tasks of daily living are tasks that are required for survival. This includes tasks like getting dressed and personal hygiene. When applied to household tasks, tasks of daily living are grocery shopping, paying bills, laundry, and errands related to household chores.

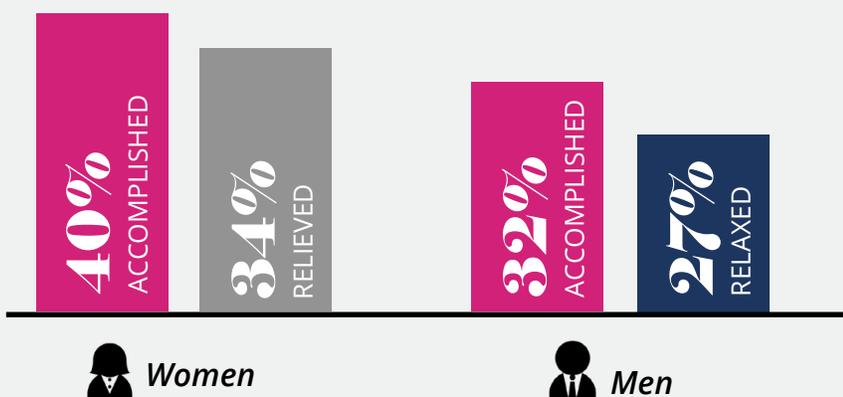
## Who does the household tasks of daily living?\*



\*\*Information gathered from the female sample only

## How do you feel when your tasks of daily living are complete?\*

\*Information gathered from the general population sample



## Barriers

In the general population sample (N=1002), lack of motivation (36%) and being too tired (29%) are what most prevents subjects from completing tasks of daily living regularly. Not knowing how to do these tasks or not having the right supplies are the least likely reasons for not completing these tasks.



**36%**  
LACK OF  
MOTIVATION

BOTH MEN AND WOMEN AGREE THAT THEY CONSIDER THEIR HOME TO BE ORGANIZED MOST WHEN EVERYTHING APPEARS TO BE IN ITS PLACE.

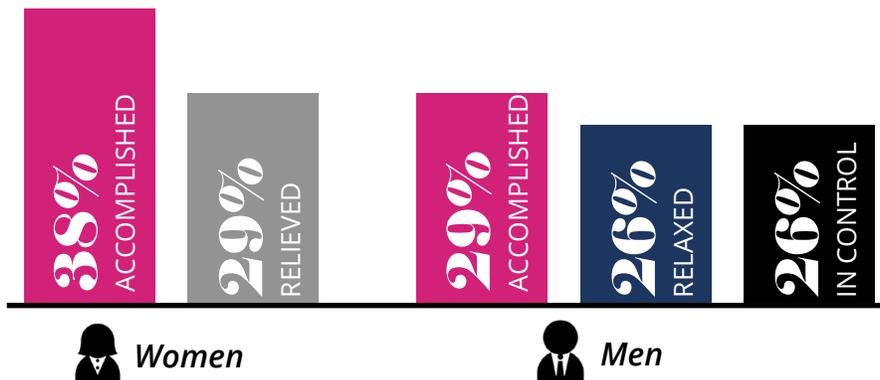


# HOME ORGANIZATION

Home organization tasks are the tasks that keep a home decluttered, organized, and productive. This includes mail management, household paperwork management, drawer organization, pantry stocking and organization, closet organization, and garage organization.

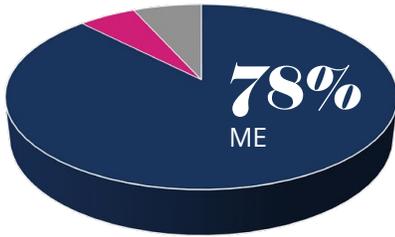
How do you feel when your home is organized?\*

*\*Information gathered from the general population sample*



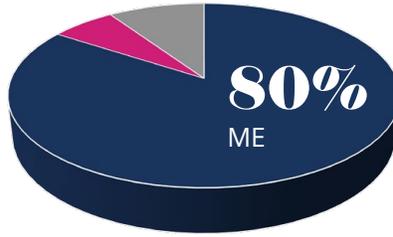
## Who does the household tasks of home organization? \*\*

### MILLENNIALS



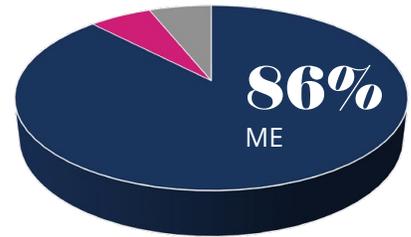
- **5%** SPOUSE/PARTNER
- **6%** OTHER (EVERYONE)

### GEN-X



- **6%** SPOUSE/PARTNER
- **9%** OTHER (EVERYONE)

### BOOMERS



- **6%** SPOUSE/PARTNER
- **6%** OTHER (EVERYONE)

\*\*Information gathered from the female sample only



# THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF HOUSEWORK

**WHEN IT COMES TO HOUSEWORK, WOMEN CARRY MOST OF THE LOAD FOR CLEANING, TASKS OF DAILY LIVING, AND HOME ORGANIZATION.**



The mental load and emotional labor of managing a home falls disproportionately to women. This work is often unacknowledged and definitely unpaid. Women are aware of this labor, although they may lack the vocabulary to describe or identify it.

Men are more often the point person on home maintenance, but that is also the task that is most often hired out. Although all people feel “accomplished” when any of these tasks are completed, women most often feel “relieved” while men feel “relaxed.”

Women also are more likely to do tasks “as soon as” they need to be done, while men seem to have a higher threshold for waiting or deferring household responsibilities.

**“I complete tasks as soon as it needs to be done”**



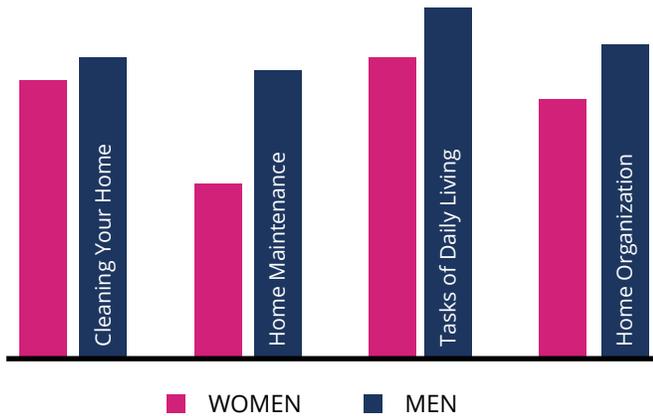
Finally, for women an organized home is mostly about appearance whereas for men it is more functional (being able to find things) or a mood (being able to relax). This lack of shared agreement on vocabulary and outcomes is likely a catalyst to the frustration and resentment among people who share a home.

*Continued on page 17*

## GENDER GAP IN CONFIDENCE

Despite being responsible for the bulk of household tasks, women report feeling less confident than men in all housework situations.

**“I feel completely or somewhat confident in my abilities for these housework situations”**



Housework has emotional impacts for both men and women. A house that is clean, maintained, has tasks of daily living done, and is organized can affect how a person feels about themselves and their home. As discussed above, there is a gender difference in how men and women describe the impact of completed housework on their emotional state. Additional questions within the survey help to clarify areas impacted by housework for both men and women.

## POSITIVE IMPACTS

- **My Family** - among both males and females, their household responsibilities most positively affect their families. Males (47%) and females (41%) report positive impacts on the family most often.
- **Males** (42%) next highly rate the positive impacts of household responsibilities on their **ability to focus and complete other tasks**.
- **Females** (42%) second highest positive impact of household responsibilities is their **ability to set goals**.

*Continued on page 18*



**BOTH MEN AND WOMEN REPORT THEIR HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES BENEFIT THEIR FAMILIES MOST OFTEN.**



MILLENNIALS ARE THE MOST LIKELY GENERATION TO BE BOTH POSITIVELY AND NEGATIVELY IMPACTED IN ALL AREAS OF THEIR LIVES BY THEIR HOUSEWORK RESPONSIBILITIES.

OVERALL, WOMEN REPORT THEIR HOUSEWORK RESPONSIBILITIES AS IMPACTING THEIR LIVES MORE NEGATIVELY THAN MEN.

### NEGATIVE IMPACTS

- **Mental Health** - for men and women, the negative impacts of household responsibilities manifest mostly as anxiety and depression.
- Both males (16%) and females (30%) rate household responsibilities as having the greatest negative impact on **anxiety**.
- Both males (15%) and females (24%) rate household responsibilities as having the second greatest negative impact on **depression**.



**48%** OF WOMEN RARELY FEEL SATISFIED WITH THE CLEANLINESS OF THEIR HOME



# ONGOING RESEARCH



Organize 365® is committed to ongoing research regarding home and paper organization. Please see [organize365.com/research](https://organize365.com/research) for the most up to date information.

## CITING THIS RESEARCH

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# HOW ORGANIZE 365® CAN HELP

Find your home organization solution at [organize365.com/shop](http://organize365.com/shop).



There are solutions to the overwhelm of the mental load and emotional labor. In this survey, 86% of women believe that organization is a learnable skill. Organize 365® has been teaching organization and providing physical tools for nearly ten years. Empowering women and men with the skills of organizing can make a difference in our homes all over America.



## Cleaning Your Home -

Organize 365®'s exclusive and proprietary Household Operations Binder has a cleaning schedule and several resources to help you stay on top of your household cleaning tasks.



## Home Maintenance -

The Household Reference Binder can help you track purchases, maintenance tasks and schedules, and keep track of frequently used vendors.



## Tasks of Daily Living -

Organize 365®'s Sunday Basket® is a solution for your kitchen counter paperwork, but it also acts as an external brain to help collect and organize all of those thoughts related to keeping a household functioning. It's a place to gather notes to yourself, to-do items, and shopping list items. The Sunday Basket® will:

- Collect incoming paperwork and help you apply the Paper Solution™
- Hold everything until you have time to process each item
- Help you plan your week for maximum efficiency
- Keep your papers at your fingertips so you can take action on them
- Teach you the skills of organization for paper



## Home

## Organization -

Organize 365®'s 100 Day Home Organization Program is a whole home solution to your organizational problems. The program helps you thrive:

- Complete daily actionable tasks that take just 15 minutes a day—so you can make steady progress and take back your home and your life.
- Learn a sequential organizational process that begins with the easier spaces to tackle—you'll strengthen your organizing muscles as you move through your home.
- Become a lifetime member of a supportive community—and get all the ideas and encouragement you need to refine your methods over the course of days, months, and years.

# ORGANIZATION — is a — LEARNABLE SKILL

## HOW I TRANSFORMED MY LIFE AND RECLAIMED MY HOME IN 365 DAYS

It is not a matter of *if* you will experience unorganized periods in your life, it is a matter of *when*. Lisa's relatable story will have you laughing out loud and emotionally releasing the clutter that you have in your life and in your home.

On her way home from a long day of teaching, Lisa realized she was failing in every aspect of her life. With her 40th birthday looming in the distance, she wondered when she would feel like a success. Her days started at 5 am: waking to get the kids ready for school, working as a teacher all day herself, and then arriving home around 5pm just in time to start the housework. Dinner, dishes, laundry, kid's homework, her lesson plans... passing out at midnight just to do it all again tomorrow.

"You're not a good teacher." Those words were on a replay loop in Lisa's mind as she drove home. Lisa added to that list: I'm not a good wife, mother, housekeeper, or friend. The list was endless. Lisa found herself at her personal rock bottom. She was not sure *if*, or how, she could reclaim her once organized, purposeful, and productive life, but she couldn't go on living this way.

**AMAZON BEST-SELLING  
AUTHOR LISA WOODRUFF**

In her memoir, *Organization is a Learnable Skill*, Lisa Woodruff, author and founder of Organize 365, shares her raw and unfiltered thoughts as she takes you along on her transformational journey as she transitioned from a reactive person who moved with the ebbs and flows of life to the proactive person she is today. Lisa walks through the mindsets and emotional challenges that she experienced during the year that she reclaimed her home and life.



Learn more at [organize365.com/book](https://organize365.com/book).





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# SAVE 5 HOURS EVERY WEEK

[sundaybasket.com](http://sundaybasket.com)

