



Episode Transcript – 011 – Letting Go of Stuff

Introduction

Welcome to Remembering to Be Me, a podcast that helps you find your own way to a place of authenticity and service of others in a world that is ever changing. I am your host, Jenn Shallvey and I invite you to join me on a journey of reflection, insight, and wisdom, as well as be challenged into growth and change. The choice is always yours. I simply hold the space, and offer an invitation and support you in the process. As you find your own way to balance the ups and downs, be rewarded with freedom, contentment, happiness, acceptance, peace of mind, and clarity. Trust yourself, discover more of the real you and share your wonderful, amazing whole self with the rest of the world. This is not always easy. So, start with this simple message to yourself, "Be me, and when I forget, remember to be me."

Main podcast

Hi, this is Jenn Shallvey and welcome back to the Remembering to Be Me Podcast. Today I am going to take you through a topic that is part of a series on letting go and today's is all about letting go of stuff. If you listened to the introduction, you would know that I am going to go through a few different areas because I want to help you work through this experience that I think we all have, where we need to let go of things that are getting in the way or holding us back from being all we can be. And I picked 'stuff' as the first topic, because we perceive that as the easiest, though, it can sometimes unravel things and you find out that it's actually not as easy as you think. But at least for today, we will go through and I will help you with some ideas, some thoughts on letting go of things.

So what do you classify as stuff? That's actually a really important question. And I think that it goes into all manner of things. So it could be physical items. It could be the furniture in your house. It could be paperwork. There's a whole range. I basically think if it's outside of you and it's tangible, then it is stuff. And I'm going to use that really crude word, because I don't need to use anything like objects or things like that, because then it gets a bit too fancy. So let's just stick with the word stuff.

Why does it even matter to you? Because I'm thinking this topic matters, but why would it even matter to you? Because that's a personal thing, isn't it? And I think it matters because we all live with very different levels of attachment to stuff. We would say that it's not attachment to things that you probably are always aware of. And sometimes it's actually things that you aren't aware of. But this isn't about decluttering your space or clearing your space or organising your space. That's a different topic. For this episode, I'm simply offering you some food for thought, some ideas, some examples, some suggestions on how you can discover for yourself what it is for you.

I also need to put a bit of a proviso in here because decluttering and minimalism and things like that have become quite topical. There are TV shows and experts that come in and tell you how to organise your life. If you're like me, you probably have gone through a few of those. You also have probably cringed as much as I have when you look at the blatant obviousness, sometimes of people's need for other support. And it's not just about whether you put something in a pretty box. It's actually so much more than that. So therefore I'm coming at this from a another level, which is about you as a person, being able to live your life better, freer, clearer, that kind of thing, and not so much about whether, you know, which box your shoes should go in. And that's fine for that. Because I've also had lots of fun organising things. My sister's one of the most amazing organising people I've ever met in my life. So some people just have a knack for that, right? And that makes life so much



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easier for us. But this isn't about that. This is about saying I have things in my life that I feel that I'm sort of stuck on or attached to. And they're getting in the way, not literally physically, but getting in the way of me living freely or living better than I am now. That's just a way of describing this.

Another thing that also is important is to think about this being your journey, not somebody else's. I've noticed as well, that there are a lot of people who are told by others that you need to do this, or you need to do that around your stuff. So you might have because of these TV shows because of these books, because of some of these experts or because you're related to a person like my sister, who's amazing at organising, you go, gosh, I want to be able to do that. So you might also have unrealistic expectations that you can live that life. I don't think that it's actually that easy.

Another thing that I also thought about before in doing this episode is that expression. And you may not have heard this, but if you have, then you'll understand what I'm talking about. That is what is one person's junk is another person's treasure. And I love that phrase. I love it so much because it says it all. In fact, we could actually say it about life. You know, one person's life is fabulous and to somebody else, it's not. Because we're all individuals. I actually feel like stuff is an expression of who we are and therefore it can reflect back on that. So it says a lot about us and others when we judge people for the stuff they have. So somebody might come in and look at your things and go, Oh, I can't believe you have that. Or why do you have that? It shouldn't matter. It's your world, your life not theirs. Right? And there are so many factors and so many reasons why one person keeps certain things and another does not. And there's also another factor why somebody might organise their life clutter-free and another one may be perceived as having clutter and then therefore they had too much stuff. That's an external expectation. That's often laid over everything that we're doing when we're looking at things and you can't help it because it's around us all the time.

There is an element, and I know it's been also shown in TV shows and articles, and I actually think that those are almost voyeuristic, but we would agree that there are aspects of having too much stuff that can also be a challenge. You may or may not be in that category with some things. The way you know, that is if your health is challenged because of it or your state of being is challenged, because that is a way of living that you can't cope with. Then maybe you have a different level here, and that's not what this episode's about. So if you feel that it's all overwhelming and that your living environment and your level of stress is really off the rails because of the things you have, then I would strongly encourage you to find somebody to support you in that process. And there are plenty of people out there that do this because there are amazing people that can come in and say, what's the real reason this is happening and work with you on multiple levels.

But for this episode, I'm going to assume that your, you've got a healthy relationship with your things you just are feeling or something's happening, where you say, I need to let go of some of those, or I'm feeling this urge to let go, or I want to let go. And I don't know why or what I should let go of or how. So this episode is about processing that part of your life, well about what you have in your world. Also it is about helping you to develop an approach that you can take forward that actually will be applied in your life, not just today, but going forward that works for you.

Another thing that is useful in this is to think about your personality and what your preferences are around your space. I'm not sure if you're familiar with the MBTI assessment or diagnostic tool, if you've done that or Myers-Briggs, if you've heard it that way. But I used to spend a lot of time working on that with clients in teams and individuals. Just recently, I helped a friend, because I had an old one and I did a bit of that for her, just for fun, because she had not done it before. It made me



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also remember that the preferences that you have in that are also relevant. So there's a particular dimension. I'm not sure if you would actually know this, if you've never done this, but there's a dimension that is looked at and it's about how you organise your space and in looking at how you organise your space, you are either structured or not structured.

What I really like about that tool when I used to use it was that it reaffirmed your preference the way you like to live. It didn't say that you could or couldn't do it. It just said, my preference is this, and there was nothing wrong with it. It said, you're okay if you're the one who likes things all over the place, but you know where they are. Whereas the person who likes everything structured and in order, they're also equally okay. Neither one is better than, or right. I think that personality factor is really important because first of all, knowing who you are in your preferences, the way you like to live your life will give you an indication around why you might have your space, the way you have it. Then it does not preclude you from learning how to organise it better if you would like to.

Then the other factor is that letting go of things or stuff is always a choice. Sometimes, and this is where it may sound like I've just gone back against my own self, the choice may not be yours. You have agency in that you have a control factor in that. Because if you are the one who's deciding that you are going to let go, it's a lot easier, isn't it? It's coming from you. It's your decision, you are directing it, you are making all of the steps happen.

But what happens if you don't have a choice? So for example, what if you were moving house and you've gone from a really big place to a really small place and you're going, let's say far away so it's not really practical to store anything in storage. And you also maybe don't want that option. What do you do? How do you let go of stuff in that situation?

And you have choice in there, but the choice of actually letting go may not be within your control. And there could be other reasons too. Could be things in your house that it could be, there are so many other reasons why something else is making you have to do this. That would be very personal.

One of the things I would do with you, if I was sitting with you, is to ask you a question and it would be a really simple one. I'd say, 'if you had a thing taken away from you, how would you react?' Or 'if something in your things broke or you had to get rid of it, because it didn't work anymore or someone stole it or just think of the most extreme example and say, how would I react if that happened?' That's a test because the minute I say that, and you imagine that might have happened, or maybe even has, you'd say, Oh, what about this? What about this? What about this? And all of a sudden those things that you really have an attachment to come up. And there's nothing wrong with that. That's, what's so amazing about this as there's nothing wrong with that. It's just an indicator of where you're at right now.

For example, I have in my house, some amazing piece of furniture that I have had passed down to me and my family. And I went through a lot of effort to get them to me and have them in our house. For years I've been protective of them. Then I remember that there was a point at which I shifted where I think I had done a lot of grieving and healing, and I got to this place where I said, I'm okay. Now I really miss the person. And I missed the experiences that were related to this item. But if something happened to that item, I'd be okay because I still am bigger than that item. I'm more than that item. But I didn't have that ability when I first got the item, it was so important for me to have this item in my house. I cannot even begin to describe it to you. I built stories about it. I told everybody about it. I, every time someone would sit down at the table, I'd tell them about the table.



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And so I have a long history of being attached to it, but it was there for me because it helped me in my healing journey. And so I look at that as, okay, that was part of my process that worked for me. Somebody else, it didn't really matter, right? Didn't need that. But that was something that worked for me.

Another, I think it may sound trivial to you, but this is a test that I use some times to see if you are intuitively picking up what you need or don't need in your life. It's the old flip the coin. So what I'd say to you is think of the thing that you are attached to, or that you're considering whether you need to let go of and imagine that thing or hold it in your hand, whatever, and then flip a coin and pick either heads or tails. And let's say, heads means you keep it and tails means that you let go of it. In that instant moment that you actually get the result what is your reaction inside of you?

Let's say the reaction was heads and it said, keep the item. Are you happy? Or are you sad? Because it's the reaction, it's the response, it's that internal part of you, that's telling you the real message about that thing. Not whether it was heads or tails. It's not really a flip of a coin that you decide to get rid of something it's really, what do you feel inside of you? That is the test.

So as I go through some of the other ideas and this process, keep that in mind, that what really matters is not what others think not what is to you, not what some methodology tells you, not what some checklist tells you or a book or whatever. What really matters is what you feel inside is right for you. That's the best way to handle this.

So in suggesting a process to follow anything that I've put out in this podcast is simply there as an offer of an idea that you can take and incorporate, test, try, see what works for you. And again, we're building up a way of letting go that is your way. Again, we're trying to start with what we think is easier, which is things, right?

In that context, may I suggest a couple of ways to frame the exercise as well. You can see the situation with love and acceptance. Embrace this whole process as something that you are doing, because you love yourself that you are not, um, berating yourself over this, that you're not listening to the inner critic inside of you saying you should have gotten rid of this five years ago. Just be loving and accepting of it.

At the same time, be super self-aware about what comes up for you. As I said, with that flip of the coin test, for example, you had a moment where something probably may have come up. If it was something that you can let go of, it probably wouldn't trigger anything. Right? But what if you weren't ready to let go of, and you were being told to let go of it. There would be something else going on that you needed to still process. That's what I mean, by being aware. So pick up on your own internal signals as you're going through this. This is something that you sort out over time. The why you feel like that may not come up right away. It is something that you work on later. So you might think, okay, I'm not ready to let go of that item. I'll put it aside for now. Maybe later, I'll look at that and figure out why. It's about process.

In each of these topics that I'm doing in this series, I'm introducing different tools, different ways to let go. Some of them will be easily applied to let's say things for example, and less easily applied to phases of your life, for example. So you have to work through how that goes for you. There is no one source nor a guide or a book that you can refer to that tells you exactly how to do what's right for you. I would continue to refer to you. I would call these basic keeping your toolkit techniques for anything in life, but for this, you can do them as well. And they would include things like journaling,



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meditation. Um, I've got another couple of they're called quadrant check-ins and timeline analysis. And those are fancy words I just applied to some pretty easy things to do.

With journaling if you haven't done journaling, then with letting go, I like to maybe use the journal as a way to tell a story about what I'm feeling or how I'm going. Another way I use journaling is I might have an inner dialogue with myself and I might write to me about something. So I'm kind of coaching myself. And another way is if it was letting go something, I might even have a journal dialogue with the thing that I'm letting go. I might go through that step of writing and asking about that. That's just to get your own insight.

Similarly, I would do the same in meditation. I might sit in my meditation and just be with that process of letting go. If a particular item in my life is triggering something in me, I might sit with that and then wonder why. And I might work with that to say, am I ready to let that go? If not, why? And then what do I need to do with that? Or is it in my life, but with a different purpose now, that kind of thing.

Then another area that I use as a, I guess, a technique, I call it the four quadrant check-in. And I've used this in lots of ways, but one of the ways I will do that here is I always check in on four levels and that is mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual. So I go through what thoughts are coming up around this? I check in with my physical body to say, well, what in my body might be changing because of this situation that I'm not noticing and I need to pay attention to? I might have an increased heart rate when I'm looking at something or I might have a pain or something. What is that telling me? Then there also would be emotional. What am I feeling and why? So I'm really going to notice those feelings. There's a feeling of letting go where those feelings are normal, but there's also a feeling that might come up that is latent within you. The best example of that for me, is grieving. So an item that might, re-trigger some grieving in you that might come up and that something that you haven't gone through. In the past, I allowed myself things to trigger grieving so I could keep myself going through the process. That was really challenging, but I did it. Now I probably still would keep those things because they have so much meaning for me still, but they're less attachment than I used to have. And then the last one is spiritual or what's, what's your passion or purpose around this. If you have some things in your life that are you passionate about that, does it have any purpose for you? Does it connect to you in that way? Those are the kind of things I would do. So that's what I mean by four quadrant check-in.

Another tool I use myself is something that I just call timeline analysis. And there's lots of practises out there that look at timelines. You might look at the timeline of a thing. So when did you have this thing come into your life and why. How has it served you over time and look at the different things it's done for you. Then why do you still have it? And I know this is, um, I'll give you a silly example, but it's not silly to me. I have a teddy bear that I still remember getting at Christmas from my parents when I went off to university because the mascot for my university was a bear. I still remember that year. Then I remember having my first breakup with my boyfriend and crying myself to sleep in my bed and the only thing that gave me comfort was my teddy bear. And I remember that so much. Then somehow that bear kind of became my like symbol or my thing. Over the years, it's become like a pillow is become a thing to rest my arm on, and it can be quite silly. Now it just sits on the chair on the bed during the day, but it's still there. I haven't gotten rid of it. And I don't think I will. It though has a different connection for me. So when I look at letting go with that thing, my timeline analysis would say, I let go of the different need I had for it. So when I first had it, it had a very



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different need for me, and now it doesn't, it's a nice sentimental memory and that's what it does for me, but it's there still, I haven't gotten rid of it. I'm not a pure minimalist. So maybe in the pure minimalist stage in my life when I'm 90 and I just have nothing that won't be there anymore, who knows. That's just one example that is seemingly trite, but it's not because I can still look at that and go, I really love that thing.

But more in depth around this, there are lots of examples that I can share, but I'll sit here with maybe two or three examples. And one of them I just wrote about on a blog post, and that was about my attachment to books. And I share that because I imagine that quite a few of you have that type of thing where you have lots of books on your bookshelf, that kind of thing, or another item in your world, maybe it's stuff in the closet. I don't know. For me, this attachment with my books was something that I had an issue with because I collected lots of books and whenever we moved house, I got a lot of grief because there are tons of boxes of books and they're so heavy and there are so many of them. And I felt like, oh gosh, I shouldn't have that many. That was one thing. But then in reality, I collect books.

So I looked back at why, why did books come into my life? And over time, why did they leave my life? And that was a fascinating reflection because my reasons varied from personal growth reasons to professional, to habit, um, to getting qualifications. But then there were also was this perhaps sometimes a lack of willpower. If I walked into a bookstore and smelled fresh new books, I probably needed to come out with a new one.

For me, I was having a sense of negative energy in myself, around having so many books that I wasn't reading or didn't want to go back and look at again. So I walked around and I went through my books again. And I've done this too many times in different ways since I've written about this, but this self journey of reflection and contemplation was something that I did with consideration. I meditated on it as well as reflected. But I asked a question that was different than what I've ever asked before. I sat with these items in my life and said, do I want to continue to experience this in my life going forward? And if so, why? And I noticed that there were so many different reasons for things staying in my life, on my bookshelf and things going. It made it a lot easier.

It was quite exciting actually, because I was like, oh my gosh, I don't have an attachment to this section of books anymore that I used to think I had to read, I should read, or I should keep in case I reread them again. And that was just a personal experience for me. So I let them go. There are still two bookshelves with books that I'm probably going to do the same thing with when they're ready to go, but they're not yet. So that's one example.

On a more professional level, there was a time in my life, actually a few times in my life where my personal growth journey was taking me into new territory. What I was finding was that I was shifting, but my professional work wasn't matching that. So the work I was offering externally to clients, wasn't what I wanted to do anymore.

You may have had that happen yourself. So one of the areas that I did a lot of work with for years was personality profiling tools. I used these mostly in team building and one-on-one leadership coaching. What I noticed was that as I developed my intuition and was working on my intuition, I was bringing that more and more into my work. I was not replacing the need for these tools. I was just finding that I preferred working with intuition more than the tools. I could see value in those tools because I had already seen that over and over again, and it was fun using them, but it wasn't



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for me anymore. So I shifted in my own way towards a more integrative, intuitive approach rather than a tool based approach.

So that timeline analysis of my approach and these different points coincided with that. I decided consciously to get rid of certain tools. So what I did was I gave away a lot of them to other consultants and if they were not reusable, I destroyed them. That was a really interesting process in itself because I was letting go physically of things that were reflecting where I was at. I was letting go of an old way. This is a great example, I think for a lot of people, because you probably have things in your life that you've grown out of because of your professional evolution and development, but you hold on just in case, right? And the work had already been done internally within me. I already let go of that part of me professionally. And there was no judgement, no part of me actually said that was wrong. It just said, I'm not there anymore. That's not me. So here is something that I need to do. So the physical letting go was a reflection of that.

I think that's how that worked. Where sometimes if I had actually tried to let go of those tools earlier on in my development, there's no way, I mean, no, no, no, no. I'm going to still run programmes with that. I might run a programme with that. I come up with lots of excuses. So you can see how the triggering that comes up. If you think, oh, I want to let go of this. It may be backwards. You can't just pick something up and get rid of it and say, now I'm not going to do that anymore.

there's a lot intertwined in that isn't there. But for me, it was really powerful. I had no judgement of it. It just didn't match me anymore. So therefore I know that's me. And it was a really great step into claiming me and be more clear about the way I work. I loved it. At the same time I can still draw from and use all that knowledge and that experience of all those years because if someone comes to me and uses one of those tools in their conversation, I go, yeah, I know how that works. Some of the theories and things from that work were really good theories. Like I've already even used it in this episode around Myers-Briggs. I said, oh yeah, that's there. It's always there, but it's used differently now.

What would be another example? I'll give you one more example. A personal one that you'd think, oh, how could you do this? But I wrote about this also probably about eight years ago or so. I forget when I did this. But I went through a process where I was using my physical letting go to also clear my attachment to parts of me. And maybe I'll save this more for the other episodes, but just on the surface, I let go of my old journals. And I had journals that had kept from when I first started university. Actually I did journaling for quite a number of years. What I noticed in those journals was that they were often about sad experiences in my life. They were about me processing trauma, processing, difficult experiences. I'd use my journal for that. There was no one else I felt comfortable talking to. So I was using the journal for that. When I went back to look at the journals, I went, Oh gosh, that's a sad story, but I'm not that person anymore. I've healed from that. This is because I had done the healing work, separate from the journals is let me give that one out there. Because I'd done the healing work, I was again in a different state, a different place. The stories in those journals to me represented what held me back. The victim in me. They were just all about being the victim. I wanted to let go of that victim in me. So I symbolically used this process of saying, yes, it's my story. How I remember that time is still inside of me. I don't need the words that were on that page to take me back into it. Because what I'm going to actually take forward will be the learning from that. So I remember actually taking each journal and tearing the pages about apart and shredding them in the shredder.



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It was so cathartic. But I could not have done that without having done the work otherwise. So I chose to let go of them and it lightened my load energetically. Me as a person, energetically, mentally, I felt better because I knew what that symbolically represented for me. I have other journals that there's no way I'm ready to let go of those yet because I use them in a different stage in my life to process information and growth and personal development. So I love going back to those ones because I can go, oh, look at that insight I had look at where I was back then and look at where I am now. They had different purposes. For me, those journals are still useful. So I haven't let go of them. But am I attached to them? No, not at all.

In fact, I had, I do journaling on a computer and I do journaling in diaries. And one day I was upgrading my online journal, my computer journal and the software for some reason, believe that all the entries prior to the upgrade. So all I had were the titles, every entry. And they had so much stuff in there. I'd written a book in there. I had all the journals that I'd processed when my mother died. I had everything in there. And I'm like, oh, and it really was hard at the time that it happened. I looked back and I go, but that's just what it was. It was just me processing a time in my life. I can always go back and remember what I felt like and rethink that or rewrite that I don't need those words to remind me, I'm not attached to those words. And that was a really big process for me. But again, it's letting go of things, letting go of stuff that was in my life that I thought I had to have. Sometimes it wasn't by choice. Right?

So I'm sharing those examples. I hope they help you because those are my personal ones. And I didn't choose to share anybody else's because I don't think that's right. I could tell you other people's, but that's not what I do. If you want to share yours, you can always tell me, I'd love to know, but it's an important thing to let go. So I let go of the things, but I think I let go of the attachment more than the things. So keep that in mind.

In summary, letting go of things is multilayered as you can see. It is not as simple as I'm just going to toss that pair of shoes out that I don't wear anymore. This whole process is about finding your own way in terms of how you are with the things in your life. Some things will be easy and others, maybe not so. The beauty of the whole process is that the thing or the item in your life, that you have some sort of feeling that you want to let go of, might actually be telling you there's something else to let go of, which we'll talk about in the upcoming episodes.

So for now enjoy playing with the idea of letting go of things and have a go at seeing what that means for you. And I look forward to connecting with you next time. Thanks.

Closing

Thank you for listening to another episode of remembering to be me. Any information in show notes from this episode will be on my website www.jennshallvey.com That's J E N N S H A L L V E Y . c o m . I would love to connect with you. You can find me on Instagram at Jenn Shallvey or contact me via my website. And after listening to this episode, if you think of someone else who might benefit, please share, the more the merrier. Until next time remember to say to yourself "Be me, and when I forget, remember to be me.