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### A new way to reorganize

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When you grow up having the smallest bedroom in the house (and the most stuff), you have to be good at figuring out where to put things for easy access and use.

That's one of the reasons Judson Crowder, 40, ended up a professional organizer.

Another is his nine years behind-the-scenes of the television series "Everybody Loves Raymond," where Crowder carved himself a job making sure the props and set dressing could be found easily and quickly.

When the popular series ended, the Episcopal High School graduate returned to Houston, eventually founding ReStorganize. His company specializes in bringing order to storage units. It's a niche few, if any, professional organizers court given the extreme chaos within, due in part to the out-of-sight-out-of-mindedness, he said.

"Storage has become a place for what's not wanted in the house but still important enough to keep," he said.

Unlike closets at home, which are accessed daily and thus "living space," off-site storage is a "dead zone," Crowder said.

(Garages, meanwhile, are a Purgatory between the house and warehouse, he said.)

To tackle what is often a mash of forgotten things that were quickly stuffed into off-site storage space can be overwhelming, he said.

Some run from the chaos as they would a messy accident. Or they don't have time to deal with it. Or they're not disciplined. Or they're too connected to every item to be effective.

These tendencies help fuel the organizing industry, said Crowder, who sees order amid mayhem.

The trick is to clear it all out, start with a clean space, purge (given parameters), categorize and reshelve, he said.

Many who do so, whether themselves or with an organizer, will find the same items will occupy less space, meaning a lower rental rate — or space for more stuff, he said.

Plus, they might find they have four grills and decide to get rid of some.

Crowder, a Certified Professional Organizer, is an advocate of recycling, re-using and re-purposing what is no longer wanted. He'll also handle the donations and resale of suitable discards for clients.

#### Job traits

Having dealt with the oddities of items used by the film and television industries, Crowder said he is rarely fazed by what lies behind a storage unit's doors. In a way, the contents are like a family's own set and props.

It's not his job to judge or to tread too hard on why items are gathering dust, he said. Rather, it is to uncover, identify, document and even map, if necessary, what is where.

"I am not a therapist," he said of his job, which does require a little psychology, empathy, comfort and sensitivity.

When he's done opening forgotten boxes, sorting and grouping items, and shelving it systematically, just about anyone dispatched to the venue could find what's needed, he said.

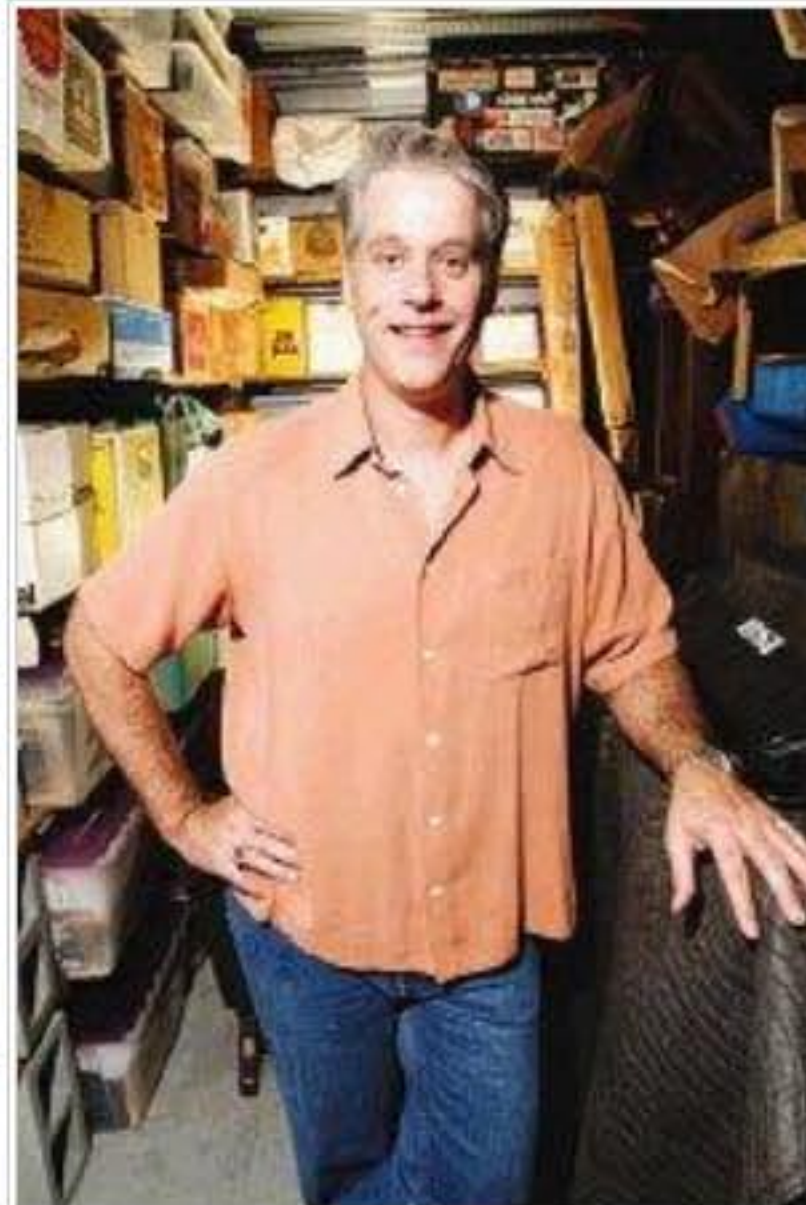
Sticking with the system is up to the client, or they'll have to endure it again, he said. His advice: if something comes in, something else leaves.

Having a system worked on the set of "Raymond." And yes, Crowder did manage to land a small appearance in an episode of Season Six.

Crowder is a graduate of Episcopal High School, Austin College and the American Academy of Dramatic Arts who worked a decade in Hollywood.

In Houston, his parents long ago converted his childhood bedroom into a library, he said, meaning it's a storage unit for books.

Recently, Crowder and his wife had a baby. Chuckling, he said he is learning that parenting brings a lot of clutter. And while he appreciates the irony, he said he's trying to manage the accumulation the same way he teaches his clients.



Judson Crowder sees order amid chaotic storage units.