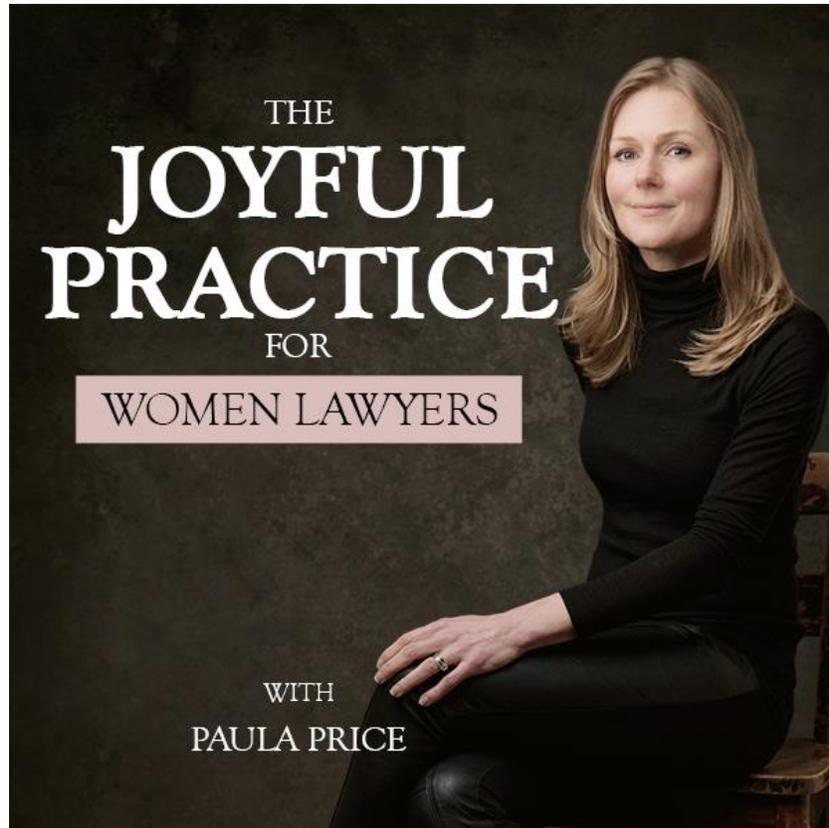


**Ep #25: More Time, Less Clutter:
Revamp Your Workspace With Professional
Organizer, Mylène Houle Morency**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Paula Price

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Ep #25: More Time, Less Clutter: Revamp Your Workspace With Professional Organizer, Mylène Houle Morency

You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast episode number 25.

Welcome to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast. I'm your host Paula Price, lawyer turned certified executive coach. This podcast was created to empower women lawyers just like you to create a life and practice you love.

Join me every week for a break from the hustle so we can focus on you, what you truly want, and how you can create it. If you're over the overwhelm, done with putting out fires, and ready to create a life and practice that brings you more joy, you're in the right place. Ready for today's episode? Let's dive in.

Hello my friends. Welcome back to the podcast. Today's episode is a very special episode. It's the first time I'm bringing a guest onto the podcast. I couldn't think of anybody better than my dear friend Mylène Houle Morency. Mylène is a professional organizer. She works in Montreal, Canada. The name of her company is FLO Organization. She does incredible work helping families get organized so that they have more time to spend doing the things that they love.

So you're going to have the chance to meet Mylène. We're going to be talking about all things home office. A number of you made that transition back in March 2020. It might have been done in haste. Maybe you've put your kitchen table to use as a workspace. Maybe it's a room in your house that wasn't intended to be a home office. You may have done this in a very patchwork way. You may have a really organized space.

Wherever you fall on the spectrum, you will want to hear what Mylène has to share with you today because she is so good. She has such great strategies that you can incorporate when it comes to organizing your workspace.

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We're also going to be talking about hybrid arrangements. Because initially the transition was going from your office space to your home space to work, but now we're starting to see people who are having a combination of both. There are certain challenges that that brings up as well. So we're going to be talking about that as well.

So I am excited. I think you're going to love this episode. Before I turn over to our conversation, I just wanted to mention again. When you hear this podcast episode, it comes out on Wednesday November 10th. On the Friday I'm doing a free webinar, and it's all about decluttering.

So if you love decluttering, we talk about that a little bit today. We're going to talk about it more on Friday in a free webinar. The link to register will be with the show notes for today's podcast episode. We're not just looking at your home office. We're looking at decluttering your calendar, decluttering your desk, and we're looking at decluttering some of the habits that are maybe standing between you and some of the things that you want to achieve. So join me for that as well my friends.

With that, I'm going to turn over the podcast to my conversation with Mylène. I hope you love this conversation as much as Mylène and I loved recording it. Have a great week everybody. So great to connect with you. Bye for now.

Paula: Hello Mylène and welcome to the podcast. How are you?

Mylène: I'm well thanks Paula. It's great to be here. Thanks for the invitation.

Paula: I'm so glad you're here. Thank you so much for joining us today. I know our listeners are going to be so excited to hear from you and to hear all the amazing tips you're going to share with us today about organizing and in particular organizing your home office.

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So for those of you who have not had the pleasure yet of meeting Mylène, Mylène Houle Morency is a dear friend of mine. I adore her. She is a professional organizer. She has been organizing for about eight years. She's based in Montreal, Canada.

A couple of fun facts about Mylène, she was recently made the spokesperson of HomeSense. So you may have seen her face on a billboard. She's also the winner of this year's Harold Taylor Award. So for anybody who's in the professional organizing space, this is a really big honor. The award is given to organizers for their outstanding contribution in the organizing profession. So we are so lucky and delighted to have Mylène join us here today. Mylène, welcome.

Mylène: Thank you so much. We can't see the blush, but I'm blushing now as you go.

Paula: You look amazing. You, unfortunately, listeners don't have the benefit of seeing Mylène. She is just delightful. So Mylène I thought we'd start out by talking about what a professional organizer is in case those who are listening aren't familiar with it. So can you tell us a little bit about what you do as a professional organizer?

Mylène: Absolutely. So as I go into different people's homes, I do both in home organizing as well as virtual organizing. My ultimate goal is to really develop customized solutions for my clients in order to not only use their space better and be able to find their things better but also to organize their information and organize their time better. So my approach is really in a triad where we cover all three of those aspects.

Because that's oftentimes we don't just necessarily—On average we'll lose between 50 minutes on an average day when we're trying to look for things that we know we've put somewhere but can't retrieve. So when we do cover organizing a space, the information, and the time, that's usually when we retrieve the most time in that method.

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Paula: Yeah it's so powerful. When you think of all the times you might spend if you don't have a spot for your keys for example. Then you're looking around the house trying to find the keys before you leave. You add that up to all the other spots in your life where you might lose time. For those who are listening, I think time really is a precious commodity. We don't want to be losing time looking for things. So I think the work that you do is so incredible.

We've had conversations before where you've talked about in relation to families where the time that you saved because you've got systems means more time with your family. It's more times doing the things that you love. So it really is more than just nice boxes and nice systems. It's really what's happening in the rest of your life by virtue of being so well organized.

Mylène: Absolutely. If I can even add to that, it's investing in more harmonious relationships. So when we're not leaving our kids or our spouse with tension because we couldn't have those mittens or the hat or the form to sign, that means that those transition moments when kids are leaving for school or when our spouse is trying to do some kind of family responsibility. It just really makes things a lot easier and more fluid.

Paula: Absolutely. I'm thinking about it as well in your own home office space where your own ability to be on top of your systems is so freeing, right. You're not spending so much more time doing productive work instead of trying to track down that file that went missing or whatever it happens to be. You have not always been a professional organizer. So what is it that you did beforehand? How did that lead to where you are now?

Mylène: Yes, so I studied in commerce in transportation and logistics. Initially I was all about optimizing processes in the transportation world. So I worked in the corporate environment for about 15 years both as an employee then eventually as a manager.

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What I found in 2007 when I became a mom and as I was preparing to go back to work towards the end of 2007/beginning of 2008 is that I could use those process optimization techniques and systems in our home life to generate more quality time and to really be the parent that I really wanted to be.

As I became a little bit obsessed with the topic, at the time keep in mind. 2007 Facebook was just sort of starting. Pinterest was a thing but not a big thing. So even when I was looking for information, there wasn't a whole lot of information that existed on that topic. So I kind of decided to really dedicate myself to do that. First for myself as a parent with the goal that my relationship with my husband would stay strong.

I could already tell during the maternity leave that planning meals and planning weekends and managing clothes. Just generally even finding time for myself, him finding time for himself so that it wouldn't become an irritant and we could just kind of find a way that would be balanced for both of us and eventually for the one, two, three kids that were added to our family.

Paula: Amazing. I should add for those who don't know you that you have three children and a dog and a business of your own. Your husband has his work outside the home. So you are living. You are living the work that you're doing. From the sounds of it, you've really become the resource that you wish that you had had back when you were transitioning when you were balancing and still balancing your professional work and your home life.

Mylène: Absolutely. Research is me-search as they say. So I found the solution.

Paula: It's beautiful. I love how you've taken the logistical planning that you had in your corporate job and now you're applying it within the—My husband and I joke sometimes that our family is a corporation.

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Mylène: Yeah, absolutely with departments and everything.

Paula: Exactly. What was it? I think you've touched on this already, but what was it that attracted you to becoming a professional organizer?

Mylène: Most professional organizers when they describe themselves say that they were born organizing whatever it was. Their bedrooms and their doll collections and their care collections and all of that.

In reality for me what attracted me to the organizing industry, I'd always been interested in time management. That was something that really defined me throughout high school and university. I was really good at that.

The space organization wasn't something that was part of my everyday life. By nature I'm actually more somebody who will leave a trail behind rather than having those beautiful magazine type covers unless I have a system.

So what attracted me to that was the potential once I saw that if I had a place for everything and put everything back into place, everything became a lot easier. While at the beginning I was really concerned about not having been born that way, I found that it was a lot easier to relate to my clients who were going through the same challenges that I'd gone through knowing that you can come out of the other side and be able to successfully implement those systems. Also keep them up. Because it's one thing to get organized. It's another thing to stay organized.

Paula: That is so true. I share that with my family every day. You create the system and then it gets undone. It's not always my family. For those listening, you don't have the benefit of seeing Mylène. As she's talking, it's so beautiful. I love how she explains it because I think that is such a neat way to learn, right? To be looking at systems as a way to organize when you're not necessarily seeing yourself as being that way innately.

If you look at the backdrop of Mylène's office, it's so beautiful. It's all organized. There's lovely pictures on the wall. Of course there's Mylène's

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lovely smiling face. So it seems so natural to you. You seem to be gifted at it. It seems like something that comes naturally. So that's really inspiring for the rest of us to know that we don't have to be born really well organized to become well organized and to stay well organized.

So we're going to talk about home offices today. There are so many areas where we could do. Mylène and I have had so many conversations. We're actually working together right now to help me with my home office situation, which is a work in progress. Mylène does all sorts of other projects. She's really great at helping at all things home related, garage related, organization related. So there are so many ways we could go.

For those who are listening, I know that the home office situation is something that is really relevant. It's probably something that you're living right now. Back in March 2020, we were all kind of requested to move home. Well, those of us who were still working in an office. So for many of you, that means setting up shop at the kitchen table. It means finding a space that maybe wasn't intended to be a home office. It means putting things together in a bit of an ad hoc way.

Here we are mid-pandemic, maybe we're near the end. We don't really know. For some of you, you've upgraded. You've gone to the trouble of setting up a better space for yourself or maybe you had a really good space. For many of you, you may not have that ideal system in place.

And on top of that, we're now moving into this new hybrid situation where you're potentially being asked to spend some time in the office and some time at home. I know that that poses its own unique set of challenges as well.

So in talking to Mylène today, we're going to be talking about those things and hopefully leaving you with some tips that you can take with you to simplify and organize and improve the situation that you have at home. Also if you are in a hybrid situation, some strategies for making those

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transitions. So with that Mylène, I would love to ask you when it comes to organizing your home office, where do you recommend starting?

Mylène: So there is no one right way and one wrong way to start. I'm going to give you maybe a few different directions. Some of you may have listened to Marie Kondo's KonMari method, which is very systematic and it's very much one size fits all. I love to pick and choose from her system, and I also like to give a little bit more of a flexible approach.

So first and foremost, looking around and trying to understand what's the vocation of the space. So you were mentioning some people were still working on the kitchen table, and that's absolutely fine. Especially now that kids are often back to school and back to daycare.

Some people who are listening might not have kids yet, might not ever have kids, or might have kids that have moved out. So if we know that we're not going to be distracted during the day, the kitchen table as long as we're looking at ergonomics and comfort could definitely still be a very good solution.

If we look behind me, we're in my home office that has been my home office in total transparency since before the pandemic, but it was always a multipurpose room. That might be something that people moved towards during this pandemic.

Because depending on where we are in the world, in eastern Canada real estate is a little bit more affordable. So we have a little bit bigger homes. When we think about Vancouver, space is a lot more expensive. So we might have smaller homes. So that's when we start looking at spaces that can be a little bit more multiple purpose.

If we look behind me, we've got our family office is where for outside of my business hours. That's where we do our paperwork. We pay our bills and so on. I use my home office in traditional work hours and sometimes when I

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give webinars. On the other side, even though some people can't see me. Nobody can actually see me, but I've got also a Murphy bed. So this is also our guest bedroom.

So looking at the space and trying to understand what do I need the space to be so that really we can fulfill all the different responsibilities and activities this room has to do. So that's number one.

The other thing is also to take a look at ourselves and see what's actually working for us. So you might look around and see. You were referring to keys earlier and hooks. Being able to put things back into their place like a hook for the keys or it might be a little container of your pens and pencils and so on. So trying to reproduce those successes in multiple ways.

If we know already that we're somebody that's very visual and if we put it away in a drawer, all of a sudden it doesn't exist for us anymore. We need to build on those rather than trying to comply to a specific way of organizing based on what we've seen in a tv show for example.

So different categories that people might find themselves in are: are you a filer or are you a piler? No way is right or wrong, but some people would be totally fine using a filing cabinet. Other people want to have a pile. So therefore how do we find a way to organize for ease of retrieval those piles of paper?

Are you a revealer or are you a concealer? Do you find that you can't concentrate really well when you see too many things around you? Therefore you need to put things away and conceal things so that you can focus on what's needed. Or are you a revealer where, once again, a little bit like the pilers you need to see it, so you don't forget it.

Once again, based on your way of learning things, are you more of a kinesthetic learner? Are you more of a visual learner? Are you more of an auditory learner? That will also tell you how do you set up systems so that

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it's really easy for you to use them. Sometimes it's also for multiple people to be using it. So if it's a shared office or a shared kitchen space then making sure that you find a midway mark for everybody and not just build it based on your own personal preferences.

Paula: It's so interesting. Because I mentioned Mylène and I have been working together on my home office. So these are questions that she was asking me. She asked me what my desk looked like. Do I like having a pile of paper? I do. I like having a paper calendar. I'm quite visual. I like having post-its that I can see, that I can reference, that keep ideas fresh in my mind.

There are other people who I've always admired them. Those people who have that completely uncluttered desk. There's nothing on it, but that's never been a habit of mine. So it's not a natural way for me to work.

What I found so refreshing working with Mylène was that I could actually build on that. We're going to be designing systems that build on my need to have my projects in my line of sight so that I can actually see them and be reminded of them and think about them. So I think it's really neat how you're taking this approach to organizing your home office space.

On a pretty related topic, the next question that I have for your Mylène is one of the things that I asked for you to do was to look into some really great storage solutions. It turns out Ikea has some really amazing ones. So I was on that Ikea website. I was looking at all these different storage sights. Then I drifted into their home office setups.

What I noticed, and you might notice this if you're on Pinterest, if you're googling home office. What does it look like? Décor. Often those images don't look like a real home office. You look at them. They have no paper in them. When I used to practice law, I did a ton of research. I had textbooks everywhere. I had piles of printed cases everywhere. I had multiple drafts

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of contracts everywhere. So there was a lot of physical paper and books and things in my space, and you never see those in the Pinterest pictures.

So Mylène when it comes to organizing a home office space where you have pens, where you have post-its, where you have all this stuff that doesn't appear in magazines. How do you go about organizing that?

Mylène: Yeah, so it seems, I started organizing in 2013. Already then I thought okay, well this topic paper organizing is not going to be something that I'll be referring to for many years to come. I was already addressing that back then.

It feels like even though we're very much supposed to be in the digital era and electronic and Cloud, we're still very much...Actually about 50% of my clients are more paper oriented and the other half are more...Actually, no. There's more than three categories. So paper, electronic, and then there's the hybrid. I consider myself more of a hybrid. So I do like to be in the Cloud, but I also like to write on actual paper.

So then how do we actually make decisions to fit that into our life? You're right. When we look at magazines, when we look at Instagram, at Pinterest, those piles are magically put away. So one of the best solutions, I'd say, is to orientate ourselves to using the vertical space.

So when we think about piles of paper, when we think about any kinds of books, we often have a tendency to use horizontal space. So look at your home office. Look at your kitchen table. Look at even benches in the entryway. We'll walk in and put things down on a bench whether we've received today's mail and the letters from the post. We just put them down on a bench. So horizontal surfaces sort of act like magnets for paper. What we want to do instead is use the vertical space.

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So whether it be like those solutions that I sent to you via email. I really love the KVISSLE systems. Maybe we can link to that in the podcast show notes.

It's just a way of using vertical space whether it's a portion of our desk or whether it's the actual wall. Wall mounting them to nearby walls so that we're actually using that vertical space that's really underutilized and freeing up those horizontal spaces that we need to be effective and to focus better at work. So that's usually oftentimes just a switch horizontal to vertical. That's sort of usually the way we can optimize our space.

Paula: That's so great Mylène. I think all of us, as you were talking I started seeing mentally all of the different surface areas in our house that are covered in paper. I'm sure everyone listening can think of places that you place. The mail that you pick up on your way through the door where you maybe weren't expecting to see it there. For me, there's a lot of paper that comes in through my children's school bags, and it immediately ends up on the kitchen table.

So I love this idea of finding creative ways. We will link to that in the show notes, Mylène, because you offered some really great vertical systems that are very affordable and usable in a home office setting. So such wonderful advice.

The next question that I was going to ask you is all about the domino effect. I just learned, actually, that this was a term that Mylène coined in our conversation. So I feel very honored actually. I'm in a multipurpose room for my work. As we started talking about the systems and how this room is organized, it became apparent to me that there were going to have to be changes made to other parts of our house. That it was going to affect other members of my family.

It also kind of raises questions for me. We are in a relatively small space for our family. There are discussions from time to time about having to move

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out of that space. So then it became this really big thing, and I felt kind of overwhelmed. Not because of Mylène, but because of the space that I'm in and just really thinking about how all these different pieces fit together.

Mylène said, "Well, yes, this is the domino effect." It sounded so official when you said it. I thought it must be a thing. Anyways, it turns out it's not a thing. Mylène, can you talk a little bit about what that means and how it comes up in an organizing situation?

Mylène: Yeah. So when I think about the domino effect, it's more about what's being impacted and what are the different vocations of that space? Even if we use the where are we working because sometimes we even might be... Let's just assume that we're working from home and not even talk about the hybrid system. Even when we're 100% working from home, we might be working maybe I'd say five or six hours of the day at our home office.

Whether it's a secretary desk in our living room or whether it's a dedicated home office. Knowing where we are working and using different spaces will also impact how we're organizing our spaces.

So that actually pushes us into the hybrid system of work. Knowing that we'll be working at the office tower downtown and also at our home, how do we make sure that the solutions that we're setting up right now won't have to be reinvented whenever we're moving to a different space?

Have some kind of fluidity and coherence across the board so that we're not constantly having to make new decisions. Because decision fatigue is very real. We're already experiencing it with our personal life.

When you add onto that, having to remember when I'm at my home office, this is where I've got my pile of paper. If I've got a wall system putting my files there, how do I make sure the important files are kept easily accessible, maybe in an accordion file in that wall file so that I can take it

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from my home desk to the upstairs living room table to my downtown office across the board. So making sure that the impact of the system is actually usable in the various rooms. Does that make sense?

Paula: Yeah, it totally does. You make such a great point Mylène that there are different spaces that you might occupy if you're working from home. Maybe there's work that you like to do. I like to work in the room that I'm in because it has excellent light. So it's uplifting. I get to look out the window. I get to see there's. Whereas if I'm working at the kitchen table then it's a little bit darker. I don't have the same outlook. We also have limited space.

So unlike an office where you get to send all your old stale files to the offsite storage area. You give it to your assistant, and it magically appears. Now granted I'm running my own business. So I don't have access, necessarily, that you might if you're at a law firm.

There becomes a need for storage. I'm not going to use the room that I'm in for storage. We're actually going to talk about this in a minute. There are certain things that you don't need near you. So maybe those go in a different part of the house versus things you want to have handy.

Mylène you were talking about this, mobility. Moving from one space to the next. What does that look like for each of us? Maybe it's your laptop and the files that you have that you're working on right now. So I love this idea of just having that domino effect and thinking about how changes that you make in one space affect how things are working in another space.

So one of the things that you, and we were kind of just alluding to this Mylène. One of the things that you had me do first, actually I guess this was our second session together. You had me look at my workspace and divide everything into zones and list those out. So please tell us about this zones thing. This is new to me, and I found it totally fascinating.

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Mylène: Especially with home office and desk spaces, I really like looking at it from a hot zone, a warm zone, a lukewarm zone, and a cold zone. So what do I mean by that?

The hot zone is something that we're going to be using on a daily basis, on a regular basis. So that is our laptop. It's our cellphone. It's a pad of paper and some pens if we're somebody that likes to use the more analog version. It could be that's where our planners are going to go. Then as we start moving away into colder zones, so into the warm zone and into the lukewarm zones, those are spaces that we're using a little bit less often.

So what would go into the cold space would be the things that we hardly ever need to refer back to. So that offsite storage that you were referring to when we're in a law firm. At home that might look like past income tax paperwork. Things that really we need to have, and we need to keep, but we don't need to refer to regularly.

As we just move away from the hot to the warm to the lukewarm zones, those are going to be things that we need less and less often. So every day is hot. Maybe once a week or multiple times a week would be warm. One a week, once every two weeks would be lukewarm. Then the cold zone is really things that we need to keep but we won't be diving into very often.

Paula: Yeah, and this was such a fabulous exercise. I'd recommend anybody who's interested in checking this out to try it. Mylène had me divide all my files and physical files into four different piles. Not just files but also my pens and my computer and my day timer. So I went through this exercise of identifying everything that I have that is related to my business and actually also the household paperwork. So for you in your practice if you're listening.

Then if you list it all and then you're categorizing it, it's actually a really interesting mental exercise because for me it really brought into focus areas of my practice, of my coaching practice that I wanted to focus on

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more. That maybe were in the lukewarm zone that maybe I wanted more in the hot zone and vice versa. Things that you're doing in the red zone where you're thinking, "Well, wait a minute. Does this really need to be here, or can I move this away?"

So it's a really great exercise just for taking that inventory. I learned a lot from going through that exercise. So it wasn't complicated. I just opened a word document and created four different quadrants and started loading things in. Really interesting to learn what came out of that exercise. So I'd recommend that to anybody who's interested in exploring that further.

Mylène: Yeah. Then people can be careful with that too even when they're looking at their computer. So that oftentimes will be loaded or that download folder will be loaded with tons of files.

Just making sure that you have a specific use for all of these things so that they don't just keep on adding up because clutter is clutter. So clutter, no matter what, whether we're revealer or a concealer will increase the amount of cortisol we have flowing through our blood. So making sure we have some kind of a system to declutter the physical space and the digital space is going to be really useful.

Paula: I love that you said that Mylène because my desktop has been causing cortisol for quite some time. I'm hanging on to what you said earlier, which is that this is a learned skill. I mean I talk about growth mindset on the podcast as well. It really if you start deciding, and I talk about the practice.

So if you decide that what you want is to develop a practice where you are more organized. Going through the process of organizing a single space, you're going to learn skills that can then apply to other areas of your life, other areas of your home.

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So I think the work that you do Mylène is so important. I love the idea that once we start developing those skills and being able to maintain them as you talked about that we can start applying it to other areas. So it's the desktop. It's our office. It's the way that we organize our files. It's the way that we streamline our whole lives. What I love is it reduces stress and saves time. So the work that you're doing is incredible.

Mylène: It's all about neuroplasticity, actually. You've talked about that, and I know studied on that, but it's all about getting those neurons to fire together.

The more we implement those steps, whether it's going through the space acronym from Julie Morgenstern, which is doing the same order of steps to organize whether it's a drawer or a garage. Rehashing those five steps over and over again is going to build those neural pathways and is going to make it easier.

So as you're getting stronger. It's almost like working a muscle. So as you start working out those muscles in your home office, then after that when you move into the kitchen or into the garage or into the playroom, you'll have acquired these new skills that are going to make it a lot easier. So, as you mentioned, maybe you weren't born organized, and that's fine. It's not something that you have it, or you don't. You keep on using it and reusing it and you'll get a lot more comfortable with it.

Paula: So true. I love that. Thank you Mylène. The next question is a topic that has come up recently. It's come up in conversations I've had with lawyers. It's come up in conversations I've had with other professionals where this return to work has come up.

So we have now this home office setup in whatever state it's in. Whether it's really advanced or whether it's still kind of in an ad hoc setup. Then there's the working back in the office. I've heard for some people it's one

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day a week. For some people it's a little bit more than that. For some people there's no requirement.

What do you recommend, Mylène, for somebody who is—One of the issues apart from chatting in the office apparently is it's harder to be productive because there's people there and you actually want to talk to them. Imagine that. So you lose out a little bit on productivity, but the real issue seems to be that it's not being organized at the office anymore. It used to be the reverse. So what kind of recommendations would you have for people who are transitioning into a hybrid setup?

Mylène: So looking at that hot zone, things that you need to have access to on a daily basis, making sure that you perhaps recreate in a mirror image what it is that you've got at home and what it is that you've got in the office. Those things that need to travel back and forth whether it's the laptop, the cables and the charger, whether it's those paper files, finding systems.

So one of the things that is probably key is having some kind of a routine, possibly ideally the night before to pack your bags so that you're not kind of scrambling in the middle of the morning mayhem of whatever emergency kind of pops up. So making decisions ahead of time so we're not depleting that energy that will go to making other decisions.

Then looking at those paper files that we will need between the two spaces. Maybe using an accordion file system that will be really easy. Once again, you've got little zones into it. Whether it's billable hours go into more of a digital space or is it a physical planner? So.

Paula: Yeah, and I think it's different for everybody. If I think back to when I was practicing, I was very paper heavy. I did not do much on the cloud. I'm much more cloud oriented now because that's how I work. So I think it really depends. I love how you tied it back to the zones because that really is key.

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I'm not there yet Mylène and that's why I'm so excited that we're doing our work together. Is that I haven't really parsed out my zones in a way that is readily accessible, but I know based on what we've done and some of the systems that you've proposed. I'm thinking in particular there's this one Ikea thing. You know the name. I don't. Where it's literally I think it's five different shelves in one box.

So if I think of how I used to organize my files, it was usually a file. So which file I was wrong on. Then there would be kind of monstrous files that would go to the filing cabinet. Not in my office necessarily but somewhere else in the office. There was usually a fairly discrete part that I would be working on.

So I can see using these systems to set up my current file load and then to have folders that I knew I could take with me. If you're printing up cases, I used to take piles of cases. Piles of cases used to go to and from the office to my home, sometimes to be read in the evening, sometimes not.

I think it's really up to all of us to think about. Like what are the things we need to bring with us? I love your suggestion about dealing with things the night before. I think it's such a great practice. If you can even look at what you've done during the day, recap what you've done during the day, and give some thought to how you're going to start out the next day. You're setting yourself up for success.

I love how you talked about decision fatigue because that's what I was thinking about. I'm like yeah, you're still making a decision, but you're doing it at the end of the day where for me that's usually when I'm pretty worn out. That leaves your decision making capacity, which for me is in the morning. It's not going to be like this for everybody.

I love the idea of preserving the mental energy for the morning when you're fresh and you need it most where you're about to tackle your big project.

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So all great suggestions for those of us, those of you, who are going back and forth from one place to the next.

Mylène: Yeah. You mentioned the Cloud, which is obviously a really important solution, especially when we're in the hybrid setting. Using that Cloud so that we can easily retrieve things and creating an arborescence. Making sure that there's a logical pathway to finding various files on the Cloud because that's something that sometimes is born out of just not as much thought as what we would like it to be.

So maybe doing a little bit of research and maybe even doing a lunch and learn with colleagues to find what are the best practices so that maybe you can create an arborescence that is a little bit more logical and a little bit more similar to what other colleagues are doing. That way you don't have to reinvent the wheel.

So that, once again, when you're trying to find that file that you're not sure where exactly you put in on the Cloud, you can just use your logic and have a very clear pathway. Not use up time and energy trying to retrieve it.

Paula: Amazing. Absolutely. You mentioned lunch and learns with your colleagues. I have to mention to anybody who's listening that Mylène does lunch and learns. She's done a lunch and learn on this particular topic. The hybrid arrangement, how to deal with that, and also a number of other really interesting topics. So if that's something that appeals to you, by all means reach out to her. As you can tell, she's amazing.

Mylène, I wanted to ask you one last question, which is what do you recommend for women who feel overwhelmed? So there's all this stuff happening. There's the kid stuff. There's the schedules. There's the surprises that come up during the day. Where would you recommend they start when it comes to getting more organized?

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Mylène: Well first and foremost, I really encourage my clients to take a look at their calendar and see if it's filled up with the right priorities? So oftentimes we will respect absolutely what I call rocks, which are commitments to others and commitments we signed up for ourselves. We'll also find lots of sand, which is the daily responsibilities. So sand would be emails and admin work. Home sand would be doing lunches for tomorrow and doing laundry and cooking and all of that.

So oftentimes we've got those commitments. We've got those responsibilities. We don't necessarily have the middle, what I call pebbles, which is what is getting us closer to our goals and what's really honoring what we need and what fills our cup. Because obviously we're going to feel overwhelmed when we're there filling everybody else's cup but constantly depleting ours.

So I really like using the idea of a champagne tower. Like a champagne period. You know when you see a whole stack of champagne glasses. If we're filling that top glass and it's overflowing into the glasses below, we're doing something right. Because we're not using the idea of a pitcher filling everybody else's cup, emptying out our pitcher, having to refill again, and starting over.

So can you find systems whether it's self-care, whether it's time with others. Making sure that you're taking care of your health. That you're sleeping enough so that you're not feeling overwhelmed. Because obviously if we're just filled with other people's needs and our responsibilities for work and for family and for others then definitely we're going to be feeling overwhelmed.

Paula: I so love that Mylène. I think you have just revolutionized the analogy. Because you always hear, and you used to be a flight attendant. You always hear the analogy of if you're in an airplane, they always say put

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your mask on first. Before you help anybody else, you need to put on your own oxygen mask.

The idea of being the summit of a mountain of champagne glasses or however you want to call that and being the first one to get filled up, that is such a beautiful sparkly effervescent and inspiring. Maybe I just like champagne. It's such a beautiful analogy to think about and how selfcare really does come down to it. I notice that so much when you talk about overwhelm and how it's really looking at what you've committed to and have you overextended yourself with respect to others.

What effect is that having on your ability to organize your own life and your own space? I think that's such an interesting point. I never would have thought of that. When you said that, it just rings so true. So I think for everybody listening to give yourself that grace and prioritizing self-care.

Then from that place, you're so much better able to then start creating systems and implement them in a way that does all the things that we've been talking about. Saving you time and saving your mental energy for more productive things than looking for your keys or finding that file that's gone missing.

Mylène: Yeah. Time for the sexy rather than just the plain old looking around for things that we know we need to retrieve but we can't seem to put our hands on.

Paula: Exactly. Exactly. Mylène, it is so amazing having you here today. For anybody who's listening who would like to reach out to you, who'd like to work with you, where do we find you?

Mylène: The best way to reach out to me is via my website. That being said, it's still only in French. I work in Montreal, as you said, and the majority of my residential clients are French. So you can find me on flo-

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organization.com. On my contact form just reach out to me and I'll be able to reply back to you.

Whether it is to organize your space virtually through my services where I'll be accompanying you on a regular basis. The beauty of virtual organizing is that we can have consistency and work in maybe one hour increments twice a week. So that everybody can build, my individual clients can build their own neural pathways, like I was mentioning, and take on those skills and acquire those skills so that they can kind of replicate it around the house and around their workspace.

I also offer seminars, like you mentioned. So I offer seminars in the workplace whether it's to do with family organization, whether it's to do with physical organization, office organizing, and the mental load and stress management. So all of those. I offer them in French and in English, especially in those workplaces where we want to offer bilingual seminars. I'm all equipped to do that.

Paula: That is so amazing. That is exactly what Mylène and I are doing right now. We're doing virtual organizing, and we're doing it in English. So I speak some French, but not nearly enough to be able to carry on a very good conversation at this stage. So if you are English speaking, by all means reach out to Mylène. As you can tell, she's more than fluent. She speaks beautifully.

Mylène: I just haven't translated the website. That's all. Yet.

Paula: Exactly. So please feel free to reach out to her. Mylène before we wrap up, is there anything that we didn't cover today that you'd like to add?

Mylène: I think I'd like to wrap up and remind people of in this era of Instagram and Pinterest where we put a lot of pressure on ourselves to recreate these beautiful aesthetic spaces. I really want to encourage

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people to start thinking of function before aesthetic, and also to remember that organization is not the destination.

Organization is the mode of transport. Whichever mode of transport. Some people are going to get there by train. Some people are going to get there by plane. So my method of organizing might be different from what yours is and other friends of ours and other clients of mine. The idea is just to use that to get to the destination where we have more time for ourselves and to really be intentional with that.

Because that's what I find is unfortunate is when you do free up that time, make sure that you're intentional and you do use it for self-care and to regenerate and to be a better version of yourself and not just to reuse it towards others. Because that's often the loophole where we find ourselves falling into.

Paula: Fabulous. I'm now thinking back to the champagne analogy once again.

Mylène: Yay, champagne.

Paula: Champagne for us all. Mylène thank you so much for joining us here today. I am hoping that we will be able to have you back because this has been so much fun. I know everyone listening has really loved hearing from you and learning from you and inspiring all of us to become more organized and to sort of apply what you've been teaching us to our home and potentially our office workspaces as well. So thank you Mylène.

Mylène: My pleasure. Thanks for having me.

Paula: Bye for now.

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