

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 8th May 2012

Tonight the BBC are showing 'Britain's Biggest Hoarders' on BBC1 at 9pm. It follows the story of TV Presenter Jasmine Harman's mother who is a hoarder and asks the questions: Will hoarders ever willingly clear their homes? Do new techniques and treatments really offer hope? And can hoarders ever be cured?

One former clutterholic who overcame her own clutter challenge in 2001 and has been working with hoarders for the last 10 years says 'yes' - but

.....only if the hoarder reaches their true turning point where their desire to be clutter free is greater than the comfort they get from keeping their clutter. They also need to acknowledge that they will be on a journey that takes, on average, 12 weeks to clear and organise each and every room, and create the habits required to keep it clear. As with any issue - loosing weight, getting fit, giving up smoking - pressure from friends and family almost always sets a hoarder back because it hasn't come from within. Although there are services on the market that offer a 'quick fix' i.e. a clutter free and organised home in a day or two - they actually make a hoarder worse. There is no quick fix for a hoarder who truly wants to deal with their hoarding.

Clare Baker, a former clutterholic overcame her own clutter challenge back in 2000. Having accumulated her clutter since 1997 when she went through a particularly traumatic period in her life, Clare realised that she needed to do something about the problem. She had every storage container ever made. If she were going on Mastermind, storage solutions would have been her specialist subject. Having dismissed her growing hoard as simply a 'hobby', and her spending sprees as 'a bargain' for 3 years, she finally reached her true turning point.

She had tried everything to deal with it on her own. She had weeded out what she knew could go, been ruthless with her decision making (and regretted it), had weekend blitz's, created endless piles of clutter and moved them from corner to corner, room to room, she had even asked friends and family to help her - which only ended in World War 3. She had every decluttering book ever written stashed amongst her clutter. She avidly watched every TV programme on decluttering for comfort. She even considered signing up for one in a last ditched attempt to deal with her clutter.

Her clutter was taking over her home and her life. She felt isolated, lonely and like a failure. She was living a double life of a successful career woman, and a mole in her home. Her clutter and hoarding was no longer making her happy, and she had no space in her home for the life she wanted. She even visited a therapist, desperate for help.

So, determined to turn her life around she sought help, only to find that she had only 2 options: putting her clutter in self-storage, which she knew would only create more space in her home that she would fill again, or spend lots of money for the services of a self styled 'expert' to come and deal with it and declutter the rubbish and organise it for her (who turned out to be someone who 'loved' decluttering and organising and had no idea what it was like to have clutter). Clare was intelligent enough and had enough experience to know that a blitz approach with an 'expert' was no better than a crash diet - creating instant results that wouldn't last.

Seeing no practical help available that would put Clare back in the driving seat and teach her how to get her clutter back under control herself, Clare decided to work out what she was doing wrong. She spent a year modelling naturally clutter free and organised people to identify the process they were using that she wasn't, then used that process to clear her own clutter in 12 weeks. She spent a further year testing that process on other cluttered people.

It was only her determination to get back control herself, slowly and surely so that she could get used to less and less clutter, more and more space slowly, that worked.

In the 11 years since Clare succeeded in clearing her own clutter, she has been sharing the skill with other, determined declutterers. In that time she has seen more and more extreme hoarders, particularly in the last 2 years and has developed a specialised Hoarder Programme that is run in parallel with therapy and counselling so that she can help the hoarder with the physical clutter while the therapist / counsellor helps them with the mental clutter. She also runs a Clutter Clearing TV Channel for more 'regular' clutterholics with more 'normal' amounts of clutter in their homes who want affordable help as they begin, continue and complete their journey from cluttered to clutter free.

'In the 10 years since I started sharing the process I discovered, I've had many clients who have come to me having been on the TV programmes, had an 'expert' in and found it didn't help or last. They realised the hard way that clearing their clutter is a journey, not a one off event that can be dealt with in a day or two.'

There is a lot of shame attached to having clutter that's out of control. Admitting you have a problem and need help is like an alcoholic standing up and admitting they have a problem. It's tough, and largely hidden from society. It's not simply a case of 'pulling yourself together' and 'getting on with it'. The clutter is merely a symptom.

There have been a flurry of TV programmes this year because Compulsive Hoarding is, as of this year, recognised as a disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Although this will make it recognised as a disorder that requires treatment, it's not helpful if there are no recognised, successful treatments available.

I have worked with, on average, 2 hoarders a year. I work with them, on average, for a year. I have a very structured programme for Hoarders involving a home visit every week for 3 hours where we go through the Clutter Clearing Process and aim to get some items out of the home. The hoarder then has a weekly 1 hour counselling session with a therapist before my next home visit, and so I work with the hoarder and the therapist to take one small positive step in the right direction each and every week. It's slow going, yet it works. It takes on average a hoarder 12 weeks to clear and organise just one room of their home, however by that point it's cleared, organised and crucially stays clear. The hoarder is in control at every step of the journey. The change is slow, steady and permanent. The results have been amazing.'

To find out more about how Clare works with hoarders like those featured in tonight's programme - or arrange an interview - contact Clare Baker on **01295 275030** or

0777 5897955 or email: clare@cdc-uk.net

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About clutterclearing.net

clutterclearing.net is a coaching business that coaches and supports people at a Practical Level to Achieve a Permanently Clutter Free and Organised Home.

It was set up 10 years ago to help people who wanted help to de-clutter and get organised and back in control themselves. Clare Baker set up the business as a result of having her own Clutter Challenge and realising she wanted to learn the skill for life, rather than becoming dependent on someone else to make the decisions for her about what was of value or not in her belongings.

Clutterclearing.net covers the whole of the UK – and also has clients across the world who have telephone coaching thanks to skype.com.

Visit www.clutterclearing.net for more information.