



## An Organized Life

It's easier said than done, but organizing your life is achievable. These four women have done it, and now they're helping others.

BY CHRIS WARREN

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### Helene Segura

#### *The Distraction Buster*

**You don't know chaos** until you step in front of a roomful of high school students as an unprepared, disorganized teacher. Helene Segura knows that lesson well thanks to 10-plus years as a ninth grade English teacher at Harlandale High School. "If you're not organized, especially time-wise, you will go through a lot of emotional suffering as a teacher," says Segura, owner of LivingOrder San Antonio. Interestingly enough, Segura also came to understand that it wasn't just the teachers who suffered when they weren't organized. "All the freshmen started with 100 averages at the beginning of the year," she recalls. "But after six weeks so many grades started sliding downhill. Not because students weren't smart but because kids were having problems with time management and productivity."

In her business as a professional organizer, Segura now has a whole new set of pupils to



teach, including many entrepreneurs and small business owners. While they might be more mature and motivated than her former charges, Segura says that many of her clients struggle in the same ways to manage their time productively. A major obstacle is the digital age we live in. Digital distractions quickly reveal themselves when Segura sits down to a one-on-one session with a new client. “Lots of them have email or text indicators and their phone goes off or dings and they glance over and then look back at me to continue our session,” she says. “Neuroscience shows that every time we switch a task, our brain takes 30 to

90 seconds to restart, so imagine how much time is lost if you get 12 emails in an hour.” Not surprisingly, Segura counsels clients to turn those notifications off.

With non-business clients, though, there’s one distraction Segura knows can’t be switched off: emotions. “With a non-business client there is usually a lot more emotion involved versus an entrepreneur or a corporate client where we can skip through the emotions and get to be more analytical,” she says. Like many professional organizers, Segura becomes a quasi-therapist in order to understand some of the issues that may spawn a person’s disorganization or lack of time management. “We try to get to the core

of the challenges in their life that could be causing challenges with time and space. That way we can recognize it and start to deal with it,” she says.

## Focus First

Do you organize your day by writing a checklist of tasks to complete and then attacking them in order of priority? If you do, kudos. Many folks, instead, let their email inbox tell them what to do. “Try to be disciplined and stick to the priorities you’ve set for yourself. If you let email guide you, you’ll change direction throughout the day and not get anything done,” Segura says.

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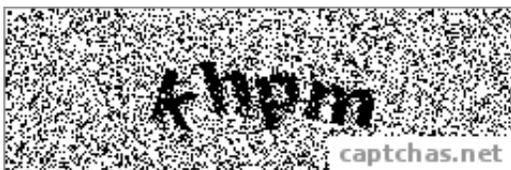
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