

*Photo*

**ORGANIZING**

*Guide*

by  
Melinda Grace Organizing

# Hey There!

## WELCOME TO YOUR PRINTED PHOTO ORGANIZING GUIDE!

Feel overwhelmed by the amount of paper photos, films, tapes and disks you have or inherited? Are you wondering what to do with all those photos and formats?

Overwhelmed? Stuck? Don't know where to start?

You're in the right place! If you walk through my 5-step G.R.A.C.E method, you'll begin to chip away at that pile of photos + find memories that will last a lifetime.

Ready to Reclaim Your Photos with  
G.R.A.C.E.?



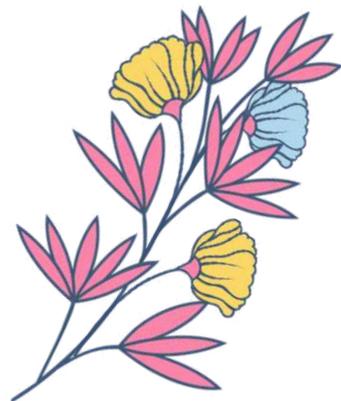
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## *Photo Organizing Guide*

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I believe that  
distraction and isolation  
caused by a cluttered  
home can create a  
cavern in our souls,  
keeping us from hearing  
God's voice...

*Melinda Grace*

Reclaim Your Space with  
G.R.A.C.E.

# G.R.A.C.E

## 5-Step Method

### *gather*

At your first organizing session, GATHER ALL your physical photos being organized & sort them into categories.

### *release*

Next, review each photo one by one & make decisions. Decide what to keep and what to RELEASE aka donate, sell, & throw away.

### *acquire*

ACQUIRE any photo organizing tools needed, custom labels & containers, bins, boxes, and frames to contain your "KEEP" photos.

### *cultivate*

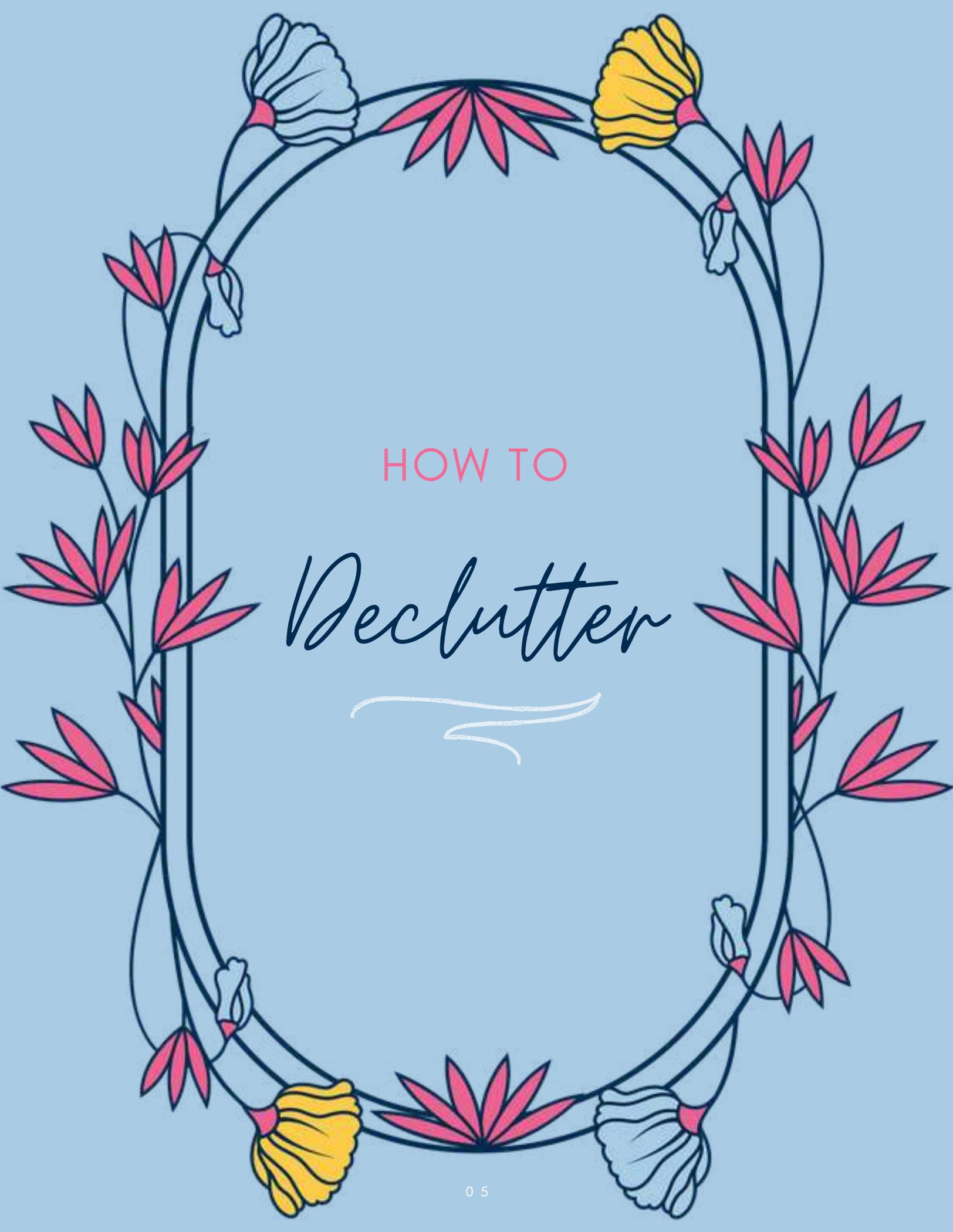
In this phase, carefully give each cherished photo a home using the acquired bins & labels. Put everything away in an organized system that meets your needs, style, & goals.

### *enjoy*

Take a moment to celebrate & ENJOY your calm, organized photos.

### *curate*

*BONUS: As you organize your photos and put them away, take time to add style & design. This will make restoring your photo organization a beautiful experience.*



HOW TO

# Declutter



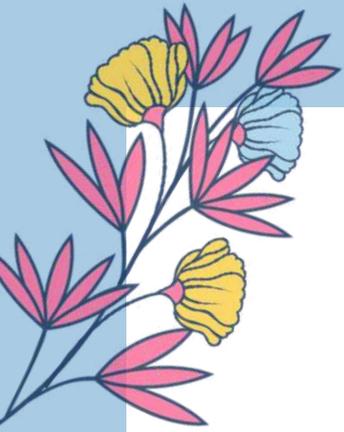
# Gather

**THE FIRST  
STEP IN THE G.R.A.C.E. METHOD IS  
GATHER.**

“In this first step, we are GATHERING  
and planting seeds for our success. We  
are going to  
GATHER three things: 1) Goals, 2)  
Organizations, and 3) Items.”

*Melinda Grace*

Reclaim Your Space with  
G.R.A.C.E.



# WHY *Photos!*

01

## YOU HAVE LOTS OF PICTURES!

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You also have other friends and family photos + their pictures of other people.

02

## PHOTOS BRING US TOGETHER

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In times of...

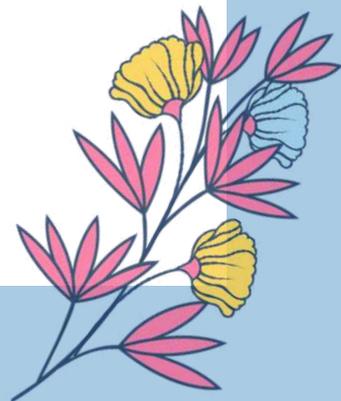
- Celebration
- Helping others remember
- Needing connection
- Sharing stories with the next generation
- Sorrow

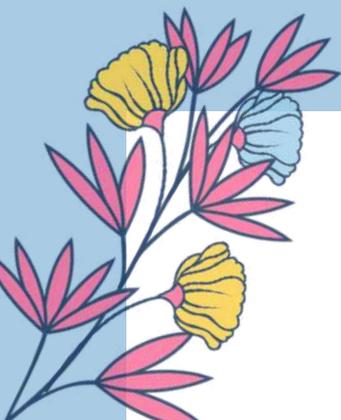
03

## LEGACY

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You want to leave a legacy to the next generation + be reminded of your beautiful time on this earth with friends and family. Photo organization is really taking the time to preserve your memories — your legacy.





# GETTING *Started*

01

## GATHER YOUR GOALS

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What are your goals for your photo collection? What do you want to achieve? How soon do you want your photo organization project completed?

02

## GATHER YOUR MATERIALS

---

Gather and/or purchase the materials you would like to use for your decluttering process, i.e., Post-it notes, Sharpies, trash bags, boxes, scissors, etc. Check out my [\*\*Amazon Photo Organizing Shopping List\*\*](#).

03

## GATHER YOUR PLACES & PEOPLE

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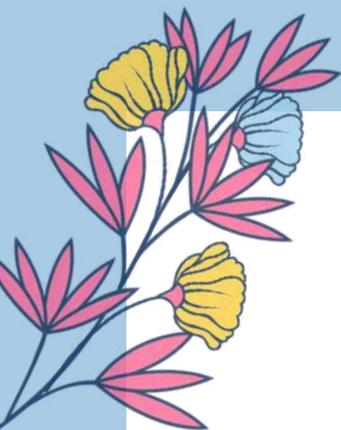
Now's the time to plan ahead and decide where you're donating, giving to a friend or family or selling as ephemera on FB Marketplace. Having a list gathered up front, makes it easier to release your items later. Also, Gather people and local businesses to outsource services like a photo finishing studio, professional digitization company, media conversion company, album design and printer company.

04

## GATHER YOUR ITEMS

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Now's the time to gather all the printed photos (albums, scrapbooks, negatives, media) including large format photos into one area. Go ahead and remove large, outdated pictures from frames. It's also a great time to gather loose film, old 8mm, slides, CD's, etc. Group them into categories, aka "like with like." Ex. Year, Family, Friends, Event, etc. Pro-Tip: Sort large collections by size. Add a post it note of the category to make future decisions easier.



# *Gather:* PHOTO TIPS

01

## **WEAR WHITE COTTON GLOVES**

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White cotton gloves protect your photos from dirt, dust and oils from your fingers that can cause permanent damage. If you can, pick up the photos and negatives along the edges.

02

## **REMOVE FROM OLD, YELLOW ALBUMS**

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If possible, use dental floss to remove printed photos from old, yellow albums. If they cannot be removed safely, put the entire album page in a folder or plastic sleeve.

03

## **REMOVE EXTRAS**

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Probably, don't need to say this, but just in case. Go ahead and remove things like paper clips, broken rubber bands, old paper clippings, notes. If the newspaper clippings and notes are important and must be kept, store separately in an envelope. Scanning these items is also a solution.

04

## **GET CONSERVATION HELP**

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If you have a particularly important family heirloom photo that **MUST** be kept and it's damaged, consider hiring a professional to work on your photo. In the mean time, make a copy of the damaged original, in case.

05

## **IDENTIFY PHOTOS**

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If possible, write info about the photo(s) on the envelopes, dividers, folders before writing on the photo itself. Use No. 2 pencil or Pigma pen on paper, film-marking pen on plastic enclosures. **ONLY** use No. 2 pencil or lighter on photos themselves.

# Photo ORGANIZATION WORKSHEET

## Gather

### GOALS:

- How do you want to feel once all photos are organized? \_\_\_\_\_
- Completion Date \_\_\_\_\_

What goals do you have for the organized photos?

- Physical Photo Albums
- Digital Photo Books
- Archival Quality Storage boxes
- Digitization
- New Frames Displayed
- Gallery Wall
- Gifts

### PLACES & PEOPLE

What services and who do you want to outsource to?

- Digital Conversion
- Scanning
- Cloud Storage
- Safety Depositi Box

### MATERIALS:

- Sharpies, Pen, Photo Pencil
- Post-It Notes
- Rubberbands
- Sorting bins or trash bags + Labeled
  - Recycle
  - Digitize
  - Trash
  - Media Categories and Photo Categories\*
- Dental Floss
- Index Cards
- White Cotton Gloves
- Label Maker

### ITEMS

- Printed Photos
- Negatives
- Slides
- 8mm Film
- CD's
- Thumb Drives
- SD Cards
- Hard Drives
- VHS
- Super 8

### \*PHOTO CATEGORIES

- Person i.e. Mom, Dad, etc.
- Family: Mom's Side, Dad's Side, etc.
- Friends
- Major Events i.e. Birth, Graduations, Wedding, etc.
- Theme i.e. Sports, Vacations, Work
- Holidays
- Time/Date
  - Baby
  - Pre-School / Elementary
  - Junior High / High School
  - College
  - Graduate School
  - Single (20's/30's)
  - Married
  - Kids

## Release

### Decide: Pass On, Give Away, Sell, Recycle, or Trash

- Doubles
- Blurry Photos
- Similar Photos
- Bad Hair Day Photos
- Bad Memory Photos
- Unidentifiable People
- Random Scenic Photos
- Old Albums/Scrapbooks
- Unused Film
- Old Cameras

# Photo ORGANIZATION WORKSHEET

## Acquire

### OPTIMIZE STORAGE SOLUTIONS

- Acid-Free Photo Boxes w/ Dividers
- Acid-Free Photo Albums
- Portfolio or Large Acid-Free Envelopes for Large Photos
- Weathertight Bins (if needed for extra protection)
- New Frames

### OPTIMIZE BACKUP SOLUTIONS

- External Hard Drive
- Cloud Drive Service

## Cultivate

### CREATE YOUR UNIQUE PHOTO SYSTEM

- Put Photos in Photo Box by Category
- Label Each Category
- Put Favorite Photos in New Frames
- Curate Your Own Gallery Wall
- Store Photo Boxes in a Safe Environment
- Put Photos in New Albums
- Put Large Photos in Portfolio

### CREATE YOUR UNIQUE PHOTO BACKUP SYSTEM

- Scan photos and/or negatives (or use a service)
- Digitize other media (or use a service)
- Upload and store digital photos in several places
- Label & Organize Digital Files

## Enjoy!

### MEDITATE / JOURNAL / PRAY

- Grab a cup of tea and spend time looking through your newly organized photos!
- Express gratitude for your loved ones, the adventures, the experiences, the memories.
- Celebrate your story — the good and the bad!

### SHARE YOUR MEMORIES

- Invite a friend or family member over and show them!
- Create fun photo books
- Create fun photo gifts
- Create a family timeline / tree



HOW TO

*Release*

# Release

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## STEP THREE: RELEASE YOUR PHYSICAL ITEMS

“Here is where you will physically go through each item one by one and make decisions—keep, toss, donate, sell, recycle.”

*Melinda Grace*

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Reclaim Your Space with  
G.R.A.C.E.

# Release

## USE BOXES OR BAGS

### keep

Place photos you, or your family, use regularly, you love, or in this pile. Put a rubberband and post it note around each category & subcategories.

### give

Place photos you want to give to family or friends in this box. You might also consider pricing vintage ephemera photos for \$0 on Facebook Marketplace. Crafters and vintage collectors might take you up!

### sell

Place vintage ephemera photos (43 years or older) in this box.

Plan to start selling ASAP.

Here's a cool [FB Group for selling](#).

### move

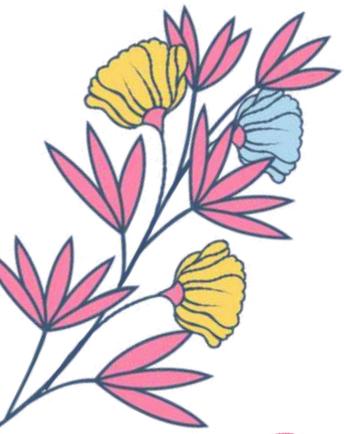
This box is for photos or frames that belong in another room or area of the house. Move the items to their correct homes once you've gone through everything to save yourself some trips.

### trash

Place any photos you want to just toss in this trash bag. Toss doubles, blurry photos, photos with people you have no idea about, events you'd like to forget, and bad hair days. Lol.

### idk

*This is the I DON'T KNOW bin. If you come across an item that you don't know what decision to make yet, simply put it in the IDK bin and then decide when you're ready.*



# Sentimental PHOTOS

01

## No Guilt

If a photo brings up guilt or negative feelings , let it go. Life is too short!

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02

## Ask For Help

If you find it hard to let go of photos because of sentimental reasons, but you want to let them go, call a friend! Have them come over and help you say goodbye. Or reach out to me, a professional organizer! I can come do in-person sessions or virtual over zoom.

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03

## Give Thanks

I find it helpful if I get stuck on a sentimental photo to pray! Thank God for this blessing of friends, family and experiences.. Ask God to help you release it, so you can focus on cherishing the memories that matter most.

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04

## Scan

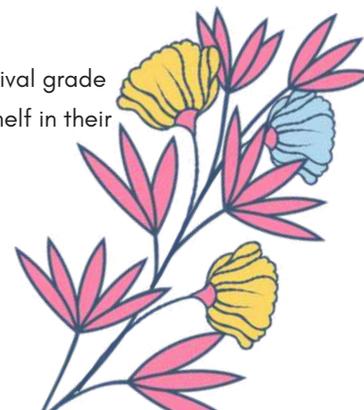
Now is a great to time to scan all the "Keep" printed photos so they are not lost to time and saved properly on your computer, back-up hard drive and/or cloud storage. Outsource digitization services to an online service like Legacy Box or to a local company.

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05

## Archive It

If you know you want to keep several sentimental items, consider acquiring archival grade photo storage boxes that are acid-free. Many people have room on the top shelf in their closets for one or two beautiful boxes of organized photos / aka memories.



A decorative wreath made of dark blue outlines, featuring pink leaves, blue and yellow flowers, and a white ribbon. The wreath is set against a light blue background.

**CHECKLIST TO**

*Release*



# Release PHOTOS

## PHYSICAL PHOTOS

- Doubles (Remember those days?)
- Blurry Photos
- Similar Photos (Choose best one.)
- Bad Hair Day Photos
- Bad Memory Photos
- Photos with people you don't know
- Random Scenic Photos
- Random Animal Photos
- Photos You Simply Don't Want
- Random Sizes that are Duplicates

## PHOTO SUPPLIES

- Old Albums / Scrapbooks
- Unused Film Rolls
- Unused Throwing Cameras
- Old Cameras
- Worn out envelopes
- Old cardboard boxes that stored photos
- Non-weather-tight storage boxes

## NOTES:

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“The goal is to be able  
to find what you need,  
when you need it, and  
to be able to put it  
away  
quickly. In the  
organizing world, we  
call this a system.”

*Melinda Grace*

Reclaim Your Space with  
G.R.A.C.E.



HOW TO

*Organize*

# Acquire

## **ADD YOUR UNIQUE STYLE & PERSONALITY!**

Consider purchasing storage solutions such as baskets, bins, or drawer dividers to keep your photos organized. If you want to properly store your photos consider archival quality photo boxes, albums, and portfolios.

My favorite items to acquire to keep photos organized are:

Photo Boxes with dividers to label

Albums

Portfolios for larger prints

Beautiful Frames (New or Vintage)

# Why ARCHIVAL STORAGE?

## TOP REASONS WHY

**Light, dust, handling, air pollutants and changes in temperature and humidity can cause permanent damage to photos and other photo media.**

## BEFORE YOU BUY...

- Assess the Value of Your Photos to Determine Budget & Priorities
- Create an inventory of types of formats, sizes, and quantities
- Who will use the photographs? How often? Do some photos need extra protection?
- Print copies of important images

## TECHNICAL TIPS

- Acid-Free
- Low Levels of Lignin
- Pass the Photographic Activity Test
- Paper with pH of 7.5 to 9.0
- Buffered Paper
- Polyester Plastic
- Board Boxes

## STORAGE SOLUTIONS

- Paper Enclosures and Envelopes
- Interleaving Paper for between Photos
- Board Photo Boxes
- Archival Plastic Enclosures, sleeves, pages (for binders)
- Archival 3-ring Binders
- Acid-free Hanging Folders
- Paper envelopes designed for negatives



# Product RECS

01

## HANDLE PHOTOS AND NEGATIVES SAFELY

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White cotton gloves to keep the natural acid in your fingers off of photos and negatives. Don't have any beverages or liquids nearby. You can find some here on my [Amazon Archival Shopping List](#).

02

## PHOTO SAFE CONTAINERS, BINS, OR BOXES

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I'm a huge fan of [Gaylord Archival's Family Photo Boxes](#). You can get sets that include dividers and / or enclosures for things like negatives or slides. A high-end, beautiful option is [Native Archival boxes](#). You can find the specific sets I like on my [Amazon Archival Shopping List](#).

03

## DIY SLIDE SCANNING AND PHOTO SCANNER

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Acquire your own in-home slide scanner to convert slides to a digital format. A personal photo scanner is also good thing to acquire if you don't want to outsource. [Professional Quality Scanner](#). [Great Value Scanner](#). [Highly Rated Scanner](#).

04

## VHS CONVERSION PRODUCTS

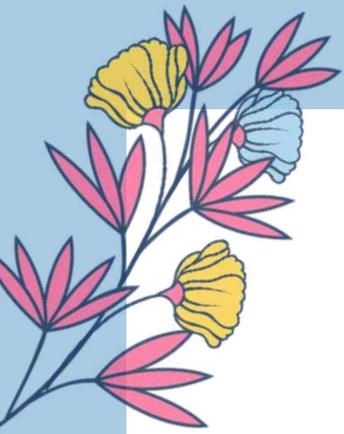
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Also consider acquiring a refurbished VHS player with digitizing software to convert old family videos. My dad bought [this VHS conversion kit](#) recently and it's working great!

\*If you don't have time to DIY it, look at the list you gathered of online or local companies that provide this service. It's a great investment for you and your family!

\*\*Some of the links above are affiliate links, which means I might earn a teeny tiny commission if you fall in love with something from this list. It doesn't cost you anything extra and supports my small business.





# Services RECS

01

## PHOTO SCANNING COMPANIES

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Local to LA? Try **Scantastic! In-Home Photo Scanning**. I've used **LegacyBox** MANY times. Try **Footbridge** or **Scanmyphotos.com** When I scan more photos again, TBH, I'll use a local service like **LA Film Lab** for all my digitizing needs.

02

## FRAMING SERVICES

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Local to LA? I've used and love Frame Gallery in Agoura Hills. Beautiful, custom work. Michaels and Hobby Lobby are great on a budget. Try **Framebridge** if you want to do it all from home and never leave the house!

03

## PROFESSIONAL PHOTO ORGANIZER

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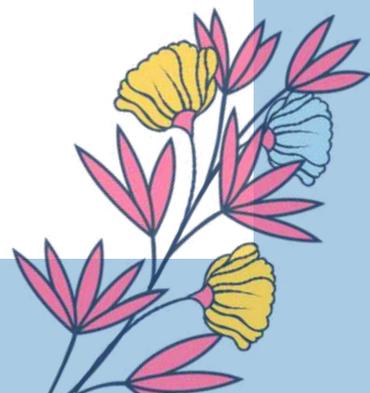
**Reach out to me!** I can help you locally in Los Angeles, Ventura or Santa Barbara Counties in-person or virtually anywhere in the world.

04

## FILM DEVELOPMENT

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Gone are the days of dropping off at Walmart or Walgreens. :( Try this awesome mail in service from **TheDarkroom.com**. I've used them many times for random rolls of film I've found when decluttering. It's great and super easy!



# Cultivate

Set up your photo displays and storage with rhythms that work with your lifestyle & save time + maximize ease.

Think about your current rhythms & routine.

What are they? For example, do you like to see photos on the wall, in a frame, in an album, or have them neatly tucked away.

# TOP 10 PHOTO *Organization Tips*

- Curate new photos in new or freshly updated vintage frames to replace outdated photos & frames.
- Curate & Create digital photo albums.
- Curate & Create physical photo albums with acid-free albums
- Digitize as much as possible for easy storage + long life.
- Put digitized photos on cloud storage + cultivate an organization system
- Curate Favorite Photos in Acid-Free Photo Boxes
- Categorize Photos
- Store ALL Photos in one place — preferably in a dark, cool, and dry area. The top shelf in a dark closet on the main floor of your house or apartment is the best location.
- Store ALL PHOTOS in a safe place
- Label

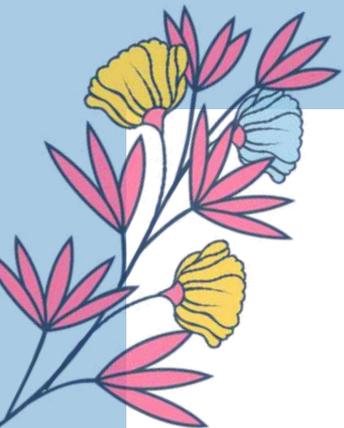
*Enjoy!*

Take a moment to celebrate &  
ENJOY your calm, organized  
photos!

“Whatever makes  
you smile and feel celebratory  
—DO THAT! Enjoy  
accomplishing your  
organizational goals!”

*Melinda Grace*

Reclaim Your Space with  
G.R.A.C.E.



# Enjoy! PHOTOS

01

## CREATE FUN PHOTO GIFTS!

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Use services like [Shutterfly](#), [Mixbook](#), and/or [Artifact Uprising](#) to create fun photo books calendars, bags, mugs, ornaments of your favorite photos and give to family and friends as gifts.

02

## DIVE INTO RESEARCHING ANCESTRY

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Now that you have kept your most prized family photos, it will be fun to use [Ancestry.com](#) for research your genealogy and learn about all the family members in your photos!

03

## CURATE & CREATE A FAMILY TIMELINE

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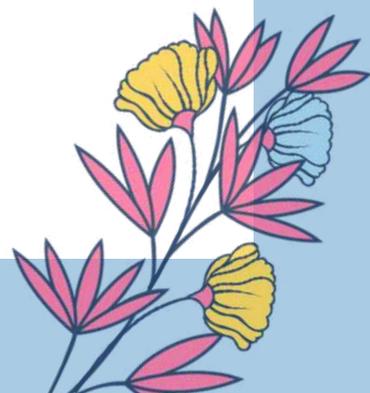
Now that you've learned about your family tree and timeline, it will be fun to curate & create a family timeline or tree. Use Canva, Google Sheets or other online programs like [Family Echo](#) or [Family Tree Builder](#) for designing and printing. Enjoy sharing this beautiful visual representation of your family with your family.

05

## CURATE & CREATE VIDEOS AND SLIDESHOWS

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It's so fun to see your photos on the TV or laptop in a fun video! Share with friends and family and enjoy each other's company and life.





HOW TO

*Maintain*



# Restore

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“Don’t think of it (maintaining organization) as something you have to do... Rather, think of it as a restorative dance of self-care.”

*Melinda Grace*

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Reclaim Your Space with  
G.R.A.C.E.

## PRINTED PHOTO

# Restore

*Every Few Years*

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- Gather all your printed photos & photo media.
- Review & Release.
- Check framed photos and gallery wall. Need to refresh and swap out photos?
- Update any boxes to archival quality photo boxes.
- Curate any new digital photos: print, frame, and/or gift!

**WANT YOUR PHOTOS  
ORGANIZED WITH  
ELEGANCE & EASE  
WITHOUT THE STRESS  
OF DOING IT ALL BY  
YOURSELF?**

[Schedule a Free Phone Call](#)



Did you know I also do virtual sessions? ***Virtual sessions are great for photo & memorabilia organizing!***

Shorter sessions + you discover and get coached on my signature G.R.A.C.E. method. Click the link above to get started today.

# Thank You



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