Episode Title: Why am I Still Not Organized
Guest: Star Hansen
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Jackie: Raise your hand if there's an area in your home you feel is cluttered. I see you, you are not alone. On this episode of the Grown-Ass Woman's Guide, certified professional organizer, Star Hansen is here. And she says clutter sometimes is actually helpful. I'm gonna say that again. She says clutter sometimes is actually helpful. Don't miss her incredible mind blowing insight. And you have to hear why she says she doesn't even make her own bed. It's true. You will not hear anything like this from another professional organizer. Stay with us.

This is the Grown-Ass Woman's Guide. I'm your host, Jackie MacDougall.

Star Hansen is a certified professional organizer and clutter whisperer on a mission to help you banish your personal clutter monster, take control of your stuff and create a life you're truly proud of. But here's the thing, Star looks at the deeper meaning of your stuff to help you figure out why you feel overwhelmed by your clutter in the first place. I recently heard her Ted talk and I knew right away, I needed to have her on the podcast. Then I read her bestselling book, Why the F am I Still Not Organized?

Honestly, I've never heard anything like it. If you have clutter in your home or your car, or even with your food or on your calendar, keep listening. Star has helped thousands of people get and stay organized. I mean, she was on Oprah, my goodness. And she is about to help us all today. *By the way you could probably tell by the title of her book, but there's some salty language in here. So grab the earbuds if you're at work or around kids.*

All right. Let's dive in.

Jackie: Why the fuck am I still not organized? Why the fuck that title?

Star Hansen: Why the fuck? Yes. Well, because that's what people always say. Two things. Well, maybe more than two things. So one, I wanted a title that did not make people feel like it was a significant organizing manual, we have too many of those. I want you to laugh. I want you to not feel ashamed to pick it up and buy it for yourself or for a friend. I want you to share it in a lighthearted manner. It's also the number one thing people are feeling when it comes to their

clutter. If boxes and bins and labels were the solution, like we'd all already be organized. The organizing industry is a $1 billion industry and growing 3% a year.

Jackie: What?

Star Hansen: Yeah. So bins are not our problem. Solutions like folding techniques. I mean, go on YouTube, go on Pinterest. We have never been so flooded with systems and solutions before. If knowledge was the problem, we would already be there. So I am interested in why the fuck you're not organized after doing everything right, after being successful in other areas of your world. Why this? Why is this not coming together and then normalizing it for you and helping you through to the other side?

Jackie: Yeah. That is awesome. And when you were just talking about the bins, I was thinking about like, expecting a bin is gonna make you more organized is like expecting your new workout clothes are gonna make you fit.

Star Hansen: But people do. My yoga mat sits out more days than I use it and I have weights in my living room because it kind of works. Every day I see those weights, I think that's a great idea. I just have to, for me, and this is for me only, I have to be okay with 10 repetitions being all I do, and having that be enough because 10 is better than in my mind, which is I have to do an entire routine for 90 days and have a full body P90X transformation with shredded abs, which I've never had, and a perfectly chiseled body, which I've never had. So it just kind of gently reminds us, hey, don't forget who you are. Don't forget who you wanna be. And that's one of the beautiful things about clutter is in many ways it helps keep us on track or we perceive that it helps keep us on track in that way by surrounding ourselves with things that we value.

Jackie: Interesting. Can you dive into that a little bit more?

Star Hansen: Oh yeah. Welcome to the fun house. My view of clutter is not that it's bad. I mean, yes, we have tons of scientific evidence that it causes spikes in cortisol and it creates stress and my experience is that it is also there to help empower you. So our external clutter is an expression, an extension of our own inner world. And yes, there can be stressful things about it, but often it's doing something to try to help us. It's trying to help us step into the next level. Like if you think of like if you're a glass of water and you start to overflow, right? It's like you're moving outside of your original constraints into a new world. And that's a lot of times what clutter is doing. We are leaving the old paradigm and expanding into the world. And what our job is, is to figure out

what that change is that's being invited. So when you have clutter, either your systems need to be elevated or the clutter's doing something for you. It's trying to help you. And if we can establish what that is, you can get that need met without the clutter. Now one of the things that I, you know, I'll give a few examples because there's many ways we use clutter to remind us of things. We use clutter to connect with loved ones, like if you think about objects you keep around you from people that are no longer here, we use clutter to protect us. You know, I tell a story about a client who had these random, seemingly random mounds of clutter all over her house. It was like a clutter mole, lived in her house and was just creating these like little piles and there was a pile of clutter in front of anything that she wanted to hide from her children, and that's not random. What that was showing was she needed privacy, she needed something for herself, and she needed secure spaces to hide things that she wanted to keep for herself. And as you know as a mother, you literally shared your body with the human. They don't know boundaries many times. I mean, I still hand my mom things to put in her purse. I'm in my forties, like hey mom, can you hold this? Like, I just assume she's an extension of me.

Jackie: The pack mule, as I would call myself, I'm always like, if you can't fit it in a backpack, it's not coming.

Star Hansen: Totally. It's so funny, my mom hands my stuff to my dad. I hand things to my mom like we are all just on an adventure together. But you know, it really is if we can start to see the deeper root of what clutter is doing for us, it really helps. And I mean some of these are lovely, like the reminders are lovely, but some of them are quite painful. If you grew up in a household with a lot of scarcity or lack, pairing down can feel like having to sever an arm off or giving away your sustainability, especially after the pandemic. So many people just had their income ripped out from under them. And we've experienced this kind of whiplash of scarcity and fear as we're walking this path and we want to be really gentle and look at how clutter might be helping in order to really set ourselves free from it.

Jackie: That's fascinating, because I don't think I've ever heard an expert talk about how your clutter could be helping you or how you perceive that that clutter is helping you, which is fascinating. But the part of your TED talk that I was like, stand up, cheer, at least in my brain, you know, like, yes, Star yes, was when you started talking about clutter, it's not just always the stuff like clutter in our food and in our world, clutter in our brains, clutter in our calendars. Oh my God. The people who I know who are like, look at me. I have such value because I'm busy. And by the way, also guilty, like everything I mentioned today, you should assume I'm guilty of in one way, shape, or form.

Star Hansen: Same.

Jackie: I have noticed that when I declutter a part of my life, it usually is just moved over to another part of my life.

Star Hansen: Oh my gosh. That's so sage of you. Well, think about it. You only have a hundred percent, right? You have a hundred percent and you can only give a hundred percent of yourself to whatever you can. Some days that's rest. Some days that's working. Some days that's kids, we are splintered and we have to choose where to give it, and it's very normal to shuffle items and focus from one area to another. It's funny, it's the whole reason why I started my organizing community online because I was like, people don't need support once, they don't need like a one-off class that they buy and they'll be magically solved, 'cause that's not how it works. But we organize a different room every single month. So in the course of a year, you've touched every room and I don't expect your house to be perfectly organized at the end of the year. What I expect is for you to make contact with each area of your home because every area of your home connects to an area of your life. And the more in touch with those areas, you are the healthier and happier and more vibrant you are. Because many of us, we just let certain parts of ourselves go dormant. And that dormancy creates an emotional sickness in us. And even if you only give it a little bit of attention, just a little like, Hey, I see you, I haven't forgotten about you. That can be enough to just satisfy that nurturing that we need, that oftentimes we, especially as women, abandon ourselves because we have life, career, kids responsibilities, and it's really important to stay in touch with all the parts of ourselves because they're each valid and super important.

Jackie: Yeah. Absolutely. I have found ways to do this in 2023, where like you talk about the junk drawer and your TED talk and also in the book, I went and dumped out the junk drawer and it was just like, I'm just gonna do the junk drawer. I historically am the person who will go, I'm gonna tackle this closet and I'm gonna empty out the entire closet. And then my ADHD brain is like, Hey, look. And so then my, there's, yeah, there's stuff all over the floor for the next four days and my husband's stressed and my kids are like, what is happening? You know? And so I have begun to do that whole like small pieces, right? So we have a buy nothing group. I think most people have a buy nothing group in your area. It's on Facebook, or I think they have an app now, but I'm not sure how active that is. But I just take stuff that I'm not doing a garage sale. I'm not gonna get $5 for something I paid $400 for, you know, I'm just, I'm gonna give something to someone. And that feeling, that feeling is so much better than keeping the thing dusty in the garage. But I'll just go, you know what, today I'm gonna give away three things and I'll go in the garage and I'll

grab three things and I'll put 'em out in the driveway and then I'll just pick people, you know? And that's kind of amazing. So those small pieces. But can we talk a little bit about energy of this stuff? Because one of the things that I do when I'm feeling stagnant, I think like in another world, another life, I was a clutter expert or something, but I don't follow through always, but when I'm feeling stagnant, I try to change the energy in a room.

Star Hansen: Yes.

Jackie: So even today I wanted to get ready for our interview, and I took everything off my desk and I wiped down the desk and I wiped down the computer and I feel really, really good. And I can see you and I can actually see the screen 'cause it doesn't have fingerprints all over it. But what happens when we just let things sit in a room and build clutter, does that change the energy? Like, I know I'm a little woo-woo here.

Star Hansen: I'm totally woo. I mean, my name is Star, so for sure I'm right there with you. It's okay. I didn't name myself, by the way, in case you're wondering. It was given to me, but I live up to it.

Jackie: So you were born from a woo-woo person as well?

Star Hansen: Not at all. I was born from Cowboys. You get what you need in this life. My siblings have totally normal names. They were like, we're gonna get fancy with this one.

Jackie: Oh, that's wild. I love it.

Star Hansen: Thank you. So I do believe that objects have energy. It's spaces have energy. We have energy. And so you are always engaging with the items around you. And yes. For some of us physical objects can feel overwhelming in certain collections and styles For other people, collections and certain styles feel uplifting and creative and exciting. I've worked with clients who are maximalist who did not want to get rid of anything. We donated nothing but we reorganized what was there, made it more accessible, and there's no right or wrong, it's just what you prefer and how you wanna keep your spaces. But I always like to talk about the act of organizing. To me it's a healing art, but it's also a curation of your life. I've yet to find a better way of putting this, so I know this isn't quite right. I'll figure it out one day and then write a book about it. But we are brainwashed by the objects around us, like we are brainwashing ourselves by what we surround ourselves with. So if I put things around me, and brainwash again is the wrong word, but I am grasping.

Jackie: It fits. It fits, we're good.

Star Hansen: It totally, it's like it is subconsciously affecting our experience, is what I really mean. We are subconsciously affected by what we surround ourselves with, because we might see it at first. Right? You hang that piece of art. I just bought a piece of art for my bedroom. When I saw it, I had to have it, and I instantly bought it, brought it home, hung it up that hour. Love it. I don't even see it anymore, right? So it just, everything we have falls to the background because our brain is focusing on what's new. Our subconscious is still taking in all that information, so we are still affected by it. So even though I don't consciously see that piece of art anymore, it is always affecting me. And so you want to really be mindful and curate your home in a way that allows you to experience the energy that you want, experience the topics, the general flow of your life, and I love the idea. So I'm very intuitive so I always tell people the first thing, when you're getting organized, you do have to know how to organize because most of us were never taught. And so it's the first thing I teach people. And if your listeners wanna know how they can download a free PDF for me at organizingiseasy.com. And I have 10 steps for getting organized. And these are the only ten steps you'll ever need. This is how you organize.

Jackie: Fantastic. Putting that in the show notes for sure!

Star Hansen: And I need you to know how to organize. And it's like chapter four in the book, because if I want you to do the deeper work of what's really happening inside of your clutter, you have to know that you have the skills to do the organizing or else you're always gonna use that as a crutch to be like, oh, but if I only knew, I don't know how to do it, I was never taught. Let's just remove that as an obstacle. There, 10 steps, you know how to do it.

Jackie: Done. And you had me at battery tester. I was like, that would be life changing. A battery tester that like all those batteries that we all have everywhere?

Star Hansen: That you just throw back in the junk drawer 'cause you're like, I don't know if it's good or not. Like it's groin fur...

Jackie: Until you need it and it's not good. Yeah.

Star Hansen: Totally! But it is like, there's certain pragmatic things that we wanna have set up so that we can do this deeper work. And I am a big believer that clutter is not good or bad? I don't, I think clutter's more good than bad. I think of clutter kind of like a weed. We see a dandelion growing in the wrong

place and we're like, ugh, why is this weed here? And yet I will go down and spend a good chunk of change for dandelion root tea every week because it's so good for your liver. So this weed in one context is highly beneficial in another, clutter's the same way. It's how we look at it, how we use it, and my mission is to help people use their clutter to transform, see their genius, grow, evolve, and get their needs met. Because once you're really getting the underlying need met, you're not gonna need the clutter anymore.

Jackie: Oh, that's so good. So let's talk about the shame though.

Star Hansen: Yeah.

Jackie: That is such a big word that keeps coming up for me in interviews in my own life. Like, how much shame, women especially, we've been programmed, talk about brainwashing! But there's so much shame around clutter, regardless of where it's coming from. And so number one, why? And number two, how do we process that?

Star Hansen: I don't think anyone's ever asked me the why of clutter or the shame before. I love this line of exploration. So I think that because clutter is so personal, because no one person collects clutter in the same way that another person does. I've never seen identical clutter. I've seen similar themes and patterns, but everybody's story's very different. And so if I walk into your house and I see your clutter, and I say this in the TED Talk, I can know the state of your life by what I see in your home, whether you're organized or disorganized. Yeah. And it's not because I have some 3D or psychic, I mean, I am a little psychic, but that's not why. It's because I see patterns and my brain takes in a lot of information. I've looked at a lot of houses and I help teach people how to do this too. And it's really about starting to see the patterns. So one is it might be shame because we perceive other people's judgments because there's a huge stigma around clutter in our society that if you have clutter, you're lazy or incompetent or not intelligent. And yet Albert Einstein had clutter. His famous quote was if a cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind of what then is an empty desk a sign? It's true. Like I'd rather have a full abundant mind than just crickets going on in there. And so really like allowing, so one is definitely the other people's perception of us, but then two is it's very vulnerable because that's our real life. I've seen all kinds of things. I've, I know about what you like sexually by what I see in your clutter. I know what you value in your clutter. I know how well you're doing financially in your clutter. I know who wears the pants in your family by your clutter.

Jackie: It's fascinating.

Star Hansen: Yeah. Most people do not want to share that information with a stranger. Like, no thank you. I don't need you in that part of my life. And so I think that's why. Now let's talk about what we can do about it, because that's where we would really wanna live. I love Renee Brown, her book Atlas of the Heart. I loved that book so much. She goes in there to define 80 plus words in a very deep way, and I find the definition so powerful, so much so that I actually created a spinoff class within the community for that because I was like, oh, we need to talk about the emotions in our clutter every single month. So we do, like tonight we're doing an intuition wise, it's my favorite class. It's amazing. But she says that the antidote to shame is connection.

Jackie: Mm-hmm.

Star Hansen: And I just. The antidote to shame is connection. We spend all of our time hiding the things that we think are shameful, that perpetuates and grows the shame and grows whatever it is that we're trying to hide. Whereas if we say to someone, I am experiencing this, or can I show you this or can I talk to you about that? That actually is what brings healing. Not the hiding, not the waiting until you're perfect. And that's one of the reasons, like I love the membership that we have so much because there are people who come in and they won't even go on camera. They will not go on camera and six months, a year in, they're like, oh my gosh and then look at this drawer. And then I have this breakthrough and.

Jackie: Wow.

Star Hansen: Yeah, because instead of it being this horrible, offensive thing, they notice that we're not running for the hills. You cannot scare me. I've seen it all. There's nothing that you can show me that is going to freak me out or think less of you.

Jackie: Nothing?

Star Hansen: Except a dead body. You have a dead human and I'm gonna be using all my trauma skills to get out of that situation. But because I've seen everything else, like I've seen it all, and I've had people confess things to me that... it's intense. I'm like a vault of information in there, 'cause this is so personal, but no, I mean, unless I think that I or my team are in danger. I'm not gonna have any judgment of you. It's not my job. You know, I can have my buttons pushed, but generally that's not about your clutter. That's if someone treats me poorly, someone treats me like staff or if there's a hierarchy in their mind, that doesn't feel good to me. I'm not a fan of that at any level. But no, you

show me any level of clutter, I don't care what it is and I'm just gonna be like, okay, no problem. We got this. I do scream if I see a spider, I can't stop that, but I will scream, but then I'll just keep living my life shortly after that. So, sorry for your eardrums.

Jackie: It's wild though that you say you can come in and like, can you give some of the tips? So first of all, you said you know what you like sexually. Is it because they have a trapeze or they have a...

Star Hansen: Ah, sometimes, I mean, sometimes, you see hooks sometimes, and you know what they're there for. So sometimes, and actually men more than women, so when I work with men, they tend to hide their sex toys. They are interesting 'because I would think that they'd be like, whatever. Maybe they want me to feel safe, I'm not sure. But most women don't hide that stuff from me, that I know of. And so when we organize their nightstand, I also really try to normalize that conversation because we procreate. It's the most normal thing other than eating, drinking and sleeping that we as humans do. So like why do we have it in the shame box? Like, so I try to just normalize it as much as possible. It's funny 'cause I use examples in the book and I know people are sometimes like, are you really into sex toys? And I'm like, I'm not, but what I wanna do is normalize it for you so that you feel safe talking to me about it. So that's my big goal. And when I work...

Jackie: Because women aren't supposed to want pleasure, Star!

Star Hansen: Oh, God forbid. God forbid we felt good. No, you just make that baby. You make that baby.

Jackie: You make that baby or you serve that man! Hard pass.

Star Hansen: Hard pass. Yeah, no, thank you. Yeah. But it's, you know, it's more about like, I'll come into someone's house and they'll have a giant box of toys that they have forgotten about or because we oftentimes stop seeing what's around us, they won't even know that something's in eyeline because they've stopped seeing it because it's been around so much.

Jackie: Right.

Star Hansen: Sometimes it's because they feel safe with me and they know I'm not gonna judge them. And so then they'll share it with me and then we strategize a great system. Sometimes it's accidental and then they're like, oh

God, I'm so embarrassed, and I have to reassure them like, it's cool. I have seen it all and I am sex positive. So go with your pleasure self. Yes.

Jackie: It reminds me of the time in my twenties where I came home from work and I don't know where she found it, but the person who would come to the clean the house actually propped it up on the pillow as if it were like a stuffed animal, you know, my vibrator.

Star Hansen: I had that with a client who was moving and like the movers found one and left it like the whole room was emptied except for this like vibrator. And we were like, that's not embarrassing. Like, she was like, I'm so mortified. I was like, you'll never see them again. It's okay.

Jackie: But now they know where you're moving to!

Star Hansen: Uhhuh. Exactly, exactly. Close the blinds.

Jackie: That's funny. So how do you know if a couple is doing well or not so well?

Star Hansen: Oh, so one of the things, this is an easy, very non-sexual benign kind of area. So one is nightstands. Are they the same size? Are they uniform? Does one person not have a nightstand? I just walked into my friend's house and she is newly single and wants to be in a relationship. And so, and just for context, the left side of the bed tends to be the feminine side and the right side tends to be the masculine side. So this friend of mine has her bed pushed up against the left side of the bed, only one night stand on the right side of the bed. And I said, baby girl. If you don't wanna be single anymore, you need to get rid of the nightstand, push your bed to the middle. I said right now the context of your bedroom is that you are the masculine, you are the provider. You are the only one that there's room for, there's no room for you to be in your feminine receiving. There's no space for someone else. You are fully embodying. And it's true that's actually what is what she's experiencing in her life. But if we are manifesting through our spaces, we need to be a bit more mindful. I've seen couples where one partner will have this giant nightstand filled with photos and lotion and like wonderful self-care things. And the other partner has this like tiny little plant stand, maybe an alarm clock on there, like barely even room for like a glass of water. And I'm like, okay. So she wears the pants. He's just hanging on by a thread. And sometimes that's because that's the dynamic of the relationship and sometimes it's because he messed up somewhere and she's not done forgiving him yet and he's not done cowering yet. And so I've seen that too where if there was cheating, for example, sometimes people when they make

mistakes like that, they will cower inside of themselves and just try to not take up space, and the healing really comes when you can start to like embody again fully. Like one of the biggest themes in my work is take up space like. You guys, yes, of course you make a mistake, but then how do you repair? It's not enough to just say, I'm sorry, how do we actively repair if you're gonna choose to be in the relationship? So nightstands is a great way to see it. It's also like who takes up the space the most? Is there a person who's dominating? Every room. Like sometimes you see that where someone is like exerting power by leaving stuff everywhere. Sometimes you see people again rolling up within themselves and trying to take up no space or keeping it to a very small area, or secrets is another thing. People who need to hide things to feel safe from their partner. That's an interesting theme to explore also. But there are a lot of really interesting themes between partnerships.

Jackie: Wow, that's fascinating. And I think about my own bedroom, our nightstands are exactly the same.

Star Hansen: Awesome. Good job,

Jackie: Our lamps are exactly the same, but I'm on the right side. Do I need to move? Because I like being near the window.

Star Hansen: I know I like being near the bathroom. I like play. So it's funny, I was talking to someone about this recently. Some couples just trade off.

Jackie: I feel like used to be more flexible

Star Hansen: If you wanna be in your feminine, switch side. I had a partner who was like, I wanna switch sides tonight. And I was like, no. I like refused to give up my left side 'cause I was like, hmm, I am feeling my feminine and I refuse to give it up, which was very masculine to me, but, oh well. But it is, there's a lot of things I love about feng shui, but I also do not like static rules. I don't like, this is this and that is that. And you're screwing up if you put a mirror in front of your bed or your, you know, it's like I say, trust

Jackie: Or you like a mirror in front of I'm saying.

Star Hansen: Who's mad about that? Exactly. 'cause you're curious to see things from a different perspective.

Jackie: Right?

Star Hansen: That's healthy. Yeah. But I want you to trust your inner wisdom because I know that you know best. And the truth is that sometimes...

Jackie: I love that.

Star Hansen: Yeah, like sometimes what we need is not perfection. Sometimes we need contrast to learn some really big lessons to move through some of the big things that we came here to learn. You're not going to be able to escape the lessons you came here to learn. And so sometimes that mirror that's placed in the quote unquote wrong place is. The version of life you need to see in order to heal or to evolve or to grow and trust yourself. There will be a day where you will just suddenly not want that there anymore, and you're gonna wanna change this. And if I can do anything, I most wanna help you learn to trust yourself again, because organizing often when we have, as you were talking about with your Junk drawer. We have so many attempts where it didn't go the way we wanted to, or we ended up feeling flooded or overwhelmed or incomplete or judged. And organizing really can be a path to healing. It can help us trust ourselves again and learn to tune into ourselves. And I think especially in this chapter of life, like, your audience where they're living like we are in a really beautiful chapter. Like you are not in the same place you've been for the last few decades. You are getting your freedom back.

Jackie: Yeah.

Star Hansen: That means you get to be creative and create the life you want.

Jackie: Right. And we have so much experience at this point. It was like we're collecting sort of like junk, right? Clutter. We're collecting all this information, all this knowledge, all this experience, and now we get to take a bird's eye view and look at it and decide what that we see, which things still serve us and let go of of it. Yeah.

Star Hansen: Yeah. And it's, you know, and we were talking before we started recording about, you know, I was sharing that I'm childless and that's a journey, right? The people who have children that I know, they are currently in this chapter of life thinking, I don't wanna burden my kids. I don't wanna make it harder for them. How do I manage my own experience so I don't have to keep up on that much and that I'm not leaving a burden to my family when I go, right? Because we are aware of that being a part of this chapter as a child, this woman, I am thinking, why does it matter that I'm keeping these items when no one will inherit them? Like I have no legacy to pass them down to. So at what point do I get rid of my memorabilia items, my clothes from the nineties or

whatever it is that I'm holding onto that I perceive has a lot of value. There's a level of grieving for all of us. There's a level of having to reimagine our lives of having to face our mortality and one of the reasons why we get overwhelmed with clutter, because it's not just which size box does this fit in, what closet does this go in? It's facing our mortality. It's reconfiguring our lives. It's deciding how we're gonna be born again, and then also how do we align with the way that our brain works versus the way that the rest of society works? Because I don't know that many people with Neurotypical brains, if I'm honest, like maybe it's my career, I don't know. But most of us have some version of neurodivergence or some kind of shift. So it's like how do we create systems that really work for us? And that's how organizing can become an empowering healing journey versus just putting things in boxes with a lid.

Jackie: Yeah. Oh my gosh. You're saying so many things that I'm like, yes. I just wanna go back just a half a second and just reiterate the point because I had a Feng Shui expert on, she's lovely, she's amazing. She taught me so many things, and it's powerful, right?

Star Hansen: Yes.

Jackie: And I have found myself over the last three years, maybe since I interviewed her feeling like, oh, I'm not supposed to do that 'cause that's against the rules and you just freed me. You have no idea. Just by saying like, yeah, sure, use some of those things if they suit you. But you don't have to just follow arbitrary rules for if they don't fit into your life. And so I just wanna make sure we put a fine point on that because that's powerful shit right there.

Star Hansen: Yeah. Well, my journey, I don't have a clutter journey, but I had an eating disorder journey and a Body image issue. And so my struggle was with Orthorexia, which is, if you haven't heard of it, it's not in the DSM five, but it's a version of eating disorders where you obsess about being healthy. So I've done every diet, I've done every single thing, and it is very rare for me to make a choice where I don't have a gremlin in my head telling me that I shouldn't use the microwave or that this isn't organic or it's not balanced properly with the macros. She knows too much. She's an encyclopedia of wealth of information, and she's not fun. I want her to go on vacation and just stay there.

Jackie: She's trying to keep you safe. Thanks. Thanks girl. Now go.

Star Hansen: Thanks, I appreciate you so much. But it's the same as the clutter where it's like, oh, I should be doing this perfectly. And I say, let's not do it perfectly at all. Let's just do it like, and do it small. Like I wanna touch back on

one thing you said earlier about the junk drawer and one of the first things I do is teach people, I have them download those 10 steps and then I say practice on something so small that you can finish it in 20 minutes. Like I have a download also that, 10 things people organize in 20 minutes or less, and you might be able to get it done in five minutes. Fantastic. Practice a few more times. Move on to something bigger and bigger. But some of you are gonna do that 20 minute project and it's gonna take you two hours. And there is nothing wrong with that. But what we wanna do is start again, learning to trust ourselves. Strengthening a muscle. You probably have never been taught this before, and you would never expect yourself to run a marathon with no training. So think of the small practice sessions as conditioning, because most people jump in with me and they say, oh, I wanna organize my garage or my room of doom. And it's full, by the way, star of paperwork and memorabilia and photographs. And I wanna pull out my own hair and I'm like, don't run. They wanna start with the hardest room. And if I was there with you, it might take us two to seven days with a professional to do that room. And in your mind, you think you can do it in four hours and it is okay that you cannot, because I have been doing this for two decades. I know how to do this. I can be half asleep and I can still do this because it's a muscle memory. It's part of my purpose for being on this planet. If you're not there yet, that's okay, but start where you are and get those skills up. I launched the membership at the end of 2019, and it's been so cool to watch people for the last four years start to apply. First they listen. They take in the knowledge. They don't do anything. They feel bad that they're not doing anything, but they still track what's going on. Slowly they do small things, then they don't do anything. Then something will happen. Either there will be like a flood in their basement or someone is coming to town and they have to do, they're kind of forced into this bigger project.

Jackie: Yeah.

Star Hansen: They do it and it is like this cascade of success and flow and I just tell people like, just keep listening. Just keep showing up. Do five minute projects because the universe is going to invite you in to a giant cascading successful experience that you cannot stop. And it's okay to wait until that happens. Like you are right on track. You are doing nothing wrong. Learning is as important as doing, if not more important.

Jackie: Yeah. That's amazing. We keep going back, this is so funny because this is how I have normally I'm like, oh, I have to edit this and put all the things that are related together and, not go back and forth and back and forth. But this exactly, the thing that we're doing today is exactly how I have conversations

with my girlfriends, right? It's just like this and then this, and then this. Because it's just flowing and it's gelling, and so I'm gonna keep it exactly the way it is.

Star Hansen: I'm so glad. Well, it's also chaotic, which is what we're talking about. You have to meet things like you can't solve a problem from the energy of the problem, but first we need to meet the problem. So we're talking about chaos and we're moving in this chaotic fashion because it's what needs to happen to really track what's happening. Clutter doesn't line up perfectly and say, I'm here for this one thing. It's a little chaotic. It's a little crazy.

Jackie: That's a great perspective. Thank you very much. You mentioned not having children and not having these things to leave to said children. If you had that path, I just couldn't help but think who says that my kids or anyone else's kids want that crap?

Star Hansen: Oh, for sure. They don't, I mean, mostly they do not.

Jackie: Yeah. Like Auntie Mabel's music box. Like, nope, they don't care. This generation, I have seen it with my own sister. So I told you before we started, I'm the 11th of 13 kids. My sister, number 12, is not a clutter person. And my dad was like, he held onto everything and she's just like, no thank you. I went to her house and she has three knives in a drawer. No knife block thing. And I was like, well, where are all your knives? She's like, well, how many do you use? And she cooks more than I do. I was like, that's a great point. I don't. And so we got rid of the knife block and the old knives and we got three nice ones for Christmas, and they sit in a drawer, and it's perfect. Like you don't need 17 knives. What are you doing?

Star Hansen: We carry things down. Like I have lots of memory boxes. One of my memory boxes is devoted to my grandmothers. Like there's several grandmas and no one knows what they are besides me. And truthfully, I barely can tell you the difference between what's in there. But it's hard because I think we perceive that that's how we keep them alive. That's how we keep their memory present. The truth is that, like this box that I'm thinking of has aprons in it. I'm having a Come to Jesus with myself right now, everyone. So in case you were wondering, I'm, you know, the therapist and the therapy. It's full of aprons. Why am I not using those aprons? What am I saving them for? And who knows if my grandmothers even used those aprons? Maybe they bought them or they were given them as gifts and they were like good aprons that never left the drawer. It doesn't matter if I ever use them. Things are so much more happy if they're used because especially like the way this world is melting down right now, like the floods, the earthquakes, just sheer chaos. Mother nature is not

happy with us and she is trying to self-correct, which makes perfect sense, but there's not a good time to wait until. To wait to use these things for some day. I always tell people, packaging is precious. Like as soon as that thing is out of the packaging, you will use it like light those candles, don't save them for a rainy day, like someday that you never use. Use everything now and if you don't use it, you probably don't need it and pass it on to someone who can use it because we live in this very abundant world and those things could go and bless someone else's lives and that's way better than them sitting in a plastic box to be thrown out by an estate vendor when I die and someone's clearing out my house.

Jackie: Absolutely. And when you think about walking into someone's home and you gave them something that they're using, it's just, I would rather see that. I have a friend who has a piano that was from her childhood and she lives in a condo and upstairs. And so that piano's not in her space, but it's been in storage for like a decade.

Star Hansen: She has bought another piano, a brand new piano with that, and had it delivered to her condo for what she paid in storage.

Jackie: There's a mattress that she also has in there, where I was like, you're literally buying the mattress over and over again. It's a mattress. Give it to somebody who could use it. But anyway, digress. So the piano itself though, like I understand that's your childhood, so why not choose someone who you love and say, you know, maybe there's another child who is playing piano, someone you love, and give them, or even say, Hey, why don't you play this until you're an adult and then I'll take it back? You know what I mean?

Star Hansen: I think that because these are big conversations, right? It seems like we're talking about an object, but we're talking about her connection to her family, the memory she has made with that over time, the perceived life she thought she was gonna have, that she perceived it was gonna be a part of her life. There's probably 10 different layers that are connected there, and this is where you go to a professional organizer or a therapist or your best friend and you say, can we just unpack my connection to this piano for an hour? Like, can we just explore what's really going on? Because most of us, we don't give ourselves that time because we don't perceive that it's urgent. That piano is not urgent. That piano is just like sitting there and it's fine. She has the money. She's not processing that. She could have bought an extra house by now.

Jackie: Or a vacation.

Star Hansen: Or a vacation or, yeah. exactly. So. Someone. I think also we are not used to people really caring about our stories and you are a beautiful interviewer. Like you really care about people's stories. Like I can feel that in you and I see it in our interaction today. But most people don't have that experience. If you look at most people with their clutter, if we were partners and you said, I'm gonna go organize the storage unit when you come back. If I was on a standard American diet, I'd probably say, well, how much did you get rid of? Did you already pair down? Did we get that money back? I would be all about the deliverable, and all that does is make people want to hold tighter to their clutter, collect more. It makes them more defensive, more protective. If you really wanna delight somebody who has clutter and is working on it, ask them. Did you find something today that reminded you of a happy time in your life? Was there anything that you discovered today that you'd like to share with me or show me? What did you, what was the process like for you? What it hard? Do you feel excited to do more? Does it feel overwhelming? Tell me more about you. And really being interested in the person's process versus the results is one of the Best gifts that you can give somebody who is working on their clutter because this didn't happen overnight. It's not gonna get solved overnight. And they need your love and support every step of the way.

Jackie: That just made me extremely emotional. You are so gifted. You were put on this earth for a reason. You call yourself a healer. You are a healer. I could feel that because so many people are like, what is wrong with you? Why do you hold onto that? Let it go. Instead of honoring, Hey, what are you feeling? Do you wanna share with me? That is beautiful. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that.

Star Hansen: Thank you.

Jackie: It leads us into this whole, like we have talked about why we have talked about all of some of the perceived negativity. I wanna focus our final time together on solutions.

Star Hansen: Wait, but can we be best friends for the rest of our lives?

Jackie: We're not already?

Star Hansen: I wanna be sitting next to a campfire with you having this conversation. And I want it to go on until dawn. That's what I want.

Jackie: Great! Done, done, done, done! Where do you live? I forget.

Star Hansen: New Mex. I live in Santa Fe.

Jackie: Oh, okay. Hey, it's a short Southwest flight. I'm just saying. I'm just north of LA.

Star Hansen: Oh great.

Jackie: So if someone were coming in today and they were just like, oh, wait, actually, before we do that, what if you walk into a house and someone is ready for the healing that you provide, but their partner is not? Because you know, I sometimes see my own marriage, like sometimes I'm this and he's not, and vice versa. Although my husband does not have a huge connection to stuff and I really appreciate that about him. But how do you deal with that?

Star Hansen: That's a great question. I will never forget going to a client's house and her partner walking up to me, he was huge. He was like six four, just this massive tower. I'm tiny. I'm like five foot, nothing. He's like towering over me and he says, I'm not afraid of you. Like first words out of his mouth. I was like, well, good. I'm not here to scare you. I'm glad you got that outta the way. But what normally happens is you'll get one partner that is like ready for this journey and they're all in. And then you've got the second partner who is like, not today, Satan. They're not interested. What are you doing here? Like, no, you know, they'll be resistant. They don't really wanna talk to me. They don't tend to make eye contact. They seem like they wanna be anywhere else. And I always tell even, 'cause sometimes people will hire me because they want their spouse organized, but they're trying to like Lure them in, like he's the one that needs help. But we're gonna start in the kitchen, but like eventually I just want him to be exposed to you so that. That is exactly what they're doing. So, but what I notice is, so people, again, people desperately want someone to give a shit about their experience and their preferences and their needs and their desires. Most of us are just walking around thinking about ourselves because we're humans and that's what we do and that's how we survive. So what I do when I work with people is I will start with the partners open. We do things. What I will also do is be very curious and interested in the other partner's experience. Like when we're working on shared rooms, I want them to be a part of the conversation so that they know their opinion matters and that they know that their preferences are required in order to create a system that works for the whole family. So I include them in that way, and then I really try to make sure that they know that They matter because most times you've got normally one person who's in, quote unquote in charge of the house, right? This is like the old 1950s housewife situation where it's like, it's my duty to do this, this, and this. And they become unseen and no one wants to be unseen in their own home. Think it's really

important for people to know that organizing is not about making anyone wrong. It's not about getting rid of things. It's not about even sorting in category, categorizing, it's about. Creating an environment that supports every single being in that house. And we can only do that when we unify and work together.

Jackie: Yeah. I love that because I think, just real quick, our garage is like, I joke is like the wagon wheel coffee table from when Harry met Sally. It's like thing that's going to be the end of us. And we discovered through a lot of work, uh, that the garage for me is not about, it's a mess. Yes. It historically has been a mess. It's getting better every, every week. But it's about safety and security for me. I once was in the house with our three babies and there was a fire in our laundry room and I had to run through the garage and the fire department had to come through the garage and I was just like, mortified and felt very unsafe. Another time we had a flood. I was the only one home. I was actually recording a podcast episode and it was in the garage and there were all these boxes and so the garage for me is this like symbol of safety and security, and I wanna make sure that I can protect my family or that I'm protected and that's my husband's area. So for a long time it was like, please clean it and I will, and that typical, you know, stereotypical nagging and not doing, and when we started to talk about what it actually means, what happens when I nag him and what happens for him emotionally, it opened my eyes, but also for him to see where I was coming from and that it was really about my safety and security. And he was like, well, I don't want my wife to feel unsafe, you know? And so he was much more interested in cleaning. But if it's just like, that's a mess, he's like, I don't care.

Star Hansen: Right, right. Well, and that's, I think sometimes we're having different conversations in the same conversation. I remember. So Abraham Hicks does these great recordings, and I will never forget, one of their examples was, you've got this partnership and one partner wants to live near the ocean, one wants to live in the mountains, and they're fighting, fighting, fighting, fighting, fighting. And finally they say to the couple, write out the qualities of the area. Like why do you wanna live near the ocean? Why do you wanna live in the mountains? And so once they did that, they were able to see that they wanted the exact same thing. They just saw it going differently. And so I think when we show up, when we have a really vulnerable conversation of, hey, the garage is my escape route. Like I need to know that I'm safe. So you can have whatever chaos you want in there, but what I require is that there be room for me to escape with the children. That if there's an earthquake, there are not going to be things that are falling into my path and stopping me from being able to get out. Other than that, I don't care what you do in there, have a heyday, but what I need is this, and so coming together and because some people are never going to be clutter free. Some people do not want their spaces neat and tidy and

organized. Like if your partner is an artist, right? He might get a lot of creativity from having everything out. That's not clutter to him. That is inspiration. Active projects, I don't want anyone to tidy that up, but he could have as inspiration and you can have your safety. There's always a way for both people to get their needs met.

Jackie: Yeah, that's great. And you know, there are instruments all over my living room and I'm totally good with that because to me, that's not clutter, that's art. You know, that's like, that's my husband and my son making things together. And so have at it, you know, we just got him a giant piano and it was like somebody hand me down. Right? That to me is like, if you walk in and you feel like that's a mess, like that's on you.

Star Hansen: I do something really random. Most days I do not make my bed, and it's not because I don't know how to do it. And it's not because I don't like how it looks. It's because mama works hard all day. She's tired some days. I just wanna feel like my bed is inviting me back in. And if it's made, what it says is I'm for display, I'm for presentation. But if I leave it open and exposed for me, I feel like if I wanted to go take a 10 minute nap in the middle of the day, I can. And at the end of the day, that bed is waiting for me to hold me. And I love that. And so one person might say, oh, I have to make my bed. Or I look like a hot mess. I feel the opposite. I'm like, I don't wanna, when I don't make my bed, it It awakens that softer part of me that is able to nurture my own self. And I require that in my life as a single woman who is working in a career, you know, as an entrepreneur, we are not soft all the time. Like most of the time that I'm working, I'm in a very much more dominating energy within myself. So I look for and curate soft spaces within my life. So sometimes it doesn't look like other people think it should look, and that is 1000%. Okay.

Jackie: Yeah. That's amazing. And so if someone were to listen right now, and, uh, sidebar, I usually do this because it ends up being an awesome social media clip, but someone presses play and they happen to be at the end of the episode. What is the one takeaway? You want someone who's listening, who's feeling maybe a little stressed out by the clutter and really wants solutions. What would you tell her?

Star Hansen: You have not done anything wrong. You are not behind. You are right on track. You listening to this right now is exactly where you need to be. The things that are going to move you forward in life the most are not the actions that you take. They are the awareness that you have, the inspiration that floods you, and you are right where you need to be. And I'm so proud of you for

everything you've done, and I know that you will be where you need to be in the moment that you need to be there. And until then, enjoy every second.

Jackie: Amazing. Amazing. And finally, the question I have to ask everybody, what does it mean to you to be a grown ass woman?

Star Hansen: Oh, I can act like a teenager and nobody can stop me. No, I'm just kidding. Um, a little bit.

Jackie: Are you kidding though?

Star Hansen: No, I mean, kind of, but not? A grown ass woman means that I can I feel like it's a sense of freedom. I just started like twirling my hair. It's freedom and power and empowerment. I really do feel like to be a grown ass woman means to stand fully in your power. To take up space, to not just take up space in your body, to take up space in your home and in this world, and to do the thing you came here to do, and stop giving a shit about what other people think. Do the thing that you feel intuitively within you and just live out loud,

Jackie: Oh, so good. It's like a mic drop right there. Oh my gosh. Star Hansen. Why the fuck am I still not organized? Like, best book. Your advice in it is to read it all the way through and then to go back for those parts. That is the best advice you could have possibly given in that book because you have to like, take it all in and process it and then go and do the actual work, 'cause otherwise you're gonna get so stuck doing the work that you're not gonna get the whole damn book.

Star Hansen: Yes. And I will say, so what's interesting is I've had a few people say to me that they've been reading it, and then there's like a point where they just kind of stop and and they're like, I just need to step away for a minute. And that is okay because I'm dropping some knowledge down, so it's like I'm recalibrating how you think so it makes sense if you have to walk away. I don't think that's a failure. I think that's like you knowing yourself and being able to process these concepts that most people are not talking about. Which by the way, I want to offer your listeners a free copy of the book.

Jackie: Oh really?

Star Hansen: Yeah, if they go to starhansen.com/podcast, they can download a free PDF right now and get it. Yes, you can get it on Audible and Amazon and all the regular places, but why not get it for free? Why not?

Jackie: It's fantastic.

Visit starhanson.com/podcast for your free copy of her book, and a free quiz, The Monster in Your Closet: the real reason you haven't been able to get organized. And if you liked this episode, there are a couple of others I've done that I think you'll really like. Episode 81, with feng-shui expert Patricia Lowen, that's grownasswoman.guide/episode81. And Episode 148, with certified life coach and award-winning interior designer Carrie Leskowitz. That's grownasswoman.guide/episode148. I'll link to both in the show notes.

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