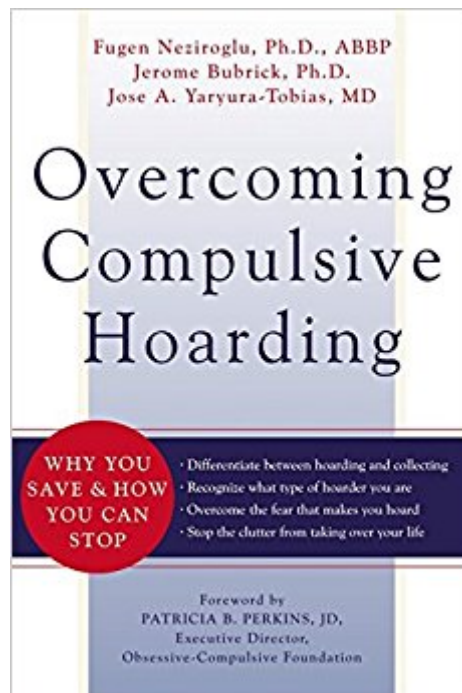




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# Overcoming Compulsive Hoarding: Why You Save And How You Can Stop



## Synopsis

Although the much-satirized image of a house overflowing with National Geographics and infested with cats may make us chuckle, the reality of compulsive hoarding is no laughing matter. The most common reason for evictions in the US and a significant risk factor for fatal house fires, compulsive hoarding is a treatable condition related to obsessive-compulsive disorder. It is characterized by the acquisition of possessions that have little or no value, which the sufferer, often referred to as the saver, has great difficulty discarding. This book, the first ever written for savers and their families, provides an overview of compulsive hoarding and how it relates to obsessive-compulsive disorder. It discusses hoarding broadly, offering readers perspectives on the physical, behavioral, and value-oriented aspects of the condition. You can use its assessment tools to help decide why you or your loved one hoards. Skill-building exercises help you determine how to beat the hoarding problem by addressing issues that often underlie compulsive saving. Even though this is fundamentally a self-help book, it contains a frank discussion about the need for professional help in some hoarding cases, how to find it, and what medications have been proven effective for savers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Collyer brothers, with their bicycle-, chandelier- and newspaper-packed Harlem apartment, may have been the most famous sufferers of compulsive hoarding (see the recent biography *Ghostly Men* by Franz Lidz), but this syndrome affects several million Americans, according to the authors of this excellent, easy-to-understand handbook. The authors, two psychologists and a psychiatrist, all

experts in treating forms of obsessive-compulsive disorder, define the syndrome as "the acquisition and saving of possessions that have little or no value" or a value perceived only by the hoarder, who "has great difficulty" discarding the objects. The book offers case histories showing how damaging the syndrome can be to one's relationships and quality of life, self-assessment exercises and, most usefully, a discussion of treatment options, from self-help strategies using cognitive therapy to outside professional help. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

The public perception of hoarding has been greatly influenced by the lurid, voyeuristic TV programs exploiting extreme hoarders. For reasons other reviewers have discussed, it may well be that this book is inadequate for that extreme level of hoarding -- but I suspect NO book would be adequate. But for a lifelong clutterer and perhaps mid-range (nothing more than knee-deep, no dead cats) hoarder like myself, this book is the best I have found. It may also be true that there is too much material on the psychology of hoarding. But I think most of it is valuable and necessary as a lead in to Chapter Six, which is where the real hands-on, "get 'er done" action starts. Having a strong background in psychology, I found the first five chapters a little redundant and heavy on the self-awareness trip. But when I hit Chapter Six, I was excited -- thrilled, actually -- by the action plan. And what ultimately matters is that for me and people like me, IT WORKS. Whatever flaws the book may have, it's still the one I recommend to people I encounter with cluttering/hoarding problems.

This is the single best book I have EVER read about hoarding, and how to overcome it! I have read Tolin, Frost and Stekee books - they were good. But if I had to recommend ONLY one - it would be this one. It is a real "breakthrough" book. I would recommend reading Clutter Busting first (it's the second best book on the subject), and then read this one and work through it. I can't praise it enough!!!!

This is a good choice for dealing with these issues. Helps learn the process of sorting. That is the base of a lot of hoarding. Is this magazine worth "saving" or can I throw it out? What about Coke Advertising from the 50's? Pretty much anything can be collected or hoarded. A book cannot cure someone who is unwilling to look at it, BUT the answers are in this book if you are willing to look.

As someone who hoards along with her mother, this book is a tremendous help in understanding the problem, and provides assistance in helping to alleviate the compulsive hoarding. As advertised

within the book, THE BOOK NEVER MAKES YOU FEEL BAD about your problem. I highly recommend this book to anyone who has a compulsive hoarding problem or is a packrat of sorts. My living situation is improving based on my reading this book. Soon I'll have the whole coach cleaned off and will be able to enjoy sitting and watching TV for once in years. I grew up in a dysfunctional family where we never had any company because you could not walk through the house and it was so embarrassing. I can remember as far back as age 13 (now 46), when the house was a mess thanks to my mother. How depressing. Never had friends over, never had a birthday party for me or most of my other siblings. We, as children, were miserable and had a rotten childhood because of my mom's problem which I inherited or learned to some degree. Again, this book never makes you feel like you're an idiot or psychotic for having a problem. The book is supportive and very informative. I haven't finished reading it yet, but am half way through and already I am empowered to clean up and do the right thing. I hope I can keep the house clean from now on and not hoard anymore. I used to be a dumpster diver - literally.

because I've been a clutterer all my life and very disorganized. But I am not a hoarder, I can say this because I have no trouble letting go of things. I find it liberating to get rid of what I don't need. I've been a compulsive book acquirer and in nearly a year of decluttering (by myself) I've given away or donated hundreds of books, many of which I haven't read. This is my primary source of clutter. This book had some good suggestions, including changing ways of thinking. I love watching the Hoarders shows on television, I've seen one of the authors on them. However, for someone who hoards compulsively, fills up the whole house with all kinds of stuff (like some of my family), I don't know if this is the best approach. I mean people who face eviction, losing their children, demolition of their houses, or even going to jail. They may need more help than just reading a book, although the authors do say that people in these extreme situations should combine the information with ongoing therapy. Oh, by the way I'm keeping the book (gave away 3 others today).

I am not a compulsive hoarder but bought this book for myself to clean up areas of my abode. I found it very helpful but at this point an update is needed since Hoarding is in the DSM-V now as a psychiatric disorder and it has been 12 years since this book was printed. The people I know who are hoarders would be unwilling to even try and fall likely into the category of just not wanting to do anything about it including reading a book which they will never get around to because they are too busy hoarding. If a hoarder did read the book, the flash card section needs to be updated as well. The book has merit and I bought two copies more for the landlord for a tenant and a cousin. I have

had two hoarding friends whose houses I had never seen but heard described. The friendships became so strained that I gave up. They preferred to collect endlessly to even answering the phone. The section on labeling boxes for sorting was very helpful in my case. I am not done and loved the 45 minutes focus time.

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