

#10

## Clearing the Space

I wake up anxious, more so than usual.

I was grateful last night that my daughter and I started a task together, long distance by phone... the daunting job of clearing her room. She has large drawers of things that she hasn't gone through or vetted in 5 years. This is the hard and creepy part for me. It comes a little too close to the Hoarding Reality Show, though I know she is not in that category. Right now there are two possibilities: she could be making real progress on this task or she could be completely frozen. Still, even within the perplexing area of space maintenance, markers of genuine growth and change have been evident. They lie not in what she says but in how her voice sounds during the effort. She is not panicky, angry or tearful. She is composed and able to laugh a bit at how much crap she has saved. This is *my* cue to let go of the memory of how she used to sound in this high stress task and stay in the present.

Then I immediately make a note to myself to bring the stick vacuum and extra Hefty bags when I show up at her apartment.

I know from experience, that she can *sound* like she is doing a lot but not actually *be* doing a lot. We have been here many times before. I need to remember that and modify my breathing while discussing the importance of *keeping* the rare DVD of the Royal Ballet's *Romeo and Juliet* and *tossing* the dirty socks, old makeup, gray T shirts, and drawers full of video games.