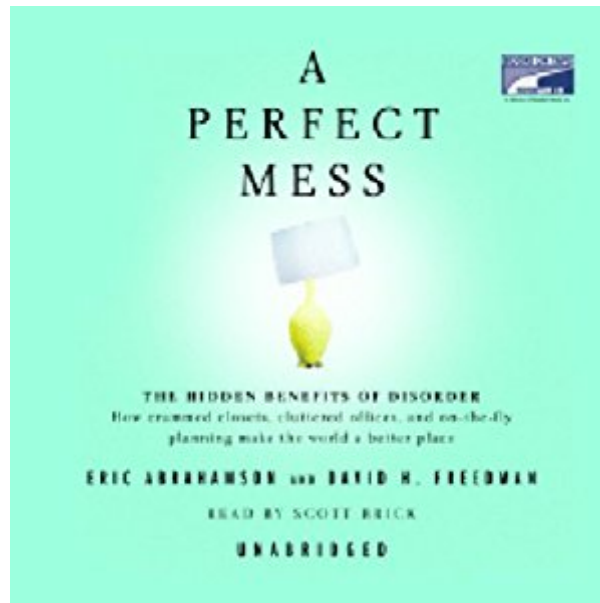


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# A Perfect Mess: The Hidden Benefits Of Disorder



## Synopsis

Ever since Einstein's study of Brownian Motion, scientists have understood that a little disorder can actually make systems more effective. But most people still shun disorder-or suffer guilt over the mess they can't avoid. No longer!With a spectacular array of true stories and case studies of the hidden benefits of mess,A Perfect Mess overturns the accepted wisdom that tight schedules, organization, neatness, and consistency are the keys to success. Drawing on examples from business, parenting, cooking, the war on terrorism, retail, and even the meteoric career of Arnold Schwarzenegger, coauthors Abrahmson and Freedman demonstrate that moderately messy systems use resources more efficiently, yield better solutions, and are harder to break than neat ones.Applying this idea on scales both large (government, society) and small (desktops, garages), A Perfect Mess uncovers all the ways messiness can trump neatness, and will help you assess the right amount of disorder for any system. Whether it's your company's management plan or your hallway closet that bedevils you, this book will show you why to say yes to mess. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The beginning of the book was very interesting, but after a while the "mess is good" message got a little old. Towards the end of the book I felt there simply was not enough material to write this book. Maybe this book should have been a long magazine article instead. Also, some of the material presented in the book was based on limited research. For example: How can you say that Microsoft

is doing better than Apple, because Microsoft is "messy" and Apple is "neat"? There is no proof of this anywhere to be found. The success of Microsoft and Apple depend much more on the particular time in history than on their messiness/neatness. In short: Don't buy. Go to a bookstore and read the first part of the book, rest is a repeat.

"Being organized" is often used as a compliment - as a society we admire the quality and strive to get better at it ourselves. Perhaps not surprisingly, a billion dollar industry of consultants, authors, products, and methodologies has formed around this field, all vying for our attention and dollars. However, as Eric Abrahamson and David Freedman point out, there is a hidden cost to "being organized", and it can be taken to an extreme. Really, how many plastic boxes and label dispensers do you really need? We all depend on order and consistency in our daily life, but it's the variety that's the spice! The authors cover a number of examples, varying from personal organization, to our gardens, and even show how large corporations can benefit from a certain amount of disorder. The provided examples are interesting, but I could not help but to feel that the authors could have, ironically, benefited from more organization. There is no central idea to the book, short of 'embrace a little disorder', and the anecdotes are interesting but hardly conclusive.

By profession I am a Professional Organizer, but hidden inside of me is a totally disorganized person who struggles every day with the chaos and disorder in my life. I've read many of the "get organized" books, but was frustrated by my inability to follow through with the sense of perfection they required. "A Perfect Mess..." is a refreshing change. It was extremely helpful with organizational ideas, but it allowed me to be less than perfect. It is full of shortcuts that allowed me to achieve my goals but drop my idealistic methods. I strongly recommend this book to anyone who is tired of the "how to" books on organization and would like to read a book written by someone who really understands.

Measured in conventional ways, this book can be -- like mess itself -- a bit frustrating: as several other reviewers have noted, it ends unsatisfyingly abruptly after wandering in desultory fashion through seemingly endless anecdotes that, for the most part, have little to do with the messy-desk or messy-home problem that most of us expected to be reading about. The essential purpose of this book, though, is to free you from the chokehold of normative concepts about neatness and organization. Read any few pages and you will probably come away, as I did, with at least two break-through ideas -- a) feel free to RELAX about the untidy aspects of much (not all! -- do

organize your estate!!) of your life, and feel genuinely good knowing that clutter and disorganization can be really really beneficial, as the authors repeatedly document; and b) out-of-the-box, contrarian, messy spontaneity can lead you to truly extraordinary personal and professional discoveries. This book is a great substitute for prozac -- if you're ever feeling depressed because your life is a mess, open this book to any page and you will be uplifted by an anecdote illustrating how often it is that turmoil magically leads to good fortune.

YOU CAN BE VINDICATED AS IN MY CASE-THIS READ DISABLES THE "STEPFORD WIVES" IN THIS WORLD. MANY OF THESE CLEANING MANIACS ARE MY FRIENDS TOO.

I live as a perfect mess and like to share this with others to show that I am not the only one.

The book does a good job at providing examples of cases in which messy systems are more reliable or more efficient. It also explains how mess can stimulate creativity, and how mistakes can sometimes have positive consequences. If you are someone who is afraid of being messy - read it, it will make you feel better. If you are already comfortable with not being 100% organized, or if you are an engineer who is aware of the fact that "sometimes some denormalization^ can be beneficial" - this book will not give you anything new.^ term taken from the realm of relational databases, replace it with an equivalent from your field.

interesting book

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47 Secret Veterans' Benefits for Seniors - Benefits You Have Earned...but Don't Know About!  
Getting Your Social Security Disability Benefits - A Step by Step Guide: How to Successfully Apply for and Receive Social Security Disability Benefits  
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