

## **B. Organized Owner Nicole Gabai Puts Organizational Methods Into New Book**

*The Enterprise*

By Joanne Briana-Gartner

Professional organizer and Falmouth resident Nicole Gabai has written a book based on the organizing methods she has developed over time. “The Art of Organizing: An Artful Guide to an Organized Life” is written in a clear voice and presents methods of organization that do not seem overwhelming.

An artist as well as a professional organizer, Ms. Gabai illustrated her book with colorful sketches of tidy closets, garages, filing systems and bookshelves. Even the book’s endpapers are uniquely designed using collage work by the author.

The longtime owner of B. Organized, Ms. Gabai tackles organization with the fervor of a life coach, inspiring her readers with the truism that “getting organized clears your mind so you can get on to the more important things in your life.”

“The Art of Organizing” is both an idea book and a nitty gritty book of details and specifics, including how to stack toilet paper and how to sort spices.

Ms. Gabai often uses examples from her professional work, such as organizing sections and creating zones, to illustrate concepts in the book.

Other true-to-life observations include noting that youngsters often like to be near their parents or near the action and therefore, setting up a homework table in an out-of-the-way spot is not likely to be effective.

She also dispels the myth that creative people are inherently messy. “The truth is a good organizational system makes more room for creativity,” she said.

While she lays out step-by-step instructions in her book, all neatly divided into six organizing principles that correspond with the color wheel, Ms. Gabai allows for personal preference in the details of organizing one’s personal belongings, suggesting that readers create systems that are intuitive to them.

“You have to be invested in it,” Ms. Gabai writes. “An organizational system that works well can be life changing but getting things sorted and put away is only the first step. To truly change your life, an effective system must be flexible enough to grow and adapt with you and easy enough for you to maintain, day after day and year after year.”

In terms of writing her book, Ms. Gabai said she had written articles and outlines for classes she has led over the course of her career. “I enjoy writing and I felt strongly that everyone should have access to learn these organizing skills and techniques. That prompted me to write the book. I wanted the information to be accessible to more than just my one-on-one clients. I found that I had a process that I was repeating so I felt it was time to share it,” she said.

The book also serves as a reference guide for those who have already gone through Ms. Gabai's organizational process. "I color coded it so people could flip to a section easily," Ms. Gabai said, "and hopefully find information quickly."

Ms. Gabai said the book took nine years to complete. "The process of what I do came easy but it was a challenge for me to articulate it into words, because I do it so intuitively that I don't think about each step," she said.

The professional organizer said she used the same principles she uses when working with clients when she was writing her book: "I'm organized with my files and categories, so I used the same skills to divide up chapters and subsections."

Ms. Gabai said she worked with a developmental editor to get the flow of the book correct and to make sure the process was written in a linear fashion.

"There are so many different levels of expertise when you are writing a book," she said.

As an artist, Ms. Gabai said she often does a lot of drawings as a way of explaining things to clients. "I sometimes need to draw what I'm trying to say," she said.

The many illustrations are what make the book stand out from other organizational books. "Other books either have photographs or they are text heavy," Ms. Gabai said, adding, "You need to visualize your space."

In business for more than 20 years, Ms. Gabai said one of the most enjoyable aspects of her job is the different people she has worked with.

"I've always felt honored that people trust me enough to invite me into their homes and offices, the private and personal areas of their life," she said.

Ms. Gabai began her business when she was still living in New York City and working in television production, modeling and acting.

"Most people I was working with had day jobs as waiters and waitresses, but I didn't have the stamina for a late night job, I had to be up early for auditions. I started organizing for different clients and in between I would go to auditions and take classes," she said.

At the time she started her business, Ms. Gabai said, "People were ashamed and embarrassed to hire me. Organizing was thought of as something everyone should know how to do."

Since then professional organizing has been legitimized on daytime television and in magazines as well as through Martha Stewart, Marie Kondo, the notion of Swedish death cleaning, and more.

When she lived in Manhattan, Ms. Gabai said, most of her clients had tiny spaces in need of organizing: "They were constantly getting rid of stuff and putting the rest in order." On the Cape, people have more room to store stuff, and Ms. Gabai found she was often working in what she called "the forgotten

places,” mainly attics, basements and garages. “Sometimes it’s 45 years’ worth of things someone has accumulated. Compared to New York City, there’s a bigger volume of stuff here on the Cape, but it’s always the same process,” Ms. Gabai said.

Ms. Gabai relocated to the Cape after being displaced by a fire in her apartment building, which led to a client offering her the keys to their home on the Cape as a place to stay while repairs to her building were made.

“I fell in love with the Cape; the people, the atmosphere, the creativity. I loved that people wore many hats here. I could relate to that. There’s a buzz to this community, there’s arts, theater, restaurants and an international flair from the science community,” she said.

A member of the National Association of Productivity And Organizing, Ms. Gabai’s career continues to grow as she expands into the world of virtual organizing. “In a couple of weeks I will have my certification as a virtual organizer, meaning I can work remotely, over Zoom, with people anywhere in the country or around the world. It’s a whole new way of doing the process,” she said.

In addition to teaching her method of organizing, Ms. Gabai hopes the “The Art of Organizing” will feel approachable and, in a way, fun. “I’ve had clients say, ‘You make this fun,’ and that’s such a surprising response. I tried to make the book manageable and not super wordy. I want people to take away this six-step process and not get overwhelmed,” she said.

With this first book finished, Ms. Gabai has ambitions to keep going. “My next book might be on move management. I’ve done a lot of moves for people and have created systems for that,” she said.

“The Art of Organizing” is available online as well as locally from independent bookstores.