

Julie Morgenstern

When
Organizing
Isn't
Enough

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What Your
Stuff
Says About
You

SNOOP

SAM GOSLING, Ph.D.

Your 'stuff' can speak volumes

Stuff. Everyone has it. Two new books examine the complicated relationship between Americans and their possessions. USA TODAY's **Deirdre Donahue** sorts them out.

When Organizing Isn't Enough: SHED Your Stuff, Change Your Life by Julie Morgenstern (Fireside, \$24).

With mega-sellers like *Organizing From the Inside Out* and *Never Check E-Mail in the Morning*, Morgenstern is the queen of helping people put their lives in order. Her new book focuses less on decluttering tips and more on how belongings and attitudes about them can cripple the owner's ability to move forward in life.

Morgenstern's antidote: SHED — "Separate the treasures," "Heave the trash," "Embrace your identity from within" and "Drive yourself forward."

Snoop: What Your Stuff Says About You by Sam Gosling (Basic, \$25).

Snoop isn't conventional self-help. Instead, the psychology professor at the University of Texas-Austin draws on academic research to explain how to look at other people's stuff — music CDs, books, personal websites, posters, e-mail usernames — and figure out who they really are in terms of five traits: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism.

And where should you look?

"Of all the contexts in which we can learn about people — meetings, interviews, behavioral tests, personality questionnaires," Gosling writes, "bedrooms are the ones that give the most reliable information." For example, if you want to gauge if someone's truly tidy, you have to actually open the dresser drawer to check if the