Written by Marcia Humphrey
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Remember a few weeks ago I encouraged you to do a bit of decluttering in preparation for fall? One of the things I suggested was that you (follow my lead and) have a garage sale with all the unwanted items from your home. Well after having my sale last week, I have vowed to never have a garage sale again; At least not until I forget how much trouble this last sale was!

I had a lot of great junk out there on that sunny Saturday morning, but no matter how low the items were priced, the folks wanted to give me less-much less. One customer, a petite older lady, resorted to grabbing a very nice bowl, and shoving a one dollar bill toward me while grunting. While I did walk away with $150 at the end of the day, I realized that I would have been much better off taking my nicer things to a consignment store rather than taking on that garage sale crowd. Consignment shops can be a great resource for earning extra cash-you just have to be patient.

Thinking of giving the consignment scene a try for the first time? If you have some good pre-owned items and don't want to bother with a yard sale, here are a few simple things you should know that will have you consigning like a pro and earning extra dough.

Visit the Shop
In advance of bringing your things into a consignment shop, visit the location and get a feel for what they carry. Just like retail stores, consignment shops range from low-end to high-end and from clothing to furniture. Located throughout the twin cities you'll find Turn Style, www.turnstyleconsign.com
, and they have both clothing and home stores. For everything baby and kid related, visit Once Upon a Child
www.ouac.com
. Remember to take only your new looking items, not the stuff that belongs in the trash!

Realize Everyone Wants Bargains
Because we all can become attached to our own stuff, be careful not to get upset when you learn your favorite outfit that you paid $300 for, is now only worth about $50. After all, shoppers everywhere-especially at consignment shops -are seeking deals. They are not seeking to pay

(nearly) full purchase price. To get top dollar for antiques or more unique pieces, you may consider selling it yourself. Try www.craigslist.org or www.ebay.com . One last thing, don't attempt to take designer knockoffs, its illegal!

Bigger is Better

Larger size clothes sell much faster, so if you have some nice pieces, expect sales to occur sooner, rather than later. In addition, bring in your related items right before the season begins so they get maximum exposure on the racks. With a little planning you can begin racking in the cash!

What time is it? It's time for you to gather your unused stuff (it's only taking up space), find a good consignment shop in your area, and begin making extra money. You'll be glad you did. Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at a low cost. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.