

# The art of losing things: Keep moving them around

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The worst thing about losing things is that when you eventually find them, they're always where you left them. (This assumes you live alone or otherwise can control who touches your stuff.) I have a mental place for most things, and I keep them there, which is great, because when I need, say, my passport, I know where to go. Except that I undermine my own organizational system. For example, the passport will be in the passport drawer for months, and then a trip is coming up, so I go to the passport drawer and confirm, yup it's still there. And then here's where I undermine myself: I *take the passport out of the passport drawer and move it to a "better" location*. In this moment of temporary insanity, I've convinced myself that this new location is better because it's more convenient, more obvious, more... something. And then shortly before the trip, I go to the passport drawer and... it's not there! I then realize, "Oh right, I moved it a few weeks ago to a better place. *Where was that better place?*" I spend the next hour or so searching through my entire house looking for the passport. Eventually, I find it, but it's a few hours of my life I'll never get back. After repeating this comedy of errors year after year, I finally figured it out: Don't move stuff around! Leave it where it is, even if where it is happens to be, in your momentary opinion, suboptimal. That rule has served me well, but some time ago it backfired. I needed to recharge the battery in my digital camera, and I looked in the obvious locations without success. And then I remembered, "Wait, I saw the recharger two weeks ago, and I resisted the urge to move it to a 'better' location." Unfortunately, I couldn't remember the *original* location. I didn't find the recharger for two days. Reminder: This Web site will be on autopilot next week and most of the week after that because I will be out of the country. Assuming I can find my passport.

Hopefully nobody will post a comment that gets me fired.



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