

## EX-SQUEEZE YOURSELF

Andy Stanley

Hey, thanks for being here. We're starting a brand-new series today called *Breathing Room*, and I want to welcome all of our Atlanta-area churches, our strategic partner churches, those of you who are watching online, and those of you who are watching by television. This is a four-part series, and we're going to talk about something that is appropriate and applicable to all of us: the whole idea of finding room to breathe.

When I was growing up, our family had an unintentional tradition. I say unintentional—it happened by accident; all families have these. Our unintentional tradition was between Christmas and New Year. My dad would go down in the unfinished part of our basement (which was most of our basement) and he would clean out. He would do a lot of it at night when my mom was asleep. Then he would take plastic bags—my dad is a minimalist so he liked lots of space—and he would organize our basement.

He would put things where they were supposed to be, and things would be lined up the way they were supposed to be. He would label things—this is back before there were label makers. He would make his own labels. Things would be in the corner, everything would be so . . . and he would spend days down there cleaning out, throwing away. He was smart. He would put things in bags you couldn't see through so he could haul them out to the trash and nobody knew what he was throwing away. As kids, we didn't care. He would try not to let my mom know or let her come down into the basement.

So he would spend hours and hours—a couple of days—getting it all organized. Then he would have the reveal before there was a such thing as a reveal. He would bring my sister and my mom down and he would navigate and tour us through the basement. Now some of you are already liking my dad more because you're so into this. So here's where this goes, and here's where all the unused paint cans go, and here's where all the tools go, and here's where all the lawn equipment goes, and here's where all this stuff . . . and you know, as we're taking down for Christmas, here's where all that is going to go. It would just be beautiful.

For some of us it was, like, godly; it was, like, spiritual because everything was organized. It was all so neat. It was great, and everybody would love it. And then, as the tradition went, after he got it all perfect and the way it was supposed to go and everything is lined up and all the junk is gone (all the clutter is gone because he hates clutter and all the clutter is gone) then on January 1, my mom would begin undoing all of that for the rest of the year.

So for the rest of the year, all the organization went away and the clutter came back because she doesn't like to throw anything away because God made her that way. I don't know why, but God made us all different. Of course, as kids, we could care less. We would just walk in the basement and just left stuff wherever we wanted to. So for the rest of the year, we would