

Donation Decision Card

How to use: Pick up one item. Work through the questions in order — stop at the first “yes” that gives you a clear answer. Most items resolve at question 1, 2, or 3. Questions 4–6 are for the genuinely hard calls.

THE SIX QUESTIONS

#	QUESTION	WHAT A “YES” MEANS
1	Is it broken, expired, or genuinely unusable?	Toss. A broken item you keep “just in case” occupies space without providing any function. If it can’t be repaired in the next 7 days, it goes.
2	Have I used this in the last 12 months?	If no: the item has already been replaced by something else or by an absence of need. Donate unless seasonal (see edge cases).
3	Would replacing this cost more than \$20 if I needed it again?	If no: low replacement cost means keeping it is pure storage cost. Donate. If yes, ask question 4 before deciding.
4	Do I have a specific upcoming use — named, dated, not hypothetical?	If yes: keep with a date attached. Write the date on a sticky note inside the item. If that date passes without use, donate immediately.
5	Does keeping this serve someone I love, or honour something that matters?	If yes: keep — but limit to a fixed container. When the container is full, the least meaningful item leaves. Guilt is not the same as love.
6	If I saw this item in a shop right now, would I buy it?	If no: you already know the answer. Donate. This question cuts through sunk-cost thinking by separating past spending from present value.

Keep

Assign it a fixed home. If there’s no space for it, something already in that space needs to leave first. “Keep” is not a parking decision.

Donate

Place in the donation box immediately — not “later.” Box goes in the car or by the door. Log it on the Donation Tracker for tax records.

Toss

Bin, recycling, or specialist disposal. If it’s genuinely broken or unsanitary, donating it wastes a charity’s sorting time. Toss without guilt.

EDGE CASES

“It was a gift”

The obligation ended when the gift was received and appreciated. The giver gave you an experience of generosity, not a storage duty. Apply questions 4–5.

“It might be worth something”

Set a 14-day deadline to list it or research the value. If it passes, donate. An item sitting “for selling” costs you space every day until it goes.

“I might need this someday”

“Someday” is not a use case. Apply question 4. If you can’t name the day, you’re keeping a hypothesis, not a tool.

“It’s seasonal / I used it last year”

Seasonal items are exempt from the 12-month rule if they’re stored correctly and genuinely used each season. If two seasons have passed: question 3.

After this session: what’s leaving the house today?