




5-29-2013

## Contain Yourself

Gianina Gelatro  
*Gettysburg College*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/surge>

 Part of the [Cognitive Psychology Commons](#), and the [Personality and Social Contexts Commons](#)

**Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.**

---

Gelatro, Gianina, "Contain Yourself" (2013). *SURGE*. 123.  
<http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/surge/123>

This is the author's version of the work. This publication appears in Gettysburg College's institutional repository by permission of the copyright owner for personal use, not for redistribution. Cupola permanent link: <http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/surge/123>

This open access blog post is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact [cupola@gettysburg.edu](mailto:cupola@gettysburg.edu).

---

# Contain Yourself

## **Abstract**

I can't say I've ever been known as the most organized person in the world. Likely due to clothing littered around my bed and papers sprawled across my desk, my living space is usually greeted with the phrase, "Well, it definitely looks lived-in." Feeling fed-up with my clutter and inspired by a bout of Spring Fever, I took my first trip to the The Container Store this past weekend. I was overwhelmed and excited by the immense amount of gadgets and boxes that existed to compartmentalize any and every aspect of my life. They really have it all from jewelry organizers to specially designed coffee filter holders. I found myself extremely comforted by the possibility of having individual boxes to hold all of my worldly possessions so that I may be able to neatly pack them away and only retrieve them when it became necessary. [*excerpt*]

## **Keywords**

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, organization, neatness, The Container Store

## **Disciplines**

Cognitive Psychology | Personality and Social Contexts

## **Comments**

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](https://www.gettysburg.edu) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at [surgegettysburg.wordpress.com](https://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com) Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

# SURGE

**[ VERB ] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward**

## CONTAIN YOURSELF

May 29, 2013

I can't say I've ever been known as the most organized person in the world. Likely due to clothing littered around my bed and papers sprawled across my desk, my living space is usually greeted with the phrase, "Well, it definitely looks lived-in." Feeling fed-up with my clutter and inspired by a bout of Spring Fever, I took my first trip to the The Container Store this past weekend. I was overwhelmed and excited by the immense amount of gadgets and boxes that existed to compartmentalize any and every aspect of my life. They really have it all from jewelry organizers to specially designed coffee filter holders. I found myself extremely comforted by the possibility of having individual boxes to hold all of my worldly possessions so that I may be able to neatly pack them away and only retrieve them when it became necessary.

While it is unlikely my newly found interest in organizing my apartment will be a lasting hobby for myself, it made me realize that even though I may have a messy room, I have a very neat mental state. Since graduating a year ago, my everyday life has drastically changed. While at school, I was constantly looking for more and more ways to actively engage in discussions of race, gender, poverty, and sustainability. I tried to look at everything I did through a social justice lens. Attempting to break down inherited societal norms was at the forefront of my mind and permeated everything else I did.

My mind was much like my room. Just as clothing spilled from my bed to the floor, blurring the line between carpet and comforter, my personal endeavor for equity spilled into everything from homework to weekends to extra-curricular activities.

After graduation, however, I seemed to have gone through a mental-organization. No longer living in an academic setting, it became quite easy to separate my passion for social justice from my job, my friends, my free time, my dating life, and just about everything else. Suddenly my time studying and discussing how to be a voice of resistance towards injustice was just a compartment of who I am; I placed it in a box and stored it away as a separate interest unrelated to my everyday life.



But what good is having all my experiences categorized and labeled? To be committed to creating change is to understand that nothing can be isolated and compartmentalized. My race influences my social class, which influences my dating life, which influences my friend groups, which influences my employment options, which influences my hobbies, and so forth. All my prior experiences color the lens in which I live and currently experience the world. My study abroad experience in college, for example, is not mutually exclusive from my experience working in Media as a post-grad, which is all directly impacted by my experience growing up in a Middle-Class, white, American family.

My hope for students on break for the summer or preparing to leave and start their own professional journeys outside of Gettysburg is that you can work to unpack your social justice lens. Don't store it away. Take a look at how your actions and your place in society shapes where you are and what you're doing. If there are experiences that you had while at Gettysburg that help(ed) you to do that (professors, eRace, conversations with friends) and you are missing those now, find new ways to sustain this lens. Read [alternate news sources](#). Read Surge!

While my room could probably stand to use a few more labeled boxes, I know that mentally I plan on doing the opposite. I want to challenge myself to unpack the compartments I have made for my past experiences, too, in the hopes that I may have a more holistic understanding of where I came from, what I am doing, and what I can change.

*Gianina Gelatro '12*  
*Contributing Writer*

<http://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com/2013/05/29/contain-yourself/>