

SUMMARY

The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up

Marie Kondo



Summary of «The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up» by Marie Kondo

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The revolutionary how-to guide for learning how to declutter your home, body, and mind.

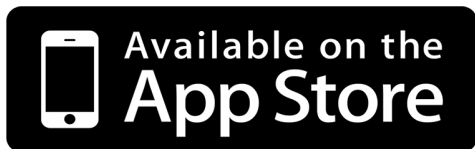


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Introduction

Despite attempting to tidy up, do you find your house still accumulating papers, clothing, and just junk? How do you know when it's time to declutter your home? Perhaps you have a closet filled with clothing that once served a purpose that now just sits and collects dust. Luckily Marie Kondo, a Japanese cleaning consultant, wrote a book to help teach you the secrets of tidying up. You'll learn the tips and techniques of a tidying guru and teach you how to tidy up just once in your life.

While other methods teach you to take a room-by-room approach, Marie Kondo instead implements a category-by-category method which is both less daunting and creates lasting effects meant to last a lifetime. Truly, none of Marie's clients have relapsed, and she has a months-long waiting list! With tips like learning how to give your house and possessions gratitude, you can learn which items spark joy and which items don't. Learn how to clear your clutter and visualize your ideal living space. You'll soon see the magic of how tidying up can declutter not only your home but your mind and body as well.

Dream Life in Dream Space

If you're wanting to clean up your life, the first place to begin is by cleaning up your space. But even before that, visualize your dream life in your dream space. Have a vision of what you want your ideal space and life to look like. Perhaps you want a space that is light and airy, or maybe you crave something darker and cozy. What type of space do you envision for yourself? Begin visualizing your dream space now.

Marie Kondo believes this first step is essential in creating your dream space. Visualize first, and then take the necessary steps to bring that vision to life. For instance, one of Kondo's clients imagined a feminine space for her feminine lifestyle and envisioned a clutter-free space, with a pink comforter and an antique lamp. She then envisioned herself taking a slow, relaxing bath while breathing in luxurious aromatic oils, listening to classical music while doing yoga, and drinking herbal tea. Eventually, she envisioned falling asleep without a care in the world, totally at peace and at ease.

Sounds relaxing, right? Maybe a feminine space isn't your cup of tea, but it's your job to figure out what is. Once you figure that out, then you begin the process of cleaning and tidying your space to reflect your ideal life.

But what does tidy even mean? Having a tidy space simply means easily accessing the things you love and enjoy efficiently, which is why it's so important to first visualize what you want. Surround your space with things that you truly love and bring you joy. For instance, how many T-shirts do you have in your drawer right now? Do you wear them all? Think about which ones can likely be donated and which ones can be used for another purpose.

Another item many people find they have a lot of is books. It's okay to get rid of the books that you don't read. Perhaps you have a few books that you intended to read but never did. That's okay. There will come a time and

place for those books but perhaps now is not that time. However, if you feel compelled to keep it then you have a passion for that item and that's okay too. Just remember you can always buy another one.

The Tidy Home

The purpose of a clean and tidy living space is more than just organizing your home, instead, a tidy home is important for improving both your body and mind. To accomplish this, you'll need to sort through your belongings in a way that feels natural to you. It's easy to begin tidying by throwing out the items that you don't want. But Marie Kondo thinks to improve your body and mind, you should focus on the items that you want to keep.

As you sort through your belongings, ask yourself a few questions, "What is its purpose?" "Does this item make me happy?" You might find yourself with many items that do make you happy but may no longer serve a purpose. For instance, those shoes you bought for your friend's wedding. They were so cute and you got lots of compliments on them the whole night. Maybe you even wore them a few more times after the wedding, but now they just sit in your closet collecting dust. They served their purpose. Or maybe you have that Hawaiian shirt you bought for a themed-party. You wore it, people loved it, and now it just sits in your closet. Again, it served its purpose. Be thankful for the item, let it go and move on.

It's important to approach tidying with gratitude and appreciation. If you aren't appreciating the items for what they have done for you, then the whole process just becomes cold and calculating. Plus, it heightens your sense of self-awareness which makes tidying similar to meditation. Yes, the power of tidying up can improve your living space and your belongings, and more importantly, improve your overall well-being.

In fact, tidying up can be similar to detoxifying your body. By discarding and reorganizing your belongings, you are getting rid of the dust and cobwebs that have settled in over the years. It's time to freshen up the place and breathe new life into your space. Marie Kondo tells us that some clients experience a physical reaction that works in tandem when tidying up their space. It's almost as if detoxifying their home simultaneously detoxifies their bodies. For instance, one client cleaned out a cupboard and shed that

she hadn't cleaned in over ten years. Almost immediately, the client had to run to the restroom once she became overwhelmed by the need to expel the toxins from her body as well. We can leave the rest of the story to the imagination.

Gain Clarity

What if I told you that tidying up can help you gain clarity about your future? Tidying up your space certainly serves more than one purpose, but first, you need to get your past in order. For instance, how many times have you done the annual cleanup of your house and you stumbled upon an item you loved but forgot you had? Using these items from your past can help guide your future.

When you find keepsakes like these, the ones that bring about happiness or joyful memories, then they may be worth keeping. Additionally, there's a process you should follow when tidying up. You should start with the easiest categories like clothes, documents, books, knick-knacks, etc. and you should end with the sentimental items. How can you possibly get rid of sentimental items? Well, Marie Kondo has some strategies to help you.

Photos are probably the most difficult simply because of their emotional value, and you may have a ridiculous amount of them. If you took the photo, consider keeping it if reliving the moment makes you happy. There are also many ways to organize photos, so consider organizing the ones you keep in a way that brings joy and makes sense for you.

What about the sentimental items that you don't want anymore? What should you do with those? While many people use their parent's house as a dumping ground for their childhood keepsakes, this strategy is inconsiderate to your parents who might not have space or capacity to keep your childhood items. Instead, consider their feelings and take a holistic approach. Just give your family and friends items you think they will enjoy. Ask your family whether they would like your childhood keepsakes before tossing them out.

You should examine each item and consider your current wants and needs, does the item fit into your vision for the ideal future? For instance, think about your documents and manuals. These items hardly make the cut as

they have already served their purpose. Do you really need manuals for the kitchen appliances you already know inside out? These documents have outlived their use and it's time to let go.

Another example of childhood keepsakes is old school texts. Perhaps you enjoyed taking the classes, but do the texts serve a purpose anymore? You can still remember the experiences and the lessons learned from those classes, so the texts have run their course, it's time to get rid of them.

Ultimately, as you go through your items, you may discover and rekindle old passions that lead you closer to your ideal life. For example, Marie Kondo tells the story of one of her clients who found that the only books she kept were those about social welfare. So, she went back to school, quit her IT job, and started a successful babysitting company. As you can see, you never know what passions could be sparked through your tidying process.

Neatly Organized

Once you begin tidying up, you might notice a change not just in your home, but within yourself. When you create a comfortable and refreshing living space and surround yourself with items you enjoy, you become happier and invigorated. Even more, you become more likely to take action in your life.

It might sound incredible, but changing the way you tidy your home can have a profound effect on your ability to take action. For many of Kondo's clients, the act of tidying up is typically the first step in gaining control of their lives. When it comes to organizing, strive for simplicity and pleasant visual order. Be sure to consider how you feel when you use or look at an item in the designated place you choose for them.

We'll start with your closet and wardrobe. Organize your clothes in a way that makes you happy and looks good to you. You want to make your closet visually appealing to you. You could organize them by garment type then color or hang them according to the season. There is no wrong way to organize your closet, as long as the organization brings you joy and looks great to you.

As you begin to tidy up, you'll begin to discover that the organization doesn't just affect your disposition, you'll also realize the power tidying up gives you to make decisions and take action. For example, Marie Kondo has many clients that believed they were just "born messy" and they could never get their house in order. Kondo advised those clients to stop with self-deprecating thoughts and begin believing that they could keep a tidy home. She wanted them to continue visualizing their ideal space. When they focused on their vision, they felt like they could accomplish their ultimate goal in keeping their ideal tidy space.

More practically, taking action around your home will overall improve your decisiveness in other areas of life. Efficient storage solutions eliminate the

stress of having to search through a mess to find the things you need when you need them. When you can make quick decisions and execute tasks versus searching for an item, you are more likely to take action.

Tidy Once

If you're sitting there thinking about all of the things in your house and becoming overwhelmed with the thought of going through each item, don't worry, you're not alone. Tidying up is a daunting and exhaustive task, but it's necessary to change your mindset and think of your tidying journey as a fresh new start. Once you visualize the space, keep your vision in mind, and then tidy up just once. That's right, once!

If you imagine tidying up your house as a special event, like a wedding, you'll begin to realize that tidying serves as a changing point in your life. Similar to how a wedding changes your life, so will tidying up. You will free up your space and create the clean slate you need to move towards your ideal life. Like a marriage, it won't be easy. In fact, it will take an average of six months to tidy up your space.

Throughout your project, Marie Kondo suggests you approach your house and belongings with respect. Communicate with them, clarify your relationship to the items, and you will gain a better sense of what you truly want and what is ready to be discarded. Communicating and respecting your items will make the process more natural and less calculating.

When Marie works in a client's home, she treats the place as a shrine. She kneels on the floor out of respect and offers a silent greeting to the home. Even her clothing is a symbol of respect for the home as she typically wears a dress and blazer upon "meeting" the house.

Tidying is a one-time project which makes it an exhaustive one. Therefore, your relationship with your space becomes important, and you should take the time to develop a daily relationship with your home and possessions. When Marie Kondo enters her home, for example, she removes her shoes and gives thanks to them for their work. She then greets her house and carefully places each item from her bag in their designated place. Every object has a place.

Let Go

As difficult as it might be, parting with your possessions is a necessary process for tidying up your space. It's hard and will become the most difficult part of your journey. Luckily, Marie Kondo has some tips and tricks to help you pare down your possessions.

Begin by determining the purpose of the item and if it has fulfilled that purpose. Ask yourself a few questions, "Why did I get this again?" "When did I get it?" and "How did I get it?" You'll likely find you keep a lot of items "just because" and these items become the main cause of clutter in a home. To begin the process of decluttering, begin with personal, clearly defined items like books, CDs and DVDs, skin care products, and shoes. Then, work your way up to more general items like kitchen supplies, household supplies, etc.

It's important to be very clear about the purpose of each item, and be willing to remove items that have outlived their purpose. For instance, earlier we discussed the shoes and Hawaiian shirt you bought for various occasions, it was time to let those items go. Another example is when you buy a book and never finish it, perhaps you only read a few pages or even read half of it. Be realistic with yourself. Are you going to pick that book back up and finish it? Not likely. Thank the book for giving you a story and be grateful for the time you spent with it, and let it go.

It seems easier said than done, but that's because it is. Many times your emotions and reason will go to war with one another. Your heart will pull you one way while your head pulls you another. When this happens, consider if the item adds value to your life. Ask yourself "Does it make you happy?" "Do you even notice it at all?" If the item has been locked in a drawer or hidden in the attic, it's likely the item isn't quite as important as you think it is.

Do you have a box or drawer filled with holiday and birthday cards? You likely keep these around for sentimental purposes, but what should you do with them? Think about it this way. They served their purpose, they were a kind gesture from close friends and family and were much appreciated. Now that the card has conveyed its intended message, should you continue to keep it? It's likely time to let it go. Same with the gifts that you have received. They served a purpose, they conveyed a message, but if it's not a gift that sparks joy or serves a useful purpose, it's time to let it go. Perhaps that gift will bring joy to someone else and live out a new purpose.

Final Summary

Decluttering your life and cutting out the unnecessary gets you closer to your goal of living in an ideal living space and living out your ideal life. And while it seems daunting and overwhelming, make it simple. Decide what you want to keep and discard what you don't. Keep what makes you happy, serves a purpose, and adds value to your life. Discard the items that don't make you happy. Don't we do this in our lives already? It's time to apply these principles to the items in your home. Dig deep within yourself and determine what you want out of your living space. Visualize your ideal space and take action that will lead you to bring that vision into reality. Once you tidy up your home, consider tidying up your life and improving your lifestyle.



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