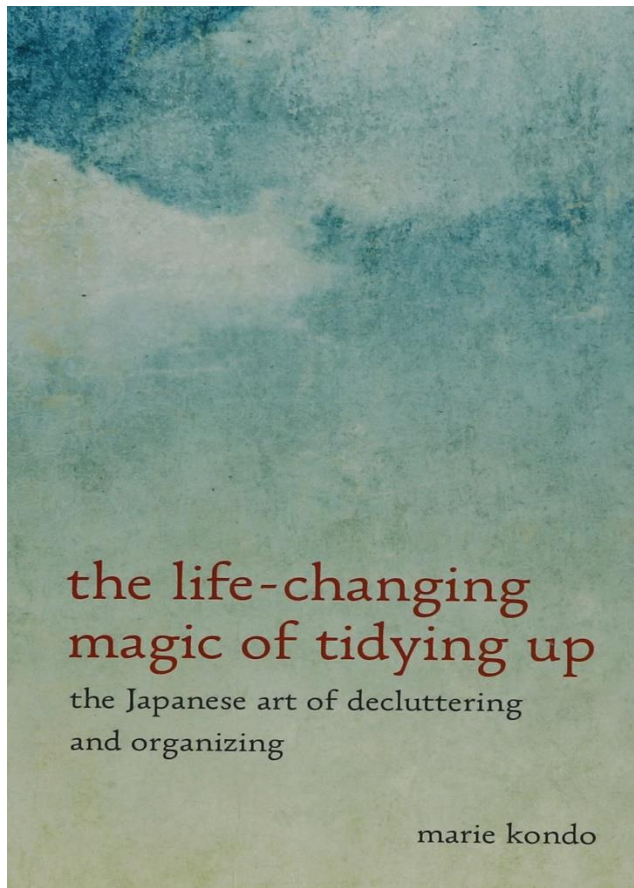


Marie Kondo: The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up Book Summary



Written Summary

<http://bestbookbits.com/marie-kondo-the-life-changing-magic-of-tidying-up-book-summary/>

YouTube Summary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 0MZgsqtNgs>

Audio Podcast Summary

<https://www.mixcloud.com/bestbookbits/the-life-changing-magic-of-tidying-up-by-marie-kondo/>

Follow us on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/bestbookbits>

TIDYING

So many of us feel overwhelmed by the concept of tidying, it's just too much and instead of facing it, we just ignore it and let it get worse. How many of us have that cupboard in the spare room full of junk we haven't used in years? Kondo's book presents the 'KonMari Method' and hopefully, this method will help you to understand how to 'tidy' a little better.

We've all heard the advice suggesting that you can't tackle a big task all at once, that the best way is to make it a habit and approach it bit by bit. However, Kondo advises against this. She explains that if you only do a little bit each day, you'll never finish, you'll be tidying forever.

"Don't aim for perfection. Start off slowly and discard just one item a day – What lovely words to ease the hearts of those who lack confidence in their ability to tidy."

Storing vs. discarding

Kondo explains that there is a significant difference between simply putting things away, storing them and discarding. When you store things in cupboards, boxes, spare bedrooms, you're simply creating an 'illusion' that the clutter has been cleared, when in fact, you are delaying the inevitable. What happens when your storage is overloaded? Then you're faced with a bigger task. This is why Kondo explains that you MUST start your tidying regime by discarding first. Get rid of all of the un-essential before you can start truly tidying.

"We need to exercise self-control and resist storing our belongings until we have finished identifying what we really want and need to keep."

Kondo's definition of Effective Tidying contains two key actions; discarding and deciding where to store things. And it's essential that they are done in this order.

Two types of tidying

Kondo explains that there are two types of tidying; 'daily tidying' and special event tidying'. Daily tidying occurs, well, daily. Part of daily tidying is the process of using something for a period of time, and then returning it to its home/place. This could be anything from a mug to a book to a jumper. The idea is that once you are done with it, you immediately return it, therefore eliminating the need to do a 'big tidy' at the end of the day. Daily tidying will never be eliminated.

Kondo's book focuses on the second type of tidying, the 'special event tidying'. The idea of her book is to encourage her readers to action a tidying spree as soon as possible, to get it done so you can live a clutter-free life.

DISCARD FIRST

"The best way to choose what to keep and what to throw away is to take each item in one's hand and ask: "Does this spark joy?"

Instinctively, we like to put things away, get them out of sight as part of the tidying process. But Kondo stresses the importance of NOT putting things away until you have completely finished discarding everything you do not need. Reason being, if you start putting things away in drawers etc, then you immediately get distracted from the task at hand; discarding, and often find yourself putting things away that should really be discarded. Only once you've got rid of every possible thing, can you start to consider where the things you are keeping will go.

"The best way to choose what to keep and what to throw away is to take each item in one's hand and ask: "Does this spark joy?" If it does, keep it. If not, dispose of it. This is not only the simplest but also the most accurate yardstick by which to judge."

Categorisation

One of Kondo's recommendation is that you always categorise your possessions. Before you finalise what you are discarding and what you are keeping, gather all items that are part of the same category together and assess them. Kondo suggests you lay them all out on the floor and analyse whether you are keeping to much or discarding to little.

Using the example of organising your clothes, Kondo suggests that you take every item of clothing out of your drawers and wardrobe, make sure to include the jumpers you've left lying on the couch or the dirty laundry basket. Lay each item of clothing onto the floor, pick them up one by one and identify if the clothing sparks any joy within you. If it does, then you may put aside and keep, but if it doesn't, then discard immediately. You can go a step further and categorise your clothing into tops, pants, jackets etc. Examine these one subcategory at a time until you are left with only the essential pieces that truly spark joy. Continue this approach with all of the categories within your home.

What about the whole family?

"To get rid of what you no longer need is neither wasteful nor shameful."

Even if you are the one driving the tidying and nobody else seems overly keen to discard their possessions, Kondo explains that the best approach is to just continue with your own tidying. By getting rid of the non-essentials and tidying your own possessions, you'll more than likely trigger a response from your family members who will sooner or later, want to join the bandwagon.

"To truly cherish the things that are important to you, you must first discard those that have outlived their purpose. To get rid of what you no longer need is neither wasteful nor shameful. Can you truthfully say that you treasure

something buried so deeply in a closet or drawer that you have forgotten its existence?”

WHERE DO I START?

Kondo suggests that you begin with clothing, then books, papers, miscellaneous and your final task will be items with sentimental value. By approaching the task in this order, you will find the process more streamlined and easy. By starting with clothing, the easiest possession to part with, you will get into the groove before you reach the sentimental items, the category that most people struggle with the most. Hopefully, by the time you reach the hardest category, you will have practiced your decision-making skills, and be feeling good about the de-cluttering.

We'll start with clothes

Kondo's step by step approach to organising your clothing:

1. Arrange every item of clothing on the floor in one room. Ensure that you physically look at and handle each individual piece.
2. **Do not downgrade your clothes.** Kondo stresses the point that items of clothing that are old, worn out or no longer spark joy, should not be kept and downgraded as 'casual wear' to wear around the house. Even in your own home, you should only wear clothing that makes you happy.
3. Learn how to fold your clothing to fit into the appropriate storage.
4. Fold your clothing so that at a single glance, you can see each item and nothing can get 'lost' at the bottom of a draw. When using drawers, you can store things standing up rather than laid flat.
5. Arranging your clothes in order is essential. On the left, hang your heavier clothes, anything long or heavy such as a coat, and anything dark coloured. Then towards the right, start hanging items that decrease in length, weight and

lighten in colour. To the right, you should find things like chiffon blouses, or lightweight short sleeved shirts.

6. Fold your socks and stockings, pair them up and neatly arrange them in your drawer. Don't aimlessly throw them in a pile where you can never find a matching set. Store them standing up, like your clothes, so that you can see each pair of socks at a glance.
7. Kondo's final clothing tip is not to over-categorise. Try to avoid categories that are seasonal, e.g. summer, winter, fall, and spring. Simply put them all together in the heavy-to-light arrangement.

Now books...

1. As with clothing, take all of your books out of cupboards and off their bookshelves and arrange them on the floor. Ask yourself whether each individual book brings you any joy?
2. If you have books that have been unread for some time, it's more than likely that you'll never actually read it. The intention was there but you never followed through. Let go and acknowledge you won't read it. Discard.
3. Keep your book collection small, and have it contain only books that have brought you informative information, or significant books. When you finish a book, if you'll never look at it again, you can discard it instead of adding to your collection.

Paper

“Sorting papers: rule of thumb—discard everything. I recommend you dispose of anything that does not fall into one of three categories: currently in use, needed for a limited period of time, or must be kept indefinitely.”

Misc.

Kondo recommends that you don't keep things 'just because'. It's not enough of a reason to hold on to these items. Go through all of your miscellaneous items. And, if they don't spark joy, discard.

Now the sentimental...

1. It's important to remember that your parents home does not equal a storage space for your memories. Regardless of how significant items may have been once, they are not necessarily sparking joy any longer.
2. Kondo explains that there is only one way to organise your photos. You have to physically look at each photo one by one, as with all of your other possessions, and examine the feelings it gives you.

"Photographs exist only to show a specific event or time. When you do this, you will be surprised at how clearly you can tell the difference between those that touch your heart and those that don't. As always, only keep the ones that inspire joy."

Reducing your possessions

Kondo explains that as you go through the process of tidying up your possessions, and discarding the unnecessary, you will reach a state that brings comfort. You will know exactly how much 'stuff' you need in order to be content and comfortable. You'll find the point where you realise you have enough to be happy, and you don't need anymore! This is a different 'quantity' for everyone, but you should come to the realisation all on your own.

"The fact that you possess a surplus of things that you can't bring yourself to discard doesn't mean you are taking good care of them. In fact, it is quite the opposite. By paring down to the volume that you can properly handle, you revitalise your relationship with your belongings."

MAKE YOUR LIFE SHINE

You'll get to the point in your process where you need to make decisions about where things are to be kept/stored. Each item needs to be designated a home. This will help to eliminate clutter in the future.

Kondo explains that through the process of discarding and tidying, you will have reached a point where you are keeping on the items that will fit perfectly within your home. She calls this the magic of tidying.

The key is simplicity, Kondo explains. Don't overcomplicate it, that will only cause more clutter in the future, you need your system to be easily maintainable. Her golden rule is;

“Store all items of the same type in the same place and don't scatter storage space.”

Make it easy on yourself

Kondo explains that your storage system that you make should be easy to put things away after they have been used, it also shouldn't increase the effort required to get them out. Don't store everyday items in high, hard to reach areas. You're more likely to not want to put them back. Clutter, as Kondo describes, is the result of failing to return things to where they belong.

Our default when storing items is to stack one on top of the other, Kondo, however, points out a few issues with this. First of all, you can't reach things at the bottom, you often forget what is piled there, the bottom items can get squished and misshapen and finally, when stacked you can fit ALOT in. And if you're to learn anything from this summary it's that more isn't better. So for these reasons, Kondo recommends stacking everything that you can in a vertical manner.

YOU'LL FEEL TRANSFORMED

“Tidying dramatically changes one's life. This is true for everyone, 100 percent. The impact of this effect, which I have dubbed “the magic of tidying,” is phenomenal.”

If you've practiced discarding items that don't spark any joy before, you'll understand just how easy it becomes to identify which items are bringing you joy and therefore, worth keeping. Kondo explains that as soon as you touch and acknowledge an item, you should know.

How many of us hold on to an unhealthy attachment to the past, we fear the future and this, Kondo explains, effects the items that you own and that you buy. You need to decide how you want to live your life and this will determine what items you should own.

"Life becomes far easier once you know that things will still work out even if you are lacking something. Being surrounded by things that spark joy makes you happy."

"Tidying dramatically changes one's life. This is true for everyone, 100 percent."

CONCLUSION

Key Takeaways

- There is an important order to tidying, first, you must discard the items you no longer need, then you must organise and store your remaining possessions. Don't do it the other way round.
- Categorise items in your house into the following; clothing, books, papers, misc, sentimental items.
- Lay everything from one category out on the floor, pick up and acknowledge each item. If it sparks joy, then you can keep it. If it doesn't then discard.
- It's OK to let go of items that were once sentimental.
- Start with easier categories like clothing, that way when you reach the sentimental items you'll be well practiced in decision making and discarding.
- Once you start a decluttering journey, it's likely that your family members will be inspired too.