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Tidying up for spring

By Amanda Eck

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Photo Amanda Eck

Raise your hand if you are ready for sunshine and warmer days! I am so very grateful for all the rain we have had, but my body is craving some vitamin D. As we inch closer to longer, warmer days my focus begins to move toward good old-fashioned spring cleaning. This act has become more mainstream since the release of the book "The Life-changing Magic of Tidying Up" by Marie Kondo, as well as her new series on Netflix.

Kondo created a method of organization called KonMari, which is a system of simplifying and organizing your home by getting rid of physical items that do not bring joy into your life. I thought I'd share some tips for implementing the KonMari method.

1. Tidy all at once
2. Visualize the destination
3. Determine if an item "sparks joy"
4. Tidy by category, not location
5. Tidy in order

1. Tidy All at Once

Instead of cleaning one room a day, devote an entire day (or weekend) to tidying up. If you only tidy one room at a time over an extended period of time, it will wind up getting messy again in a matter of a few weeks or months.

This can feel overwhelming and many of us do not have the time to tackle our home all at once. But not to worry, Kondo encourages you to do what you can if you can't do it all in one day.

2. Visualize the destination

Before you start tossing things, take the time to visualize what your ideal lifestyle would be. Create a list of what you want your home to look and feel like. How do you want to live in your home? How do you want others to feel when they enter your home. Instead of just wishing "I want an organized and clean house" set a more emotional goal such as "I want to walk through my home and feel inspired, energized" or "I want to live in a zone of creativity."

It sounds silly, but KonMari teaches that the more emotion you can bring will help you accurately visualize the home and lifestyle you want.

3. Determine if the item "sparks joy"

Kondo's lessons show that in focusing on what does not make you happy, you're only inviting unhappiness into your life. If you look around your home and focus on what you "don't" like in your home, you are only creating more negativity.

Instead, focus on what you love. What brings you joy? What makes you smile when you see it or what item brings about a positive memory when you look at it. By highlighting the items that bring you joy, the unenjoyed merely fall to the wayside.

Pick up an item, touch it and ask yourself if it "sparks joy" in your life. If not, set it aside.

KonMari states that you must touch every single item before you get rid of it. This is not the time to bring "rational thinking" into the mix.

Focus on how you "feel" about the item. Let your emotions guide you on determining if you are going to

keep an item or not.

4. Tidy by category, not location

Most people store items that fall into the same "category" in various locations. For example, you probably have clothes in your closet, under your bed and in your dresser. So instead of tackling a closet or a dresser, tackle your clothes first. Pull out every single piece of clothing you own and lay it out in another room on the floor.

5. Tidy In Order

Kondo has come up with the ideal order in which you should tidy up. Start with clothes, then books/magazines, then papers, next Komono (misc. stuff), and finally sentimental items.

Separate everything out from each category and then into subcategories, which will make the process even easier. For example clothes can be subdivided into seasons. Books and magazines divided into "read" and "not yet read." And if you are anything like me, the magazine piles are larger than the clothing piles! (It's a sickness, for sure).

As you are sorting and "feeling" items make sure to have a trash bag handy to toss items to keep you from hanging onto them "just in case." If you struggle with an item, set it aside and come back to it. If you still wrestle with getting rid of an item because "it's still good" or "Great Aunt Myrtle gave me that," why not consider passing it onto someone else who might enjoy it. Shhh! We won't tell Aunt Myrtle!

Hopefully these tips inspired you to get your KonMari on this weekend! And if not, do what I do: watch a few episodes of "Hoarders" on A&E to get you in the mood!



Photo Amanda Eck



As the Owner and Principal Designer of Lamorinda-based Amanda Carol Interiors, Amanda Eck believes your home's interior should be both approachable and well- appointed. She often asserts, "Beauty is a necessity." With a distinct sense of style that mixes contemporary and classic design she fashions spaces that are both elegant and inviting. Her design aesthetic is inspired by anything visual but especially fashion, architecture and art. Visit <http://amandacarolinteriors.com> for more design ideas.

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