

The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing

Author: Marie Kondo

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The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up is a non-fiction, self-help book written by Marie Kondo, who teaches her readers how to tidy once and forever. Her KonMari method is based on the simple, two-pronged principle of 1) discarding and then 2) organizing items that bring joy to the owner. Kondo instructs with simple sentences that reflect her minimalist approach to life, but these combined with the repetitive structure of her book are effective at instilling within readers remembrance of her message. The book features personal anecdotes of experimentation and client success, an order for tidying to prevent hesitant hoarding, as well as folding techniques for optimal organization. But the latent messages are as comforting as a loving home. . .Kondo also teaches her readers independency, responsibility, and growth. Along this tidying journey, these individuals learn to be present—in that their identities are not based on their past (old love letters, Father’s Day cards) or their future (toilet-paper stockpile, stockings). They are granted the opportunity to discover who they are in the moment and what brings them joy based on the items they decide to keep. The magic is discovery, like tidying up the home and finally, seeing everything that was always there with a new lens.

I have lived in six separate niches. I have not considered the latter five as homes, as I have my first one. And it shows in my anger and discomfort towards the apartment and

neighborhood I am living in now. But I learned from reading that I was displacing blame and anger on this shelter, when it was I that was at fault. When the mountains of the clothes collected from those six different locations was displayed, I felt a sense that I was living in all of them at once, in the single living room—without a sense in the world who I was now! But from this task, I could visually observe my deep emotional attachment to the past. With Kondo’s gentle instruction, I was able to let go of dormant but lingering feelings that emanated from me like a foul presence. I bid memories over the span of my lifetime goodbye that held me back from freedom and adventure, adieu. They were buoys I believed granted me security, but it’s now plain to see that they were only chains all along.

I completed this book overnight, entranced by the remedial and honest and refreshingly unordinary words of Kondo. I was touched by almost every aspect of the book, especially the premise that having a lot of possessions is not always filling. But the bits of which I could not connect with the book focused on her emphasis on possession and personification of her material goods. I do not believe in putting too much importance on things, but nevertheless, I learned to appreciate everything I had from this reading, even the home I have now. I believe this book would be kind gift to those of the young-adult audience, as I personally was a feral monkey-child; however, as Marie Kondo proclaims: “Even a three-year old can tidy!”

Book Recommendations:

Spark Joy by Marie Kondo

The Joy of Less: A Minimalist Guide to Declutter, Organize, and Simplify by Francine Jay

Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less by Greg Mckeo