

6 Ways to Declutter and Find Joy

Who couldn't use a pop of joy right now?

As the pandemic drags on, some people realize that their house and stuff just don't spark joy – the rallying cry of Japanese tidying guru, Marie Kondo. She's author of *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, and she developed the KonMari method of home decluttering.

It entails tidying by category rather than by location and the approach also encourages people to ask whether an object sparks joy to decide whether to keep or toss something. Only necessities and things that bring joy get to stay. Everything else gets donated, sold, or discarded.

If you're pondering your next move and need to purge and organize first, KonMari may be an approach to consider.

Kristyn Ivey, a certified KonMari-certified consultant with Chicago-based For the Love of Tidy, offers ways to rethink your approach to decluttering.

1. Define your vision

Ivey, who provides both in-person and virtual consulting, asks clients to develop a detailed vision of their ideal living environment. She explores their wishes through a series of questions and statements, including:

- How would your life change if your home were clutter-free?
- Keeping your ideal lifestyle in mind, walk through a perfect day in your life.
- Pretend you've reached the end of your KonMari Tidying Journey. Describe in detail how you envision your home will look and feel post tidy.

You can rely on your own written vision throughout the tidying process, especially when motivation is flagging or indecision about letting go of objects creeps in.

2. Measure clutter's cost

Clutter affects more than the physical environment. It creates anxiety and stress and wastes time and money.

According to Pixie's 2017 "Lost & Found Survey," people spend 2.5 days per year looking for lost objects – keys, glasses, the TV remote, and so forth.

It also found that Americans collectively spend \$2.7 billion each year replacing missing items.

One way to motivate yourself to tidy is by tallying the cost of unused clothes, unloved decorative objects, and bursting organizational bins.

For example, one Ivey client discovered that she'd spent \$17,000 on off-site storage. During her own tidying, Ivey found \$300 worth of unworn clothing.

3. Purge and Organize Once

Traditionally, people purge and organize regularly. Think about the concept of annual spring cleaning.

The KonMari method entails purging comprehensively and holistically and quick decision-making.

"It's a tidying event, and you move forward with a different perspective," Ivey comments. "Everything has a home, you have the right amount of stuff, and you're controlling what comes into your home. You're maintaining an organized lifestyle."

4. Facing Change

If you're rethinking your housing choices – downsizing, moving across the country for a lifestyle change, or looking to assisted living – start looking at your things analytically.

Ivey asks, "What things are essential and spark the highest level of joy? What will you bring with you, no matter where you move?"

Still, discarding a lifetime of possessions is emotional. But by viewing the purge with anticipation of a new life and with gratitude for a fresh adventure, you can ease the sense of loss.

5. Managing your legacy

Will you be passing on joy or a burden of clutter to heirs?

Talk with your family about what you're planning to leave to them and discuss their wishes.

Ivey asks clients whether they've mentioned to loved ones that they'll be inheriting particular objects. Frequently, the answer is no.

Sometimes seniors keep items because they *think* a child wants them, only to discover that an object doesn't fit that child's décor or it's just unwelcome.

It's best for everyone to be open about who wants what. That way, kids don't live with guilt about not taking family treasures, and seniors can get rid of unwanted things and make space for something that's more meaningful to them.

6. Living abundantly. Now

So often, people tidy up, renovate, and redecorate only when it's time to move. Rather than postponing decisions about living clutter-free until you have a bigger or smaller house, why not tidy now?

"It's about having the essentials that spark joy, embracing yourself and your situation in the *present*, and making the most of all that," says Ivey. "KonMari gets you closer to your vision so you can use your home as a place to support the activities that are meaningful -- having family over, supporting hobbies, and especially during this time, enjoying what keeps us engaged and entertained," she adds.

Resources:

- For the Love of Tidy (www.fortheloveoffidy.com) – Learn about Ivey's services, and her podcasts, blog, and tidying resources.
- KonMari (<https://konmari.com>) – Marie Kondo provides tips, challenges, and products related to her brand.
- KonMari Consultants (<https://consultant.konmari.com/#/consultants>) – Locate KonMari consultants in the U.S., Canada, and around the globe.

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