

# **The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up Study Guide**

**The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up by Marie  
Kondo**

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# Summary

From a little girl on, Marie Kondo was fascinated with cleaning up her room and keeping her possessions neat and orderly. As a young school girl she would volunteer to clean the classroom when the other kids fought over feeding the classroom pets or giving out test papers. After getting home from school, Marie would immediately go to her room, put her things away where they belonged and work at reducing the amount of things in her room. When she finished with her room, she would move on to her sister's room and begin straightening and organizing her room.

Marie was a natural for the career she ultimately took on. She became an in-home consultant who would help her clients tidy up their homes, reduce them of clutter, discard unused or unnecessary personal possessions and devise effective storage solutions. She always promised her clients that by following her approach – the KonMari Method – they would never have to deal with clutter again. She also assured them that their lives would be more joyful and productive and that their lives would literally be transformed.

Marie Kondo describes the KonMari Method in great detail. She provides what is fundamentally a how-to guide in her book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*. Just as the title suggests, Marie promises that by adhering to her advice her clients will experience life-changing events that will have a magical effect on their lives and even their careers. This transformation is possible through the de-cluttering of one's house and the effective storage of items – everything from books to clothes to papers and to mementos that are the most difficult to part with.

Following the KonMari Method there is not only a physical improvement in one's life, clients experience a new inner peace and confidence that occurs when people are surrounded with only items that bring them joy. Marie Kondo provides the steps it takes to learn which items should be discarded and which ones should be maintained and stored away in specific places.

Marie Kondo describes how to connect with one's items on a deep and personal level and to develop a real and lasting relationship with one's house. Kondo has utter respect for the homes and possessions of her clients. When she begins a new consultation job, she greets the house and kneels down to it to demonstrate her respect and honor for it. She advises her clients to greet their homes every day when they come home. A home should be appreciated because it serves as a shelter and haven for its owners.

After Marie's clients complete the KonMari process in their home, they are assured that they will never have to deal with clutter again. In fact, their lives will be transformed. With a clutter-free environment, her clients will be positioned to take their lives to a new level. They will be clear-eyed and ready for more change in their lives. Ultimately they will realize that the clutter in their homes was also cluttering up their minds and creating barriers that were keeping them from elevating their lifestyles and advancing their careers.

# Chapter 1: Why Can't I Keep My House in Order?

## Summary

People are surprised that Marie Kondo makes a living teaching people how to tidy up. Parents always tell their kids how to tidy up their rooms but they don't teach them how to do it. Tidying is not taught at school, is considered something that doesn't require training and has been largely self-taught. All that is changed with the innovation of the KonMari Method of tidying up.

A common complaint is that shortly after tidying up everything is soon a mess again. Marie passed time reading lifestyle magazines at home and food magazines at the library when she was a child. She would apply the tips she read about around the house. She wasn't interested in playing outside with other kids. She would tidy up and notice that very soon everything was messy again. She thought that cutting the amount of clutter could be a resolution. If a house is in proper order, keeping it tidy will be easy even for lazy or sloppy people.

People do not change habits without changing their mindset. As a youngster, Marie read the book *The Art of Discarding* by Nagisa Tatsumi which stressed the importance of getting rid of unnecessary things. She was able to fill eight garbage bag full of old books and toys and other items that she hadn't used in years and forgotten she even had them. The transformation in her room was astonishing. One's mindset can be changed if a room is tidied up all at once. Removing clutter will change one's mindset and habits. She tried recommended methods of disposing of unneeded items slowly but it was not effective. The key in disposing of clutter is to either decide to throw things away or decide where to store it.

People sometime use tidying up to distract them from something else they have to do like studying for an exam. A messy room is caused by a person; it doesn't get that way by itself. A tidy room will force a person to examine his inner state and not be distracted by a messy room that needs tidying up. Tidying up is a tool. The ultimate goal is to establish an effective lifestyle once a house is tidied up.

Storage is one of the first problems when tidying up. Beware of promises for quick remedies. As a young student, Marie tried all the storage tips found in magazines. Storage is not the answer to clutter. The storage units – files, baskets, racks – become clutter themselves. Tidying must start with de-cluttering. Tidying up by location is not a remedy because the same category of items may be found in more than one location. Therefore, it is more efficient to tidy by category.

After Marie became a consultant she studied different methods of tidying up by character type. However, she learned that it made more sense to categorize her clients



by their actions rather than by personality type. There were the can't-throw-it-away types, can't-put-it-back types and first-two combined types. Ninety percent fall into the latter category. The first step in tidying up must begin with discarding items no matter what personality type a person is. Tidying is more impactful by planning it for a special day – not part of the daily routine.

Tidying should not be looked at as an endless chore. The only tidying that should be done on a daily basis is putting things back where they belong. “Special” tidying, putting one’s house in order, should be a once-in-a-lifetime event. Once a state of perfect order is established, it will be easy to maintain and there will never be a return to clutter. The finish line is when everything has been put in its place. Follow-up tidying will only be necessary once or twice a year to purge unwanted items and to place recently purchased things.

## **Analysis**

Marie Kondo is a tidiness consultant. People are surprised that she has made a career out of helping people learn how to pick up after themselves. Although children learn most things they need in life from their parents or from school, Marie noticed early that instruction on how to tidy up and avoid clutter was an important missing element. She connects having an organized, clutter-free environment with being able to pursue a person’s desired lifestyle.

One of the major complaints from her clients is that after tidying up, it is not too long before the clutter starts to accumulate again. Marie emphasizes that this “rebound” occurs when tidying up is done for the short term not for the long term.

Sorting through items to edit them down is the first step in the process. Determining the appropriate storage remedies is the second phase. Marie recognizes that most of her clients are indecisive about whether to keep or throw things away. She teaches her clients how to make these decisions. She tells them to beware of advice that has proven ineffective because there are no quick remedies.

Once a house is tidied up in the KonMari method, it will take little or no effort to keep things orderly. She stresses that things must immediately be put back in their designated place in order to avoid clutter build-up.

## **Vocabulary**

catalyst, thunderstruck, marathon, tangible, epiphany, daunting, diligent, phenomenon, viable, retrospect

# Chapter 2: Finish Discarding First

## Summary

The rebound effect occurs after everything is tidied up and clutter begins to recur. The answer is to tidy up all at once and as quickly as possible. The average time to tidy up a house is six months. It may seem like a long time but once it's done, it won't have to be duplicated. Discarding must be done before making storage decisions. Don't store things away to throw away later. Not following this rule will result in complete failure. Before starting thought must be given to one's desired lifestyle.

Items that have ceased to be functional or are out of date or style should be the first to go. It is easier to decide what to keep than to decide what to throw away. Holding each item and assessing the pleasure it brings is a good way to recognize what to discard. There is a physical reaction when touching something that brings joy. Things to be discarded should be done by category and be gathered together. This will serve to eliminate excesses and duplicates of the same item. Dealing with one category at a time will speed up the tidying process.

Don't start with mementos because there is an emotional attachment to them. These are the most difficult items to edit down. Function, information and emotional attachment all add value to items and make them more difficult to dispose of. The process goes more smoothly by leaving items in this category to last. This is a general guideline for easiest to hardest to part with: clothes, books, papers, miscellaneous and mementos. It is best not to let the family see what is being disposed of because they will question everything that's being gotten rid of and want to keep most of it.

Parents can be sentimental about mementos being thrown out. Giving items to family members that they need or can use is a good way of disposing of unwanted things. It is difficult to deal with family members who are packrats and don't want to give up anything. A soft approach with gentle questioning about the viability of some items will avoid undue stress.

When she lived at home, Marie reverted to stealth tactics to rid the common storage locker of unneeded items. In most cases, no one knew that she had moved or gotten rid of some things. When confronted by a family member about a missing item, she'd tell them that she'd done them a favor and thrown unnecessary things away. Even though she had good intentions, she ultimately realized that her actions had been wrong. But she had inspired other family members who began to go through their things and either discard or store them.

Some items of clothing that Marie couldn't part with but didn't wear any longer went to her younger sister. Later, Marie realized that she had used her sister to hang on to things she herself couldn't part with which resulted in her sister's overflowing closet. It is



practical to give things away to someone else if they really need or want them. Forcing one's discards on someone else is not a good practice.

When tidying, Marie reaches a near meditative state during which she can have a dialog with herself. Creating a quiet space while making decisions about what to discard is crucial. Even playing music during the process is not advisable. Any noise makes it more difficult to be in touch with one's inner self. Starting out early in the morning makes the decision-making process more productive.

An item that gives a person a flash of joy from touching it can be the deciding factor on whether to keep or discard it. There are two types of human judgment: intuitive and rational. Some clothes and other items aren't meant to be lifelong possessions. Getting rid of unnecessary and unused items will help put one's life in order.

## Analysis

It takes about six months to get everything in one's house in perfect order. That may seem like a long time to some; however, Marie promises that by following her advice they will never need to do a huge reorganization again. The initial tidying up must be done in a big-picture way – all at once although it takes months to finish. However, the challenge should be looked in the whole – all of the house instead of drawer by drawer, closet by closet or room by room.

Marie advises her clients to attack the problem by beginning with the low-hanging fruit. If an appliance or other device no longer works, it should be thrown away. Sorting through personal items is the first step of tidying up. Each item that a person owns needs to be held and touched by the person. If they feel a sense of joy from touching the item, it is an item that they should probably keep. The goal is to find those things that will bring them joy. When a person is surrounded by things that make them feel joyful and brings them peace and serenity, the person will be free to pursue other challenges in life.

The most difficult items to sort through and get rid of are mementos because they have an emotional attachment and arouse memories from the past. In deciding what to get rid of, the person has to consider if the item has function and purpose, provides necessary information or has an emotional attachment. These are things that add value to an item and are part of the elimination process in deciding if the item goes in the keep pile or into a trash bag.

## Vocabulary

communal, criteria, superfluous, neurotic, cursory, havoc, blatant, anomaly, stealth, ambient, criterion

# Chapter 3: Tidying by Category Works Like Magic, Section 1

## Summary

A new client is always nervous when Marie Kondo arrives for the first appointment. They are fearful that they will be her first failure. They can't believe that she can actually tidy up their messy homes. Everyone can learn to clean and tidy properly if they use the KonMari Method. Marie tries to soothe their worries. Tidying up is fun and a chance to get in touch with one's inner self. There is no mysterious process. All a person has to do is use her intuition and be armed with a supply of trash bags. Reducing work to the recommended categories and going in order – clothes, books, papers, miscellaneous and mementos – will lead to success.

Clothing should be divided into tops, bottoms, clothes that are hung, clothes that should be folded, socks, underwear, bags, accessories, clothes with specific purpose like uniforms or swimsuits and finally shoes. The driving force in making decisions on what to keep is whether they bring joy. Each piece needs to be handled to test it for its joy level. Make sure to gather all items of clothing from every room. Every piece of clothing should then be arranged on the floor. Marie warns her clients that if they failed to include a piece of clothing in the pile that it will be discarded without assessment. This warning usually rallies the client's memory and they are able to recall a few other pieces of clothing. Marie does not include items in the laundry in this threat.

The average number of clothing item in the pile is 160 which overwhelms most people. Marie opts to start with off-season clothing because it's the easiest category because the items are currently being worn and clients are more detached from them. Marie urges the client to ask herself if she really wants to wear the clothing when it's next in season. This simple question will allow the person to rid themselves of unwanted clothing and leave them with only what they really like and will wear. She discourages people from demoting clothing to casual wear that they will only wear at home. They can wind up demoting too many items to that category and likely will not wear many if any of them. Additionally, most clothes designed to wear out do not make comfortable casual wear. Marie believes that women should wear nice gowns or pajamas to sleep in – not bulky sweat suits. What is worn at home and to sleep in impacts self-image and the desired lifestyle that one is attempting to achieve.

Once clothing items have been gone through, the person is generally left with only a third of what they started with. The next step is putting them away. One client hung everything on hangers including t-shirts and purses instead of storing them away in drawers. Marie recommends that the majority of one's clothes be folded and stored away in drawers. Folding clothing reserves space. Folding can solve most of one's storage problems for clothing. The act of folding one's clothing is a chance to transfer energy to them. Folding also increases the longevity of clothing and keeps it wrinkle-





free. Folding is also an act of love and caring for the items that have been determined to bring joy.

When storing folded items away in drawers they should be organized so that everything can be seen at a glance. Items should be stored standing up rather than in flat squares piled on top of each other. To do this more folding is required to make the items more compact. More wrinkling occurs when items are stacked in a pile. Every piece of clothing should be folded into a smooth rectangle. Once the items are lined up in the drawer each one will be immediately visible when the drawer is opened. Each item will have its “sweet spot” in the drawer.

There are two reasons for messy closets: there are too many clothes or there is a lack of organizational know-how. The basic rule is that hanging clothes should be gathered by category. Each closet should have a jacket section, suit section, pants section, etc. The secret for maintaining an organized closet once it has been tidied up is to arrange the clothes so that they rise to the right. Lines that rise to the right bring more comfort to people. Heavy clothes like coats should be hung on the left with lighter and short clothes hung moving toward the right side. Clothes within each category should also be organized from heavy to light. Organizing the closet in this fashion will generate energy that will be transmitting the clothing.

## Analysis

Most every client fears that she will be Marie's first failure. They feel that their clutter is so out of control that no one can solve it. Marie strives to make the process fun and purposeful. Using one's intuition is essential in determining what direction to go in with items – should they go or should they stay. Marie makes no decisions about what people should keep although she does leave signposts along the process in an effort to point them in the right direction because she knows that their lives will improve by simply being neater. Too many unneeded and useless items sitting around a house not only clutters the house, it clutters the mind.

From her own experience, Marie learned that passing apparel and other items down to younger family members is not the answer. When she was younger and still lived at home and couldn't part with an article of clothing, she would give it to her younger sister. Later, she realized that to avoid making a good decision about getting rid of an item she was using her sister so she wouldn't have to. She avoided making a hard decision, got it out of her closet and into her younger sister's closet. Marie also finally figured out that her sister took many of the items she gave her just to be polite. The result was the item was still cluttering up the house but only in a different closet.

Marie stresses to her clients to trust their judgments which are either intuitive – when there is a deep feeling of joy about the item – or rational – there are sound reasons for discarding an item, for example it no longer works or has purpose.

## Vocabulary

ultimatum, gala, criterion, taut, genetically

## Chapter 3: Tidying by Category Works Like Magic, Section 2

### Summary

Socks are often stored in rolled up lumps. Socks should never be tied up or balled up. Their time in a drawer is the only time socks have to rest and recuperate from being on feet and walked on all day. Balling them up will add stress rather than allow them to relax. Forgotten socks pushed to the rear of a drawer will lose their elasticity. A pair of socks should be stacked on one another and folded lengthwise then folded into thirds with the toes inside not outside. Thicker items like leggings should be folded in half and gently rolled up. Ankle socks need to be folded only once. Socks should be stored on end so that the swirl is visible. Shoeboxes can be inserted into drawers to help with organization and storage.

Storing seasonal clothes is dysfunctional and not practical. Air-conditioning and heating systems have made seasonal storage unnecessary. Items to be stored in drawers should be categorized by material heft – basically cotton and wool. Trying to categorize by season fails to provide proper organization. Storing off-season items in plastic storage bins is not recommended because other things wind up getting stored on top of them and they become difficult to access. Storage containers should be aired out occasionally so they stay fresh.

Begin the process of storing books by putting them all in a pile on the floor. Each book should be handled and assessed for the joy it provides. To be able to make good decisions about what books to keep and which to give away they must be taken out of hibernation and in the same space with the owner. For large numbers of books, they should be piled in categories: general, practical, visual and magazines. Clients are surprised that they are able to make quicker decisions about their books when they're off the shelves and onto the floor. The books need to be touched not read by their owner to determine if the book gives her a thrill and should be kept.

A book should not be kept because it might be re-read. The rereading of books by the ordinary person is a rare event. There is no value for books to line a shelf; their value is in their content. A book should be given away if it has never been read and has been on the shelf for a prolonged period of time. Old textbooks have no purpose and could be useful to current students. Less than fifteen percent of Marie's clients ever read unread books that they've been saving to read. Copying favorite passages from a book into a notebook or photocopying them are remedies for a book that is hard to part with. Clients are surprised how having fewer books increased the impact of the books that have been retained.

There are papers of many descriptions that pile up in everyone's house. There is no need to create a complex filing system in the home. Most papers can be thrown away

especially now in the electronic age. The only papers that should be retained are papers currently in use, needed for a specific purpose or those that must be retained. After winnowing the papers down, they should be stored as either papers to be saved or papers that require action. All papers should be kept in one location. Papers that need to be accessed frequently should be separated from those that will be accessed infrequently or not at all.

Maintaining handouts from lectures or seminars should be discarded because they will probably never be revisited. After reconciling credit card statements and used checkbooks there is no reason to hang onto them. Most user manuals for electronic devices or appliances should be thrown away after reviewing them. Warranties should all be kept together in a clear file without separating them into categories. Warranties are rarely used and each one does not merit its own file folder. When looking through the file for one warranty, check for expiration dates on the others so they can be tossed. Dispense with greeting cards that are over two years old. They actually served their purpose when they were first received.

## **Analysis**

Marie provides in great detail how to fold and store socks. It may sound like an unimportant step but Marie puts great emphasis on folding and storing socks in a way that uses less space yet allows full view of the socks stored in a drawer in one glance. She urges that traditional methods of storage like putting seasonal clothes “away” be abandoned. With today’s air-conditioned homes and heat-controlled homes, there is no reason to store them in any place other than the closet. Marie provides detailed instructions on how to set up a closet to provide greater access and in a manner that provides serenity and peace for the individual.

Marie Kondo gives a guideline for the sorting, disposing, storing and displaying of books. Books are items that accumulate and even though there are good intentions many are never read or referenced. Some books have obviously outlived their usefulness – like school books and text books that haven’t been touched in years. They can be given away to libraries and other organizations where they can have purpose. Some books contain favorite passages which can be copied and placed in notebooks – a process that takes a lot less space than keeping the book itself.

Papers and documents are another source of clutter that can be controlled. Marie stresses that the only papers that should be retained are those currently in use or needed for a specific purpose or those, like warranties, that must be retained. Papers that should be retained or need action should be categorized and stored accordingly.

## **Vocabulary**

essentially, enduring, lengthwise, precariously, spellbinding

## Chapter 3: Tidying by Category Works Like Magic, Section 3

### Summary

The Japanese word “komono” translates as small or miscellaneous items. Most people have a drawer with small things that have been accumulated over the years – a junk drawer. The items should be handled one by one to see if there is any joy in keeping them. There are many categories and should be categorized according to the basic order for sorting komono. Clients are surprised how many such items have been accumulated over the years.

No one should feel guilty parting with a gift because it fulfilled its purpose when he was first given and received. If it no longer holds joy, it should be disposed of without feelings of guilt. Throw away samples of make-up and other personal care samples because their shelf-lives are very brief. Don't keep packaging for electronic items around. Having the original packaging is not a plus in selling the item at a later time. Unidentifiable cords should be thrown away as should broken TVs, radios and appliances. Electronic equipment can be taken to recyclers. Storing extra sets of bedding for infrequent guests is a waste of space. Exercise equipment and gear should be disposed of after being left idle for a prolonged period of time.

Even though coins have value, Marie Kondo finds them in all sorts of places in the homes of her clients where they are of no use at all. She makes sure that they put the coins in their wallets not in piggy banks because they will use it if it's in their wallets. Why save it in a piggy bank where they will leave it sit forever? Excess coins should be placed in bank accounts. Some people hoard coins in plastic bags for years where they oxidize, discolor and become pungent.

The last category of items to be tackled is sentimental items. They are the most difficult because there are emotions and memories attached to them. Marie reminds her clients that the memories they have will not be tossed away with the discarded items. Their time was in the past; people must live in the here and now. Storing things away from the past actually causes one's past to become an onus that inhibits living in the present. It is also difficult for parents to discard drawings that their children made at school when they were little. A parent will not hurt the feelings of their adult children by throwing this artwork away. Some people have artwork and other items like report cards and graduation certificates from their own childhood. The writers of old letters that a person has kept for years have forgotten about them years before. The present-day person should be admired and celebrated not the little puzzle pieces that helped to create her.

Random photos stuck in books are in the back of drawers should be evaluated and either placed in an album or discarded. Leaving photos until last is a good strategy. By now the person is an expert at evaluating the value of an item and going through the



photos will be much less painful had they gone through them first. Like other mementos photos represent the past; the present is what needs to be focused on. A box filled with old photos of relatives that a person can't even identify has absolutely no value.

Marie is shocked at the stockpiles of unusual items that some people have been accumulating for years. One client had an inventory of sixty new toothbrushes. Another client had thirty boxes of plastic kitchen wrap and another had eighty rolls of toilet paper. The biggest stockpile was a cache of 20,000 cotton swabs. Hoarding indicates an issue with one's feeling of security.

After going through the process, something will click with a person who will innately know when she has discarded the right amount of items and retained the things that will bring joy and be the foundation for her desired lifestyle. Marie stresses to her clients to trust their intuition about what to keep and to choose the things that give them joy after touching them. She does not ascribe to traditional rules for discarding things that recommend throwing out clothes not worn in two years. It will inspire joy and bring new vitality to the relationship they have with their things by decreasing the number of items to be retained. Marie will touch the life of a person who has cleared out things that have no joy.

## Analysis

In this section, Marie Kondo addresses those usually small, miscellaneous items that everyone accumulates and no one knows what to do with. They may have some usefulness and have purpose or they may be things the purpose of which has become a deep mystery. The Japanese word for miscellaneous items like these is "komono."

Marie strives to convince people to not feel guilty about getting rid of items they received as gifts. They should be assessed like any other possession. The owner should handle the item and if they get a sense of joy from it, they should keep it. If it has served its usefulness and there is no longer any joy attached to it, they should put it with other items to be given or thrown away. No guilt or shame should be attached to giving away something received as a present because it long ago served its fundamental service – it was given as a gift and gratefully received. But that time has passed.

Marie is astounded by the amount of coins that are found all over the house. She recommends that her clients put them in their purses or wallets and spend them. Putting them in a piggy bank is just another way to avoid using them. The piggy bank takes up unnecessary space.

The most difficult komono to get rid of are items that have sentimental value. These items evoke old memories and emotional responses. Marie stresses to her clients that the emotion and memories attached to the item still lives in the person's heart and mind. They don't have to keep the item to have those memories.

## Vocabulary

tantalizing, komono, unfathomable, pungent, promotional

# Chapter 4: Storing Your Things to Make Your Life Shine

## Summary

Everything should have a specific place to be stored. Keeping things tidy and in place becomes a habit and allows more time to enjoy life. If every item does not have designated place in a home, the house will soon be cluttered. One of the main reasons for rebound or failure is not designating a place for everything. Whenever a person is finished using an item it should immediately be placed back in its designated place. As already stressed, sorting and discarding of items must take place before decisions about storage are made. People will learn to limit their purchases to the storage space they have available.

When Marie Kondo first became a storage coach she learned that clever ideas for storage were generally ineffective and sometimes created new problem. Simple storage solutions are always best and will result in less cluttering. There are two rules to effective storage solutions: all items of the same category should be stored together and the number of storage areas should be limited. Separate storage spaces should be provided for each family member who will have pride in their possessions and keep their storage area tidy.

Clutter results when stored items aren't accessible or because there are no specified storage spaces for them. It is ideal to plan a storage space in one location in the house and to store things by how often they are used. Items that are stored should never be piled on top of each other. Vertical storage is the best solution because it prevents the accumulation of unnecessary items. Stacking things weakens those items on the bottom, whether it's clothes or papers or other items.

Following this simplistic guideline for storing items limits the need for commercial storage items. Simple drawer units and boxes are the most useful storage items. Shoeboxes are particularly versatile storage options. A big plus in using shoe boxes and other boxes that are accumulated is that there is no extra cost in their use. If storage boxes or bins need to be purchased it is best to wait until the sorting and discarding processes are completed.

The most efficient way to store a bag is inside another bag. To keep the shape of a handbag, scarves and gloves can be used instead of tissue paper. Handbags should be emptied everyday to purge papers and other unnecessary items and to allow them to rest from the burden they carried all day. A small box in the storage area should be used to hold wallets, keys and other items overnight. Don't clutter up the floor of a walk-in closet with bedding or seasonal items like ornaments or skiwear. Using storage units with drawers is the best way to store clothing. Bulky items like golf clubs and guitars can be stored against the back wall in the walk-in.



Bottles of shampoo and conditioner kept in the shower get in the way when cleaning and also amass slimy mold. In the kitchen, sponges, clothes and soap detergent should be kept in the cabinet below the sink. Sponges and cutting boards should be dried out on the veranda. Store seasonings in cabinets – not on the counter. The top shelf of a bookshelf is ideal to keep spiritual items or to create a personal shrine.

Don't store items that can be considered guilty pleasures like old posters of pop idols or CDs. Be proud of them and display them openly or create a special place for them in your closet. New clothes should be unpacked, de-tagged and hung or folded away immediately. New clothes have a different aura hanging in the closet at home than they do hanging on the racks in a store. Marie has found that many people store favorite items that they don't want to run out of like certain colored socks or certain under garments. Many of these purchases stay in their original packaging. Unpacked items take up less room than packed items. It is a good idea to get out of the habit of overbuying items because of storage concerns.

It is important to have a serene place in which to store your clothes and other items. Using store boxes is a great way to save but the labels and company slogans must all be removed. Marie teaches her clients to appreciate their belongings because by so doing they will treat them with more care. Our belongings work hard for us and support our lives. Just like people like going home to relax, it is important that all our belongings have a place just for them to go to at day's end.

## Analysis

Storage is the main focus of this section. It is vital that after a person sorts through all his possessions and makes the often difficult decision of throwing some away and keeping others that those items she decides to retain are properly stored. It is essential that every possession that is retained has a specific storage destination. If there is no storage spot determined for an item, it will become clutter and all the work done in the sorting and disposing of items will begin to deteriorate.

After becoming a consultant, Marie quickly abandoned the concept of designing of elaborate storage plans. Such plans just wind up complicating the process. It is best to keep storing as simple and logical as possible. There are two simple rules in storage: store things in the same category together and limit the number of storage areas in the house.

Items stored in drawers should be stored vertically. Piling things on top of one another takes more room, damage things on the bottom of the pile and make locating items more difficult. The best storage items to use are boxes and simple drawer units. If storage gear needs to be purchased, it should only be done so after the purging process is complete.

Items that provide joy should be displayed proudly. There is no need to hide old posters of rock stars if they still give joy to the individual. Marie stresses that tags should be

removed from new clothes before they are hung and unpackaged before they are stored away in drawers.

## **Vocabulary**

adversary, voila, sanctuary, forlorn, ingenious, veranda, talisman, pretentious, qualms

# Chapter 5: The Magic of Tidying Dramatically Transforms Your Life

## Summary

A way to determine who you are is by thinking back to childhood and recalling the things that made you happy. Having a clutter-free environment helps this process. Marie's clients often tell her that after their houses were put in order they are able to discover what they want to do with their lives. Her clients have gone on to do amazing things once Marie helped them organize their homes. To Marie, tidying is the best way to get to know yourself.

Marie convinced one of her clients to dispose of her huge collection of seminar materials and books. The woman felt that Marie's tidying course was more impactful than "feng shui or power stones and other spiritual goods." The client quit her job, wrote a book and found a publisher. Without all the debris that was unknowingly bogging her down, she realized that she didn't need to change and became more confident in who she was.

There should be a feeling of joy about an item to keep it. When there is doubt, a person needs to figure out what is keeping her from letting go. It is usually an attachment to the past that keeps us from discarding items. Once that is addressed, getting rid of something that no longer has purpose is much easier. Disposing of items forces us to confront our flaws. There are three choices in the disposing of unnecessary items: face them now, face them in the future or avoid them all together. The first choice is the most beneficial.

Once items are discarded, it's amazing to learn that you can do without them. Marie has probably inspired the disposal of some 28,000 trash bags and over a million individual items. There can be a pang of regret over discarding something after it's gone but it's never devastating. By paring down one's possessions, it is easier to find things and to know exactly where to look for them. By making so many decisions about their possessions, Marie's clients become adept at making decisions in other areas of their lives.

Bodies have physical reactions to the disposal of unnecessary items. People have been known to break out in a case of acne or have diarrhea which indicates that the body is purging itself from toxins. Marie has noticed physical changes in the appearance of clients after they have discarded large amounts of clutter. The house transforms as well. Dirt that had been covered up by clutter becomes visible and can be cleaned up. People have told Marie that they have lost a desire for accumulating new clothes and other possessions. When unhappy with an untidy house, people crave something to distract them like new clothes. It is similar to a person who overeats to cover up other problems they are not facing.



Some clients ask if tidying up brings good fortune like feng shui is alleged to do. Marie responds that a comfortable environment brings energy and joy which surely is an element of good fortune. By putting one's house in order, a person is allowed to live in his nature state. Marie can sense when a client is holding something that brings them joy and when it does not. Being surrounded by items that bring a person joy naturally makes them feel happy. The items that make people happy vary as much as the people themselves do. If a person can say with conviction that she feels joy from an item no matter how bizarre others might think it is, it is an item that should be kept.

Life begins after tidying up your house. An untidy house is not life-threatening but it is probably virtually joyless. People can multi-task; however, the human being can only truly adore a few things at once. Tidying up is not the purpose of a life but it helps get a person past the barriers to the life that a person wants to lead. Once a person's house is in order, she never has to worry about it again. It will stay organized when following the tips outlined in the preceding chapters. After disorder, there can be order. After order, there can be joy.

## **Analysis**

Having a clutter-free environment helps a person reach deep inside to find out who she is and what she wants her life to be. Clutter serves to throw up barriers in the process of living the lifestyle that is most desirable for the person. Marie has many success stories to tout. After one woman got rid of tons of seminar material and books, she saw her way clear to do what she wanted to do. She quit her job, wrote a book and had it published. She attributed Marie's advice and her newly tidied up world for the transforming her life.

Marie's clients also tell her that after making tough decisions to get rid of things that they don't even miss them. Sometimes her clients and Marie herself have felt a pang of regret over something that they discarded. But they it as part of tidying up their lives and that no process is ever perfect.

Marie has been asked by her clients if tidying up will bring them good fortune. What defines good fortune is subjective and varies from one person to another. But In Marie's mind, having a clutter-free life that taught a person how to make decisions and allows them to go on to take on more important things in their lives is truly a blessing.

The underlying goal in tidying up an environment so that there is more joy in life and the freedom to move on past the clutter that has been holding them back.

## **Vocabulary**

integral, essence, vibrant, forbearers, instantaneous, manifest, incomprehensible

# Important People

## Marie Kondo

Everyone has a distinctive personality – like class leader, jock or, like Marie, the organizer type. She tidied from the time she was in elementary school, in fact, she volunteered to clean and tidy up the classroom. She didn't fully recognize that tidying up and organization would be life-long pursuit until she first became a consultant.

Marie would spend her leisure time after school at the library pouring over design and home style magazines. She read tips on organizing, cleaning and storing and would try them out at home. After finishing with her room, she would move on to the rooms of other family members and “help” them with organizational and storage problems. She got carried away at times and went too far in her largess by throwing away items that belonged to other family members. Marie knew that the person wasn't using some items, would never throw them away and that the items would wind up creating clutter. At one point, she was ordered to keep her organizing activities confined to only her room.

Marie was the middle child and realized later in life that she tidied up in part to gain more attention from her parents. The middle child always feels left out – too old to act like the baby and too young to get special privileges. Tidying up gave Marie a purpose and independence. She had a difficult time bonding with people; she replaced the need to bond by making a connection with things. She gained confidence from the attention she gave them and the time she spent with them. She discovered that she could be herself with them. She had an innate need to help others who had similar feelings of not belonging. Her natural interest in organization and her long experience in tidying up her house ultimately came together to create a career for Marie that she never imagined she would have.

## Client “A”

Marie Kondo referred to one of her clients as Client “A.” She was a thirty-year-old woman with two children. She was very cooperative in the purging process. When Marie visited her the second time, she saw that the woman had made much progress in discarding of unwanted items. In fact, she had gotten rid of thirty bags of items she decided not to keep. But she hadn't really gotten rid of the items. She sent them to her mother's house!

As a teenager, Marie gave her younger sister clothing that she hated to get rid of. It was just a way of avoiding making the tough decision to really get rid of an item. Instead, she was piling up her unwanted things at her mother's house. That way she had the security that she could always go retrieve something she decided she wanted. It was a security blanket in a sense. Marie had learned in dealing with other young women that their



mother's houses often became overburdened with the items their daughters wanted to store in their houses. It wasn't fair and it was a way of putting off dealing with the items once and for all.

Eventually Client A's mother took Marie's course. Marie knew that things would soon come to a head and that they would not only be dealing with the mother's items, they would finally be dealing with A's things that she was storing at her mother's house. Her mother wanted a relaxing space of her own but her daughter's things had so overwhelmed her that she felt her only safe haven was in the kitchen.

In order to solve both problems, Marie told A that neither she nor her mother could graduate until there was resolution about the items she had stored at her mother's house. That did the trick forcing A to finally deal with her items and make decisions about them.

## **Client 1**

One client dreamed of a more feminine lifestyle which to her meant her an apartment that would be as tidy as a hotel suite and decorated in white and pink. Her bathroom would have elements similar to a spa. It is crucial that the details of one's desired lifestyle be specific. Visiting model homes or looking through interior design magazines can be inspirational. Once a desired lifestyle has been envisioned, the individual must ask why that particular lifestyle comes to mind.

## **Client 2**

One of Marie's clients, a woman in her fifties, had no problem sorting through her own things and discarding many of the items that no longer had joy for her. However, when she started going through her husband's things, Marie learned that her husband's things were stored all over the house so he could have easy access to all his things. But the result was the opposite. His "storage system" created clutter, confusion and chaos.

## **Client 3**

A thirty-one year-old female client of Marie's work for a foreign consulting firm. The young woman like many Japanese women liked to have her fortune told. The woman had spiritual charms that Marie found scattered all over the house. There were thirty-four charms in all. People give charms to people for good fortune. Special meaning was attached to these charms; one of the charms had been given to the woman by her grandmother for her success. In cases like this, Marie suggests that the client makes an altar in one corner of their house so that these charms and other spiritual items can be kept all together.

## **Client 4**

One client was a woman in her thirties who lived with her daughter and husband in a small but very neat house. She had no reluctance in discarding personal items. Marie immediately sensed that although the woman was neat and everything was very orderly, that something was wrong – something was bothering the woman. As soon as Marie opened the clothes closet, she saw the problem. The woman wisely used store boxes for her storage. It saved money and time to reuse these boxes. However, the problem was that the closet was “noisy” because all the labels, ads, slogans and tags were still on the boxes. She told the woman that these things must be removed so that the closet is a serene place where her clothes and personal items could rest.

## **Client 5**

A client in her thirties made the comment that letting go of unwanted and unnecessary times was more important than adding new items. This client loved to study and had a vast network of customers. After the KonMari process, her life changed drastically. She had gotten rid of huge amount of material that she had gathered over the years and had largely never touched again. She felt as though a burden had been taken off her back; she changed careers and found a new life as a result of the tidying up.

## **Client “K”**

Marie Kondo referred to one of her clients as Client “K.” This client had a three-year-old daughter whose clothes and toys were stored in drawers and cabinets all over the house. Marie helped the client gather all of her daughter’s items and stored them in one place. After that the little girl began choosing what she wanted to wear and began putting her toys away and taking better care of her things. She was experiencing the pride of ownership.

## **CEO Client**

One of Marie’s clients was the CEO of a large corporation. She was helping him organize his office. His bookshelves contained many large tomes with impressive titles. She felt she was in a bookstore. As it turned out, the CEO was just creating an image with the books and hadn’t read any of the books. He wanted to keep them all because he would read them “someday.” It has been Marie’s experience in most cases that that day never comes.

## **Lawyer Couple**

One of the most difficult clients that Marie dealt with was a couple who were both lawyers. When going through papers, Marie had to “defend” herself against a barrage of

questions about disposing of the papers. “What if they are needed in court someday?” “What if they have to produce the document to a client?” Marie learned early on that those “what ifs” rarely happen.

## **Marie’s Good Friend**

One of Marie’s clients had been a good friend since her college days. She was an IT expert but, like Marie, loved to tidy up her house and possessions. She did a good job of editing down the books in her bookshelf winding up with only books that engaged her. When she got the chance to look over the books she had kept, she found they were all on social welfare. It made her recall her dreams to building a society where parents could work without worrying about their young children. By scaling down the books and eliminating those she no longer had any interest in, she was able to recall her dream. She ultimately quit her IT job and started a child care center.

## **Prize Student**

One of Marie’s clients became her prize student. She had discard fifty trash bags of belongings after just one consultation. She had disposed of everything from old photographs, often difficult to part with, to hundreds of articles of clothing. She proclaimed that there was nothing left to get rid of but Marie suspected there was more to purge. As Marie looked more closely and began asking her about specific items, the woman had to admit that there were more things she could do without, items that did not bring her joy. In the end, she was comfortable with the items she was left with and that gave her joy.



# **Objects/Places**

## **The Art of Discarding by Nagisa Tatsumi**

The book entitled, The Art of Discarding by Nagisa Tatsumi, was an inspiration to Marie Kondo. The book came to Marie's attention when she was in high school. The book described the importance of purging unnecessary items from one's environment.

## **Dobutsu Uranai**

Marie Kondo's interest in tidying up and organization compelled her to categorize methodologies by character type. To help in his endeavor she conducted research in the psychology, family lineage and even the blood type of her clients. She also delved into Dobutsu Uranai which was a zoological fortune-telling type of astrology.

## **Intuitive and Rational Judgment**

In learning about the human side of organizing a household and tidying up clutter, Marie found that there were two main types of human judgment: intuitive and rational. She urged people to trust their intuition more than their rationality in deciding what personal possessions they should dispose of. She believed that a person could trust their intuition – how they felt about an object – over their rational judgment. Using rational judgment, a person conjures up the pros and cons on whether to keep or throw away an item. Using intuition, the person will experience a joy that tells her to keep the item. If there is a joyless reaction, the person should give or throw away the item.

## **KonMari Method**

In developing her consultation service in organization and tidiness, Marie Kondo developed a process that she named the KonMari Method. She promised that if her clients followed the guidelines contained in this methodology they would never clutter again. The book, The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying up" describes the KonMari Method.

## **Click Point**

Marie Kondo promises her clients that when they have arrived at the perfect amount of possessions for them to keep they will experience a physical reaction. There will be a satisfaction that comes over them and they will know that they have reached that point. She refers to this moment as the "click point."

## **Shoebox Storage**

Marie advocates using store boxes for storage remedies in the homes of her clients. They are free and they come in a variety of sizes. She recommends using only square or rectangle boxes that are free of any slogan, company name or tags so that there is no “noise” in the storage area. The most versatile storage boxes according to Marie are shoe boxes. They are sturdy and small enough to be used in cramped spaces. The lid can be used to cover the stored items or it can be used for other storage needs.

## **Feng Shui**

Some clients ask Marie how her KonMari Method compares to Feng Shui which brings good fortune to a house. Feng shui is a process in which good fortune is bestowed upon an individual for reorganizing his environment. Although it is an ancient tradition, it became popular again in Japan in the late twentieth century and has gained attention around the world.

## **Yin and Yang**

The dual forces of yin and yang are elements of feng shui. Yin and yang are two halves that make the whole. When the two halves are split apart, the equilibrium is upset and chaos can result. When the two halves are together there is peace and harmony. Yin and yang are in a sense opposites – yin represents “shade” and yang the sun.

## **Shrines**

While Marie recognizes that it is difficult to part with some mementos that have outlasted their purpose or usefulness, she believes that if so disposed that people should create a shrine on the top shelf of their bookcase or create an altar in the corner of one of the rooms to store and honor spiritual items.

## **Komono**

Komono is the Japanese word for miscellaneous items, small articles or gadgets. These are items that often wind up strewn about or in junk drawers. They are usually small items that have no storage home. If they aren’t given away, thrown away or given a storage place, they will accumulate enough to cause a breakdown in a tidy home.

# Themes

## The Magic of Tidying

As a tidiness and organizational consultant, Marie Kondo has seen the transformation of many of her clients after they have gone through the KonMari Method that she developed. The method basically consists of sorting items, purging items, discarding unwanted items, storing items and maintaining the storage system. The result is a physical transformation of the homes of her clients. They are always pleased with the results because their home looks and feels better. But according to Marie there is much more to it than that... a kind of magic is part of the process.

It is Marie's firm belief based on her own experiences and anecdotal evidence from the experiences and reactions of her clients that after the clutter has disappeared and every item in a person's house has a specific storage assignment that peace and harmony and joy settle in on the house. There is no wizardry or sleight of hand. But there is a real transformation that the house undergoes.

People feel joy after their house has gone through the KonMari process. But the house also feels contentment. Marie greets the house when she enters as a consultant. She tells her clients to do the same. By showing the house honor and respect, the client has a connection to the house. The clients begin to feel a dedication to the house and to their possessions. They want to keep the house, rooms and storage areas neat and keep their possessions in their place.

A harmony is palpable in a house that has been tidied. There is a synchronicity that envelops the house that was not there before. If it was there at all, it was hidden under all the clutter. This transformation allows those in the house to leave worries about a messy house behind and go on to find themselves and perhaps more purpose in their lives.

## Discarding Items

The disposal of items is one of the main themes in *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*. When a house is cluttered it simply means that there are either too many items in the home or there is inadequate storage – or both.

Marie Kondo describes the importance of following her guidelines in a step-by-step fashion. The very first step in de-cluttering a house or office is to sort through every single item and decide on a one-by-one basis whether the item should be thrown away or discarded in the trash or should be kept by the owner. Marie's tidying process designed to clear clutter from her clients' lives will fail if this first step is not completed in a comprehensive and thorough manner. Marie refers to a relapse in cluttering problems as "rebounding".

Marie advises her clients on the importance of doing the sorting and purging process correctly even though it is time-consuming. It is worth the time and effort because if done correctly, the person will never have to go through the process again. Marie tells her clients to hold each item in their hands, touch it and try to make a connection with it. If the client feels a spark of joy when touching the item, it should probably be retained. If there is no reaction, the item should be tossed away. It is Marie's philosophy that an environment is transformed when it is filled with items that bring joy.

## **Folding**

Marie Kondo focuses several extensive chapters on folding. According to Marie, folding is an art. Marie preference for storing clothes is folding rather than hanging them. There are bulky items like coats and suits that have to be hung but everything else can be stored. As many clothes should be folded as room allows.

Hanging takes up much more space in a room than does folding. Twenty to forty pieces of folded clothing can fit in the same space as ten hanging garments. Marie tells her clients that the real benefit of folding is the human contact with the item. Running one's hands over the garment releases energy into the cloth which eventually will be returned to the person. There is a healing process that takes place. In Japanese it is called *te-ate* which translated means applying hands. Prior to modern times and the advances of medicine, people believed that hands actually healed diseases. The process has a positive impact on both the article of clothing and on the person folding the item.

Folding also allows the person to notice rips and tears that must be tended to increase the longevity of the piece of clothing. Marie feels that going through life without folding one's clothing is a big loss. Folding clothes to prepare them for storage in a drawer is an act of love and caring and should be done full-heartedly. Folding has always been important to the Japanese culture. The traditional robes like the kimono and yukata were stored in drawers that were designed just for them after being folded into perfect rectangles. The Japanese believe that there is a dialogue between man and his wardrobe.

## **Sentimental Items**

When going through the purging portion of the KonMari Method of organizing and tidying up, sentimental items should be saved for last. For one, they are the most difficult items for a person to deal with. There is an emotional attachment to these items that really have no other value or purpose than what they meant at one time. But that time is past and the person should be able to discard of sentimental items that are really never used or needed.

But when the client begins going through old love letters, Mother's Day cards, drawings that their children made in school and the like an emotional response is evoked. Throwing away a child's clay dish that he made for his mother thirty years before is

tantamount to throwing that child aside. It's an irrational, emotional response and it is real and should not be ridiculed.

Since deciding to throw away sentimental items is the most difficult, Marie has her clients leave them until last. There are several reasons including the fact that it's difficult but this portion of the purging will benefit from the experience that the client already had in making hundreds of decisions about other items. In other words, they will be trained by then. They will realize that throwing things that have no energy or vitality to them any longer is a good thing. It will free the house to be filled with joyful things. Marie stresses to her clients that although the mementoes are being thrown away, the memories and emotions that the person feels about them will remain in their heart and mind.

## **Relationship with Home and Possessions**

Marie has respect for the houses of all her clients. When Marie begins with a new client, she greets their house and kneels down to honor it. She never wears casual clothes when working at a client's house. A person should greet his house every time she returns to it. A house should be appreciated for providing shelter for its owner. Carrying on a dialog with your house benefits the tidying up process. The apex relationship is for a person to be in sync with her house and her possessions. Thought should be given to organizing a house according to what would please it.

Most every possession a person owns is designed to help and support him in some way. Because Marie believes in the energy and vitality of an item, she teaches her clients to hold, touch and connect with each item when they are sorting through their possessions for disposal. If the client feels a flash of joy when holding the item, they should probably keep it. Marie believes that it is vital to live in an environment that is filled with items that provide joy and serenity.

Our pathway to each possession we have is unique to each of us and there was a reason they were sought. Discarded items leave behind an energy of its original purpose. Whatever a person discards will come back into her life in some other form. A person must rid herself of things that no longer provide joy. Its parting places it on a new journey. The person is the benefactor of a detox effect when unnecessary items are removed.

# Styles

## Structure

The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up is structured like a how-to manual in that author Marie Kondo describes the KonMari Method of organization and tidying up in step-by-step detail. She provides some personal background explaining how she became interested in neatness and cleaning as a young school girl. She was able to take the interest and eventually form her own neatness consultancy. She has made helping other people remove clutter from their homes and literally transform their lives.

There are five main sections: 1) Why can't I keep my house in order? 2) Finish discarding first. 3) Tidying by category works like magic; 4) Storing your things to make your life shine. 5) The magic of tidying dramatically transforms your life.

In the first section she describes the clutter that people live with and how it is a barrier to living a full and satisfying life. The second section covers sorting and discarding of unwanted objects. She is an understanding woman and is fully aware that it is difficult for people to part with things. She walks them through and gently urges them to make good decisions but she never decides for them. Section three focuses on organization and the categorization of items to make plans for storage easier. Storage is the focus of the fourth section with emphasis on always returning items to storage so that clutter doesn't return. In the last section, Marie describes how lives transform magically after a house has been tidied up by the KonMari Method.

## Perspective

Marie Kondo is a tidying consultant. She has innovated a process that she called KonMari. She has many clients who have hired her to help them clean up clutter in their homes, purge their possessions and store their remaining items in a proficient manner. Marie Kondo is the narrator of The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up. The narrative is from her point of view because she has lived a life devoted to having a tidy and uncluttered environment which eventually evolved into a very successful career.

The topic of the book is both very personal to Marie Kondo as well as important to her professionally. She feels and senses the importance of having a clutter-free house not just for organizational purposes but on a higher level a better lifestyle. Kondo believes that tidying up one's house will allow opportunities to transform one's life in many other ways. To Kondo, having an overabundance of personal and household items, general disorganization and a dysfunctional storage system clutters one's mind as much as it clutters one's environment.

Marie believes in being in touch with one's possession. She recommends that her clients hold and touch each item they own in the purging process. If they feel joy when holding an object they should probably keep it. If not, they should throw or give it away.

There are other household consultants that help with organization but Marie Kondo is unique in this field. She connects a tidy house with the magic it takes for a joyful life and for a life transformed to a higher level.

## Tone

Marie Kondo writes about her KonMari Method of organization and tidiness with respect and in great detail. Neatness and organization has been Marie's favorite subject since she was a little girl in elementary school. She had a natural affinity for organizing her room and keeping it neat and felt compelled to help other family members and friends with their storage and organizational issues. Many marvel at her good fortune in discovering what career she wanted to pursue at such a young age but she really didn't see her fondness for neatness and organization as a career opportunity – for her it was just something she thoroughly enjoyed.

Marie's respect for her profession and her clients is obvious throughout her book. She demonstrates the honor and gratitude she feels when a new client trusts her to help with a clutter and organization problem by greeting the house when she first enters. After entering the house for the first time she kneels down to the house to demonstrate the respect she feels for the house. She advises her clients to greet their house every day when they come home because it is place that provides them with comfort and safe haven.

Marie's deliberate and detailed descriptions of her methodology demonstrates the patience and dedication she has for her clients and for her profession. She has no complaints about her clients or their particular organizational problems and obviously offers them her full support and understanding.

## Quotes

If you use the right method and concentrate your efforts on eliminating clutter thoroughly and completely within a short span of time, you'll see instant results that will empower you to keep your space in order ever after."

-- Marie Kondo (chapter 3 paragraph 6)

**Importance:** Marie Kondo contends that by tidying up a room all at once, the impact will inspire the individual to always keep the room in order.

Putting things away creates the illusion that the clutter problem has been solved."

-- Marie Kondo (chapter 6 paragraph 3)

**Importance:** The author dispels the storage myth: storing clutter away still leaves you with clutter.

Think in concrete terms so that you can vividly picture what it would be like to live in a clutter-free space."

-- Marie Kondo (chapter 11 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** Marie Kondo stresses that tidying up is part of the lifestyle that each person wants to have. Before beginning the first step of tidying up which is discarding, she recommends that time be set aside to think about a desired lifestyle.

Keep only those things that speak to your heart. Then take the plunge and discard the rest."

-- Marie Kondo (chapter 13 paragraph 17)

**Importance:** Marie Kondo stresses that before discarding anything that it should be held in your hand and focused upon to see if the item brings you joy. If that doesn't happen, the item should be tossed away.

When you come across something that you cannot part with, think carefully about its true purpose in your life. You'll be surprised at how many of the things you possess have already fulfilled their role."

-- Marie Kondo (chapter 19 paragraph 6)

**Importance:** Marie Kondo stresses that some items that come into our lives are not intended to remain forever. Once an item serves its purpose it should be discarded.

It's paradoxical, but I believe that precisely because we hang on to such materials, we fail to put what we learn into practice."

-- Marie Kondo (chapter 32 paragraph 5)

**Importance:** Author Marie Kondo is referring to hand-outs at a seminar or lecture.





Hanging on to stacks of such materials is a waste of space because although there are good intentions the material will probably never be revisited.

No matter how wonderful things used to be, we cannot live in the past. The joy and excitement we feel here and now are more important.”

-- Marie Kondo (chapter 2 paragraph 37)

**Importance:** Maria Kondo uses this argument to try to convince people to dispose of mementos from long ago whose purpose had been served long before. The emotions and memories connected with the time will remain in the person's thoughts and never be disposed of.

Clutter is caused by a failure to return things to where they belong. Therefore, storage should reduce the effort needed to put things away, not the effort needed to get them out.”

-- Marie Kondo (chapter 46 paragraph 3)

**Importance:** Marie Kondo's advice to avoid clutter is to immediately return things to their designated storage place after using them. She stresses this because clutter is the main enemy of an untidy house.

At their core, the things we really like do not change over time. Putting your house in order is a great way to discover what they are.”

-- Marie Kondo (chapter 58 paragraph 4)

**Importance:** By discarding of unwanted clutter, a person can feel free to think and get in touch with who they are and what they want to be.

Attachment to the past and fears concerning the future not only governs the way you select the things you own but also represent the criteria by which you make choices in every aspect of your life, including your relationships with people and your job.”

-- Marie Kondo (chapter 61 paragraph 2)

**Importance:** When a person is reluctant to dispose of something that has no purpose in her current life it indicates that there is an emotional element attached to the item. Once that connection is addressed, it is easier to dispose of the item.

It's a very strange phenomenon, but when we reduce what we own and essentially 'detox our house, it has a detox effect on our bodies as well.”

-- Marie Kondo (chapter 65 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** Marie Kondo recommends getting rid of unnecessary items because it has a cleansing effect not only on the house but on the individual as well.

As for you, pour your time and passion into what brings you the most joy, your mission in life.”

-- Marie Kondo (chapter 69 paragraph 4)

**Importance:** After tidying up, a person is free to pursue her desired lifestyle and to enjoy the joy that orderliness brings.

# Topics for Discussion

## 1

What in Marie Kondo's childhood indicated that she would have a career in consulting clients on organization and tidying? What appealed to Marie about tidying?

## 2

What are the three categories of character types that Marie's clients fell into? What is the first step in tidying up despite character type?

## 3

What is the "rebound" effect that Marie Kondo refers to? What occurs when a person who is discarding personal items reaches the "click point?"

## 4

What is feng shui? How does it compare to the KonMari process?

## 5

What is komono? What is the basic order for sorting komono?

## 6

As a young girl at home, Marie would hand down clothes to her younger sister when she couldn't decide whether to keep it or throw it away. Was Marie doing this out of the goodness of her heart or did she have an ulterior motive? What resulted from this practice?

## 7

Why does Marie have her clients hold and touch items during the purging phase of tidying up? What convinces the person to keep or throw away an item?



## 8

How did Marie show respect to the house of a new client? Why did she think paying respect to the house was important?

## 9

What shouldn't samples of shampoo and make-up be kept? Why does Marie recommend displaying "guilty pleasures" like poster of pop idols?

## 10

Why do people experience physical reactions to the disposal of some of their possessions? How and why do houses transform after a KonMari method process is completed?