

Key Concepts

The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up

The author's idea is to perform this "tidying" exercise over a six month period or so.

Family and their possessions should be largely ignored.

There are two main steps to tidying: Discard extraneous objects and put everything back in a defined space.

Discarding is a very intuitive process that must be honed and refined. When choosing what to discard, a person must consider whether an object sparks joy.

Storage solutions should not be overly complicated, or they lead to more clutter. As long as possessions have been sorted and everything has its own place, complex storage systems are unnecessary.

Belongings should be treasured, thanked and treated with care. Belongings want to be used, and if they are not wanted or used, they want to be let go.

Problems with discarding come down to attachment to the past or anxiety about the future.

Tidying, when done right, is done by category rather than location. Instead of room by room, start with clothes, then books, papers, miscellany, and finally sentimental items.

Tidying, when done right, will initiate the start of a brand new life. It is a celebration, a special send-off for those things that will be departing from the house, in order to restore balance.

The skills earned through tidying such as discrimination, decision-making, and letting go are applicable to many other areas in life. This is the magic of tidying.

The author suggests that by choosing to keep only those things that spark joy in your space you will be happier and more inclined to seek joy in other areas of your life.