

STRAIGHTENING UP OUR HOMES & MINDS

ADAPTED FROM THE WORKS OF
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October 2019



From "Mastering the Mess" to "Hoarders," there are dozens of television shows about cleaning and organizing. The most popular organizing guru of recent years is Marie Kondo, whose book, *The Life-Changing Art of Tidying Up*, has been an international bestseller and has inspired TV shows. With the popularity of such shows and books, and the messes in people's houses, it highlights that most of us have a serious problem with having too much stuff.

Marie Kondo's method for organizing messy homes is pretty simple. She wants us to ask ourselves about each item in our home, "Does this spark joy?" If it does, keep it; if it doesn't, discard it. While this sensible advice has been popular in the last few years, it is by no means new. Susan wrote about this idea in *End the Struggle and Dance With Life*. Her rule for cleaning out her own closets was to, "Use and enjoy that which enriches your life; let go of that which is just excess baggage."

Susan's and Marie Kondo's advice provides wonderful insight, but what causes us to accumulate so many things that we do not need?

In *End the Struggle and Dance With Life*, Susan wrote, "We live in a society that encourages accumulation. We have been taught that more is definitely better! As a result, we always seem to hang on to more than we actually need."

Why do we always want more, more, more? Why does it feel like we never have enough even when our shelves and cupboards are overflowing? Susan called this "Poverty Mentality" or "Poverty Consciousness." When we feel at our core that we aren't enough we buy, buy, buy.

Susan said that accumulating and holding onto stuff only succeeds in bogging us down. In order to get more, we work more and stress more. We struggle to relax. The upkeep of our lives leaves us little time for play and pleasure. Marie Kondo echoed this idea when she wrote, "We amass material things for the same reason that we eat - to satisfy a craving. Buying on impulse and eating and drinking to excess are attempts to alleviate stress."

Our lives can be so much richer if we let go of the stuff that weighs us down. We should cultivate lives that are filled with riches that take us to a higher place - relaxing with friends and family, reading books, exploring hobbies that enrich our lives, taking the time to contribute to the world, and so on.

It is not about filling our lives with 'stuff,' but filling our lives with those experiences that bring us joy.

So how do we do it? Well, we start with an affirmation, of course! "If you suspect that you, too, hang on to things because of a poverty consciousness," wrote Susan, "then I suggest you do as I did. Keep repeating to yourself the following words as you begin letting go of the clutter in your life."

I have enough. I am letting go.

Once this affirmation has taken hold of your thinking, then began the task of cleaning, organizing, and discarding. Keep repeating to yourself, "I have enough, I am letting go," while you are looking at each item stuffed into a closet, crammed onto a shelf, or shoved into a cupboard. Susan recommends starting with a closet. How many clothes, shoes, hats, scarfs, coats, and jackets do you have that you never wear or haven't even thought about in years? Susan advised to make a game out of it and discard as many "unnecessary weights" as you can find. You'll be surprised by how much you have to give away!

When you begin to release the unnecessary items in your life, you will begin to feel as if you have enough.

Susan wrote, "In the beginning, it is difficult letting go; but as you get into the swing of it, you will feel lighter and fresher and better able to see what you really need. This is what I imagine 'spring cleaning' is truly about.... It's amazing how far a good cleaning of your closets will take you, isn't it? I'll bet you feel lighter just thinking about it!"

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Quotes & affirmations are some of Susan's most powerful tools, increasing confidence and positive inner talk, and setting you on a path to self-love and embracing uncertainty!