



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

Francine Jay

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Having less stuff is the key to happiness. Do you ever feel overwhelmed, instead of overjoyed, by all your possessions? Do you secretly wish a gale force wind would blow the clutter from your home? If so, it's time to simplify your life! The Joy of Less is a fun, lighthearted guide to minimalist living. Part One provides an inspirational pep talk on the joys and rewards of paring down. Part Two presents the STREAMLINE method: ten easy steps to rid your house of clutter. Part Three goes room by room, outlining specific ways to tackle each one. Part Four helps you trim your to-do list and free up your time, and explains how saving space in your closets can save the planet. Ready to sweep away the clutter? Just open this book, and you'll be on your way to a simpler, more streamlined, and more serene life.

The Joy of Less: A Minimalist Guide to Declutter, Organize, and Simplify Details

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Darla says

just from the opening, I'm getting a whole lot of inspiration to start moving out "stuff"...starting with (gasp, dare I say it) passels of books. More & more is available in electronic form. Why do I hold on to so many? Answers will vary.

~ OK, I'm about half way through & I rather feel like I'm stuck in the corner of a party listening to a chatter box rattle off everything she knows about minimizing without taking a breath! Obviously, minimizing word usage is not on her list of to-dos. Perhaps as Mrs. Jay has been tossing books, she's been saving up words.

~ Great ideas are scattered like wildflowers amongst an overabundance of knee-high weeds. I shall persevere (and skim, skim, skim...; at least, Jay inspired me to unload an entire shopping basket full of books (largely modern fiction, and including my 3 hardback Twilight books)at half-Price Books today!

~ I'm all done and nothing in my assessment has changed. Bits of wisdom are to be found, but the preponderance of verbiage had me skimming more than reading. Jay's chapters, which target every room in the house, began to read like a shampoo bottle label: Later, rinse, repeat (again, and again, and again).

Read it, I would say, despite her inability to stop chattering. The ideas, once you get to them, are truly good; the thoughts on minimizing, despite the Earth-love-eco-babble I have come to sigh & eye-roll at these days, are worth considering, if only from a Stewardship model. But, when you're done with Mrs. Jay, move on to Joshua Becker. Her ebooks are cheaper; his are simpler, more streamlined, and work the extra couple of bucks.

Anna says

i needed a bit of a motivation to start cleaning again so in a way this book served its purpose but other than that... why was it so obviously directed at straight women in relationships? why was it so filled with gender stereotypes? why was it written as if the readers needed every little thing explained? honestly, we've all cleaned before, we're not that ignorant.

Suzanne says

Full disclosure: I'm not an aspiring minimalist. I read this to get inspired to reorganize some areas of our home.

The basic strategies for reducing the amount of stuff you have are solid, but overall, I found the philosophy too aggressive and the author's tone annoying and overly chirpy. (So many exclamation points!) It's very self-helpy, too. Minimalism = happiness. Less stuff = more joy. I know it feels great to rid yourself of clutter,

but something about her presentation felt shallow to me, like the minimalist title you bestow upon yourself is the emphasis. Maintaining minimalism is your happiness over all else.

For example, she mentions that if you have a friend that gives you a lot of handmade items as gifts, you should *"express your gratitude, but don't overdo the enthusiasm, or you'll likely end up with more "art" in the future!"* Yes, putting your minimalist philosophy over friendship. That sounds like a sure way to happiness.

I don't know. I could pick nits all day, but this just wasn't for me, I suspect.

Cayenne says

This was a great reminder of a lot of things I already knew, but it also helped me gain a new philosophy about owning things. It renewed my motivation to organize and reduce, but it also helped me take it to a new level, such as helping me feel less guilty about getting rid of things I might "need someday" or increasing the value of empty space. She mentioned several times the freedom one felt in college when possessions were few and focus was more on doing rather than on owning. Yet, she encourages us to value and enjoy our (limited) treasures by putting them on display; to take joy in our hobbies; to make more space for our friends and family both in our lives and in our homes--you can't play a board game on a cluttered table. I am resolved to think much more carefully about purchasing new things and to buy in smaller amounts; to travel with less luggage; to be more generous; to tread more lightly in life. I highly recommend this book, especially in our consumer-oriented world.

Skaist? says

Puiki knyga. Manau, kiekvienas tur?t? j? perskaityti. Atradau ši? knyg? d?l to, kad prad?jau dom?tis minimalizmu nuo tada, kai atsitiktinai paži?r?jau dokumentin? film? šia tema, po to prad?jau klausyti internetin? radijo laid?. Aš neb??iau aš, jei neieško?iau prieinamos knygos apie tai, kuo susidomiu. O prad?jus ieškoti literat?ros lietuvi? kalba aptikau ir ši? knyg?. Iš ties? ieškojau kitos, bet ši? pavyko gauti grei?iau iš bibliotekos. Ir džiaugiuosi, kad radau ir perskai?iau. Autor? teisingai ?vardina knygos pradžioje, kad dažnai žmon?s nutraukia skaitym? ir imasi tvarkytis. Ir man taip buvo. Paskaitai ir ži?ri, kad jau nebe skaitai, o planuoja kaip k? sutvarkyti. Aišku, iki tokio minimalizmo, kad ir kaip žav??iausi žmon?mis, kurie sugeba pasilikti tik tikrai naudingus ar tikrai jiems gražius daiktus, man dar toli toli toli. Bet mintys, id?jos ir patarimai rasti šioje knygoje paskatino pažvelgti kiek kitaip ? turimus ir norimus ?sigyti daiktus. O tai jau pradžia kelion?s iš toki? nam?, kuriuose begal?s nenaudojam? daikt?, apie kuri? tvarkym? baisu net pagalvoti, o atrinkti ir išmesti atrodo kankinantis, varginantis ir begalinis darbas, ? tokius, kuriuose lengva, jauku ir kuriuose kiekvienas daiktas (ar bent didžioji dalis daikt?) yra naudingi ar graž?s. O kai tai sako žmogus, at?j?s iš kaupik? gimin?s ir paveld?j?s kaupik? bruožus (prisipaž?stu, tai aš), tai jau š? t? reiškia apie knygos svarb? ir poveik?.

Pequete says

Apesar de já ter lido uma série de livros sobre minimalismo e temas a ele normalmente associados (como organização), gostei muito de ler este Menos é Mais. Peguei nele na altura certa, pois nos últimos anos, os

meus ânimos minimalistas têm andado um pouco adormecidos, e isso tem-se reflectido de forma negativa a vários níveis.

Gostei da forma como o livro está organizado, com uma introdução ao tema, seguida de dicas práticas aplicáveis aos vários espaços da casa, depois lidando com os diferentes tipos de objectos, os restantes membros da família, e, por fim, fazendo um enquadramento mais geral do minimalismo como movimento contra-corrente do consumismo generalizado a que se assiste hoje e das implicações mais vastas que pode ter.

Gostei particularmente de algumas passagens, como aquela que usa as viagens para ilustrar a liberdade que se consegue ao transportar menos bagagem:

“Pense em como seria chato carregar duas ou três malas pesadíssimas durante as férias. Faz séculos que você está ansioso para essa viagem e, quando desembarca do avião, mal pode esperar para explorar as paisagens. Não tão rápido — antes você precisa esperar (e esperar e esperar) que as malas apareçam na esteira de bagagem. Depois, precisa arrastá-las pelo aeroporto. É provável que você siga direto para o ponto de táxi, porque manobrá-las no metrô seria quase impossível. E nem pense em tentar pegar lugar no city tour que está começando — você tem de ir primeiro ao hotel e se livrar desse fardo gigantesco. Quando você finalmente chega lá, desmaia de cansaço.

O minimalismo, por outro lado, o deixa ágil. Imagine viajar apenas com uma mochila leve (...) Você chega ao destino, desce do avião e passa pela maré de gente esperando pela bagagem. Depois entra no metrô, pega um ônibus ou anda em direção ao hotel. No caminho, experimenta todas as visões, sons e aromas de uma cidade estrangeira, com o tempo e a energia para saborear tudo. Você tem a liberdade e a flexibilidade de um pássaro para se movimentar por aí — pode levar a mochila a museus e a pontos turísticos e guardá-la num armário quando for preciso. Diferente do primeiro cenário, você começa com tudo e passa a tarde vendo as paisagens em vez de arrastar suas coisas de um lado para o outro. Chega ao hotel energizado por sua experiência e pronto para outra.

Quando não estamos mais acorrentados às nossas coisas, podemos saborear a vida, nos relacionar com outras pessoas e ser participativos em nossa comunidade. Ficamos abertos a experiências e mais capazes de reconhecer e aproveitar as oportunidades. Quanto menos bagagem carregamos (tanto física como mentalmente), mais podemos viver!”

E entre muitas outras passagens interessantes está também esta:

“Quando nos identificamos com marcas e nos expressamos através das coisas materiais, perdemos a noção de quem somos. Usamos bens de consumo para projetar determinada imagem de nós mesmos, comprando basicamente uma máscara para exibir para o mundo. Além disso, estamos tão ocupados cuidando das nossas coisas — correndo de um lado para o outro, comprando isso e aquilo — que encontramos pouco tempo para parar e explorar o que realmente nos anima.

Quando viramos minimalistas, nos despimos de todo o excesso para revelar nosso verdadeiro eu. Temos tempo para contemplar quem somos, o que achamos importante e o que nos faz realmente felizes. Saímos do casulo e abrimos as asas como poetas, filósofos, artistas, ativistas, mães, pais, companheiros, amigos. O mais importante é que nos redefinimos pelo que fazemos, pelo modo como pensamos e por quem amamos, e não pelo que compramos.”

Claro que agora que as lojas põem à nossa disposição frutas da América ou África do Sul durante todo o ano, roupas da Índia e ferramentas da China ao preço da chuva, não é fácil resistir e optar por produtos locais, explicar aos miúdos porque é que não compramos aqueles morangos tão apetitosos que apareceram no supermercado em Dezembro, ou comprar as cadeiras ao artesão local pelo dobro do preço das do Ikea... Mas concordo com a autora, quando ela diz que vale a pena tentar.

Claudia says

Trouxe pouca informação nova. Mas valeu a pena!

Lorna says

After reading and enjoying Marie Kondo's 'The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up' and Tolstoy's writings on living simply and consciously, I was inspired to get rid of most of my possessions and only keep things I truly need. This book has inspired me to continue on a minimalist path and I have seen an incredible change in my life - particularly in having so much more time to spend seeing family, working on my painting and getting out in nature.

I was particularly blown away by Francine Jay's final thoughts on how the simple decluttering of one's possessions can free ourselves but also our fellow humans and the Earth's resources.

Sara says

I read this book at the suggestion of a friend whose opinion I value. We are both interested in adopting more of a minimalist life style as part of our general commitment to environmental values. Like him, I seek to live more lightly on the earth these days.

Unfortunately, this book has its ups and downs. It certainly is a guide to decluttering and organizing, I'll give it that. What it isn't is a guide to truly reducing one's footprint and learning how to minimize one's impact through truly environmentally sound principles.

Ms. Jay introduces her scheme for reducing the possessions each of us already has. The rules are pretty basic--I already knew enough to get rid of something when I bring a new one home, for example. I'm the first to admit that stuff has cloned itself in the basement and attic, and every room in my house should be gone through in search of items I no longer want, need or use. And I'll give Ms. Jay credit--she has motivated me to do just that. I'm starting with the "fat" clothes and the books I know I'll never read.

And then she takes a turn into rigidity. OK, what's wrong with having a stack of books on the coffee table that are in the process of being read? What's wrong with leaving the mail on the counter to be sorted through and disposed of after the cats are fed? Ms. Jay is more than a tad obsessive about clutter, and not in a good way. I imagine her house is so picked up and neat that it doesn't even resemble a place where real people live.

I debated about 2 or 3 stars. In the end, I opted for 3, simply because she has motivated me to cancel magazine subscriptions, get rid of old appliances, and clean out drawers where all manner of junk was hiding.

Rose says

Quick review for a somewhat quick read. I'd probably give this read 2.5 stars overall. I read this over the course of a few days in audiobook form, and I'll admit that I didn't care for it despite having some practically useful ideas. I decided to read this for exploring methods of minimalist living and retention, since that seems to be a pervading topic when it comes to productivity and organization. The text itself has useful ideas if you

haven't read very many decluttering/minimalism guides, but the narrative itself is cumbersome in its narration. Simple and key to remember ideas often get lost in explanations that go on much longer than necessary. I found it too superfluous in its communications. As the narrative went on, I honestly didn't like many of the suggestions the book gives to approach a minimalist lifestyle (a.k.a. "Participate in sports that require less stuff." Yes, this was an actual suggestion in this book among other methodologies.) It's interesting that a key idea of this narrative communicated learning to control your stuff, not allowing your stuff to control you and what you want to do, but yet ideas like that give the opposite impression.

I would take this guide with a grain of salt, and it may be better just to use this for what is useful to the person reading it and to supplement other guides on organization and minimalist living. The figuring out what to keep sections were good, but its overarching useful mantras are taken over by redundancy and counter-intuitive suggestions.

Overall score: 2.5/5 stars.

Todd N says

I really wanted to buy this book in physical form, despite the barbaric nature of not reading on a Kindle, because I figured it would be the kind of book that I would loan or give away to someone else. But after several months of trying to find it, even braving the dread Self Help section, I gave up and downloaded it.

This is a very good and practical book for anyone who wants to declutter or streamline their life. And who doesn't? Conveniently, the first letter of each step actually spells out the word STREAMLINE. What could be simpler?

Each step is explained in a plain and unrelentingly cheery way. Then the steps are painstakingly applied to each major room in a house. This gets a bit redundant, but it has the advantage of making it possible to flip to a particular room and get everything you need to do in one section without flipping around.

The part I like best is that you have to remove everything from a room to really declutter. I couldn't agree more. We recently moved everything from our basement to our garage to have some work done and it was amazing to see all the crap we had. We wound up making a bunch of donations and/or trips to the dump.

At times the book gets a little goofy, like when it suggests donating extra paper clips. If you are running across town to donate paper clips you may need to streamline your head a little bit or ask your doctor about OCD medication.

The cheeriness grated at times, but that's just a personal thing with me. I can't read phrases like "Now we're having a blast sorting our highlighters by color!" without feeling physical pain.

Recommended.

Kate says

For being a book about minimalist living, this book seemed to have a lot of redundancy. The concept of simple living just lands a little flat when stripped of the connection to stewardship of God's world and resources. Jay had some good ideas, but most of what she shared was common sense. I also felt that many of her approaches were strictly selfish in nature. For example, she suggests only having enough dinnerware for the number of people living in the home, which leaves no room for valuing hospitality. She also suggests taking a photo of a gift in use to send to the giver in order to make them feel good, and tossing the gift in the donate box right away. I don't appreciate the deceitful approach at all. Why go through the trouble of being sneaky when a simple explanation to friends and family about living a simpler life could suffice? I would not recommend this book.

Carrie says

This book would have been better if I had not done other reading on minimalism and decluttering prior to reading it. It contained a lot of common sense reminders and was very repetitive with the description of the "streamline" approach in every chapter. I found that the farther I got into the book the more I was just skimming it for any new ideas it might have contained. The best part was the beginning of the book and the introduction to the minimalist mindset...After that the rest was something I felt burdened to get through.

Darek says

300-pages long, exhaustingly repetitive book on how to simplify things. Oh, irony.

Val...Shameless.Skanky.B*tchy. says

4 Stars

This was a solid book on Minimalism, a lifestyle I am becoming more and more in line with. The premise of only owning and keeping things that I need, use, or bring me joy seriously appeals to me. I have always hated clutter.

That said, I am not striving to be a strict or pure minimalist by any means. Rather, I see myself as merely what has been dubbed as a *rational* minimalist, meaning my goal is not to be a one pair of shoes owning, figurine-less psychopath with only two glass mason jars and a capsule wardrobe. Nothing against those people - kudos to them - but that's just not my goal.

My goal is to clear the blatantly superfluous and eradicate my needless spending. I mean, homie already "pared down" her book collection to, like, a thousand. Meaning I got rid of 25 books! Sounds minimalist to me. Okay... so not gonna lie. I'm not minimalizing my books. They bring me mad fucking joy.

I did manage to cull the herd in other ways, though. Who knew I had 75 pairs of shoes, 50 pens and an embarrassing amount of purses and makeup. Going through things and minimalizing the unwanted, unused, and unneeded felt SO good.

Anyway, while I did find some of this book to be a bit...preachy - and borderline deceitful in regard to

unwanted gifts - I also really appreciated the overlying message of simplicity, environmental awareness, and the idea of living more mindfully.
