

Marie Kondo – the life-changing magic of tidying

I want you to imagine a lovely oak tree.

Have the picture?

Now imagine that the **leaves** are symbolizing the **symptoms** of your clutter issue, like your cluttered closet, your inability to move freely in your living space, the fact that you have to move piles of magazines off the bed before you can get your rest, or the piles of laundry that has to be moved out of the way before you can use the bath tub or shower.

The **branches** are symbolizing the **emotions**, how you feel when you see or think about the clutter, the frustration, overwhelm, shame, or anger that you can't get the place in order.

The **trunk** represents the **life events** that you have experienced, how you grew up, how your parents and siblings behaved around the theme tidying and cleaning up, how cleaning got to be associated with good or bad memories for you.

And finally the **roots**, which represent the **limiting beliefs** about yourself and your abilities. What “truths” are you holding about yourself and your ability to live a clutter free, joyful, spacious life? Are you “just a messy person who can't keep it tidy?” Are you not good enough to enjoy a clean home? Are you not lovable or important enough to deserve the ease and beauty of a de-cluttered house?

Let's investigate!

Get a journal or a piece of paper and a pen...

The leaves symbolize the symptoms or side effects of your cluttered environment.

What is your reality right now around clutter and untidiness?

Example: I can't see my office desk for all the paper scattered over it; My kitchen cupboards are a health hazard, when I open a door something falls out!; I get depressed every time I have to open my closet door; I fall over shoes and jackets in the hallway....

In the space below, or in your journal, describe with your own words how your current situation looks like:

The branches symbolize your emotions around your clutter situation and how you feel about your home environment right now.

Example: Do you feel frustrated, annoyed, depressed, embarrassment, ashamed, overwhelmed, exhausted, lost...?

How do you feel when you think about having to tidy?

How do you feel when you are actually tidying up?

How do you feel when you throw or give things away?

How do you feel about your ability to tidy and keep it that way?

How do you feel about other people that are able to keep their homes tidy?

How do you feel about your home, the feeling you get when you step inside your front door? Do you feel safe, relaxed, "at home", annoyed, angry, depleted...?

What areas of your home are currently causing you the most stress? Specific rooms, areas, cupboards, drawers...

How have you acted when feeling those feelings?

Example: Have you reached for food, your phone, your computer, your TV just to escape the chaos around you?

Have you just shoved all the stuff in a drawer and forced it shut?

Have you, like me, screamed and kicked or thrown things around out of frustration? (Seriously, I do sometimes!)

The trunk symbolizes the important events that may have affected your way of taking care of your home and the things in it.

Think about all of your experiences, from when you were a kid until today around the topic tidying, de-cluttering, cleaning, getting rid of things.

How did your parents act around the topic tidying and de-cluttering?

What do you remember from your social background, school, teachers, friends around the topic tidying and de-cluttering?

What experiences do you have when it comes to tidying and cleaning up, early in your childhood or later on in life?

Did you feel good tidying your room when you were a kid, or did you get punished in any way if/when you didn't clean your room or do your chores?

Was tidying your room or helping out in the house something that bored you to tears or something you liked doing?

Were you forced to throw or give something away that had emotional or sentimental value to you?

How did you experience the atmosphere in your home when tidying and cleaning was happening? Was it fun or a cause of a lot of drama, threatening and screaming?

When did your clutter issues begin? Was it during a stressful time in your life? Was it when you moved away from home? Was it when you started a family? Is it a way of rebelling against your parents or partner?

The roots symbolize the most fundamental factors that are shaping your ability to live a tidy and clutter free life

What are your beliefs you have about your ability to live a clutter free life?

Example: I'm just a messy person.; I just don't have the ability to keep it tidy.; Having to clean and tidy up makes me feel deprived of my freedom to do what I like.

What are the stories you tell yourself as to why you can't clear the clutter?

Finish these two sentences:

I can't de-clutter because.....

I want to live in a neat and tidy home, but....

How do you feel about living clutter free? Are you good at tidying? Is it easy for you to tidy?

Is it safe for you to live in a clutter free home?

What role is your clutter playing in your life? How is it keeping you busy from thinking about your situation or your future? Is the clutter keeping you busy and "helping" you from facing a deeper emotional issue?

If all the time you spend clearing, cleaning and moving your stuff around was available for other activities, what would those be?

If you didn't have to worry about your clutter, what would you change, let go of or do with your life instead?