

**AUGUST 2015**

# TIDYING UP



**“Is something missing?”** My colleague remarked as she noticed my newly tidied bookshelf. Having just turned my tidying attention to my reference library, I was particularly pleased by her observation. I was only 25 pages into Marie Kondo’s best-selling book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*, when I was overwhelmed by the need to test her theories. Since Kondo requires tidying by category, and books were in my immediate vicinity; this is where I started. And the results were instantaneous. I felt lighter and lifted. Imagine the possibilities if I carried this out throughout my office and home?

My living space is tidy. I wish I could say the same for my twin sons’ habitats. Their car is filled with the world’s largest collection of drinking straw wrappers, loose change and empty water bottles. Their unmade beds are surrounded by moats of clothes—both clean and dirty, with towels, shoes, and their other worldly possessions sprawled about. When I have an opportunity, I toss out the trash, sort through the clothes and keep any meaningful money found in the process (just kidding, though it is tempting). On the odd occasion when I do get annoyed, thanks to Ms. Kondo, I now know that this is a sign that I am actually neglecting something in my own space. Going forward, I will turn my attention to the yard, the garage or some other common area.

Our offices were recently expanded and renovated to accommodate our growing firm. During that process, special attention was given to the kitchens and breakrooms to accommodate brown-bag lunching, monthly community breakfasts and spontaneous celebrations. On a fairly regular basis, I can be seen in one of them tidying up, tossing packets of ketchup and soy sauce, unpacking Styrofoam cups and paper towels, and sorting through our world-class collection of Tupperware containers. This process is natural to me. It requires very little effort on my part and the wellness benefits are enormous. Whether our colleagues realize it or not, they use the breakrooms because they are inviting. No dining *al desko* here. People go back to their work with pep in their step and without strengthening the strain of penicillin growing in their keyboards.



**The (clutter-free) BKS Kitchen**



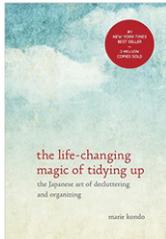
Going forward I will be making some adjustments to my tidying process. I used to attack by location and discard as I went. But there are always those items that give you pause—those that you might use “someday,” gifts, bargains or priceless memorabilia. Ms. Kondo suggests that you start with the category of colder items regardless of location—those with little or no emotional attachment. This gets you warmed up for the tougher culling. She also advises that you touch every single item to see if it sparks a joyful emotional response. If it does not bring you joy or if it does not have a specific use – out it goes -- until you feel the “click” of having tidied just enough for you.

### So what magic does Kondo promise from tidying up?

- Finding out what you love.
- Learning that letting go is even more important than adding.
- Increasing your ability to make decisions.
- Discovering how you want to live your life.
- Restoring balance to you, your possessions, your office and your home.

## BOOK REVIEW

### The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing, by Marie Kondo



Mountains of science support the wellness benefits of de-cluttering. It brings us closer to our purpose, and enhances the other modifiable realms of wellbeing including financial, physical, social, and community. The KonMari method takes it to the next level. The approach is clear and specific. The results are immediate and palpable. After you finish the book, if it does not spark a joyful emotional response, pass it on.

#### The approach

1. Keep only what brings you joy.
2. Discard the rest.
3. Decide where you will store the possessions you love.
4. Tidy by category, in order and *ikki ni* (all in one go) to prevent the rebound of refilling all of those newly tidied spaces.

Tidying starts with clothes, followed by books, paper, *komono* (miscellany), and lastly items with sentimental value. I think Goodwill is going to have a good month!

## RESOURCES



**PATRICIA M. FULLER, PhD,**  
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Patricia M. Fuller has dedicated the last 17 years to designing and delivering wellness programs as a project manager and contractor for PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP. Her training events earn consistently excellent ratings for her holistic approach and her real world application.

Prior to concentrating in wellness, Pat taught accounting and auditing as an adjunct professor at the University of Tampa. She earned her CPA designation in 1992 as a senior associate for Coopers & Lybrand. She has a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Utah.

Pat has a PhD in holistic nutrition. In 2010, she was board certified by the Holistic Nutrition Credentialing Board. Her areas of research include stress management and eating habits. She is a Certified Wellcoach and a member of the Institute of Coaching. She is an annual attendee to The Harvard Medical School Conference, Coaching In Leadership & Healthcare.

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