

Clutter is a stressor. You cannot get away from that. Clutter offends your sense of order, consumes greater effort and of course, results in time wastage. Oh yes, clutter dents your image. You will agree, clutter must go. Well, “Konmari” by Marie Kondo helps. Immensely. Intensely.

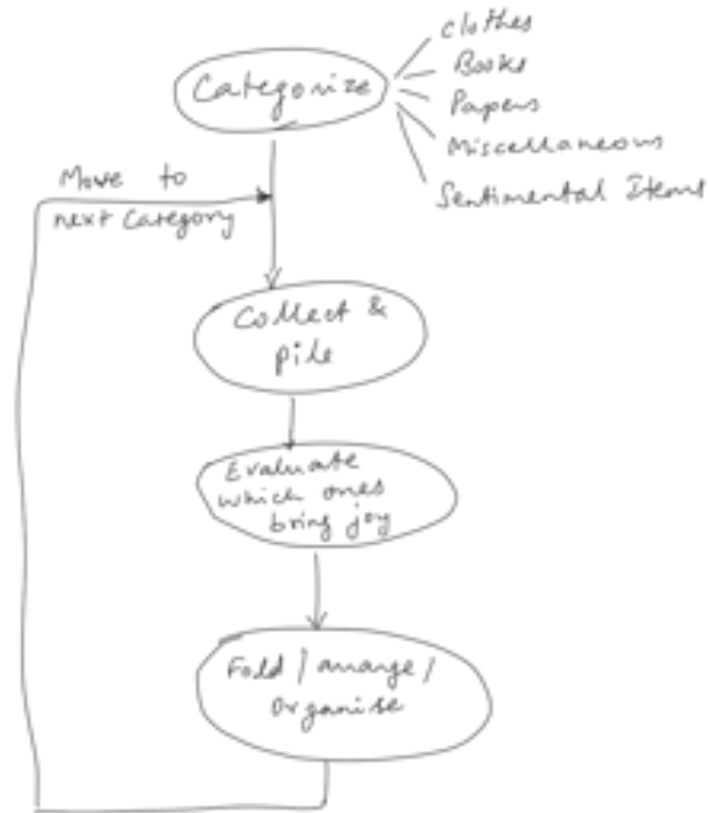
Konmari is a decluttering method. At the most fundamental level, it involves “choosing the things to keep” as against the usual decluttering methods of choosing what to throw. With KonMari, you keep only the things that “spark joy,” and let go of all the other things. By adopting this method, you delve into your minds, bring out memories, and consciously get rid of things that no longer spark joy. According to Marie Kondo, the inventor of the KonMari method, the entire exercise, when done conscientiously, has the effect of actually cleaning up/clarifying your thoughts and making huge, positive changes in your life.

The fascinating KonMari calls for the following steps:

1. Categorize your things and deal with them in this order: Clothes, Books, Papers, Miscellaneous, and Sentimental Items—absolutely in that order.
2. Collect and put all the things under each category in one place.
3. Pick each object and consider if it “sparks joy.” If so, keep it in a “Retain” pile; else, send it to the “Discard”

pile.

4. Organize the items that give you joy into spaces you have designated.
5. Repeat steps 2 to 4 for each category.



Marie Kondo is a thirty-plus Japanese woman. The 'KonMari' moniker combines parts of her last and first names. She has been decluttering and organizing for as long as she can remember; her books are best sellers; she has been named one of Time's Top 100 most influential people of 2015. Well, with her credentials established and out of the way, let us get back to how her tidying method works.

Marie calls the “life-changing” KonMari method as a “one-time festive event” of decluttering and organizing. Once you have organized your stuff with this method, you are Never, Ever going to do this again. Except of course, replacing things in their places and quickly sorting through your things once or twice a year. Before you yell: “But, replacing is just what we don’t do,” let me tell you this: KonMari arrangement is so easy to maintain that keeping things in place becomes second nature even to the most confirmed mess-maker. Marie Kondo says one can take even six months to declutter the KonMari way; the key is moving across categories of things one after the other and completing the exercise in one go.

In KonMari, handling your possessions in the order Clothes, Books, Papers etc. is essential, because while clothes are by far the easiest to give away or discard, sentimental items are the toughest to let go of. Once you train your mind by sorting through your clothes, you are better equipped to cope with your books. This mental make-up improves and by the time you reach Sentimental Items, you are in a much better frame of mind to make sensible decisions about what "gives joy" and what does not.

The next thing Marie Kondo insists on is about collecting every single item in a given category and putting them in one place, before proceeding further. For instance, if you are dealing with Clothes on a particular day, you collect your clothes from your closets/ shelves, bathrooms,

clothes stand, the laundry, the washing machine and so on. Now, put them all on the floor in a pile. (**Refer picture**).



In case, you have a humungous collection and you simply cannot handle them in one shot, you could sub-categorize the category. For example, you could do Sarees on one day, Salwar-Kameezes on another, Winter Clothes on yet another and so on. Why is this step necessary? Why can't you just look at items from where they lie and decide whether you want to keep them or not? Well, every object has "life" and can communicate. But, when it has been left uncared for/unused for long, it just goes to "sleep." Bringing them out in the open is like nudging them back to active life. Marie believes that only when objects are "alive" can they tell you exactly whether they bring you joy

or not. Moving on from the collecting and piling, the subsequent step is to evaluate each item.

Deciding what to keep is a crucial step in KonMari. Picking every item, holding it, allowing the emotions it triggers to surface—you need to do all these, before deciding if it “sparks joy.” It is no good saying, “Yes, it gives me joy” without even thinking about it. Sometimes (for many people, it is most times), you wear clothes for every other reason but for joy—because they are functional/ you paid a tidy packet for it/ it is a gift from your mom/friend or because you thought it would look good on you when you saw it in the showroom. It is important to eliminate such items from your life—because at some level, they make you uncomfortable and force you to use them—or worse, merely store them. And, as you can realize, all these end up as clutter. And when clutter begins to gather, it is like a cobweb in the mind, disrupting clarity and ease. Hmm, you never did realize you might have so many clothes that were clogging up your wardrobe. But, merely throwing them away would “hurt their feelings” and leave you with a feeling of guilt. So, it is essential to thank every piece of cloth for whatever function it did: kept you warm, made you look good, made you realize that style was not for you, made you understand you like a color or material etc. And once you have thanked your clothes (or other objects, as the case may be), you tell them “Please go and give joy elsewhere.” And wow, now you are left only with stuff that make you happy. Isn't it time to appreciate them by putting them away in their special places?

Organizing the items you have chosen to keep involves two steps: a) Folding/ arranging appropriately b) Stacking. For example, if you are setting up your clothes, you will need to fold and stack them in a 'special way'. Special way implies folding your garment or any piece of cloth in a manner that allows vertical stacking.

Notes:

1. You could use sturdy cardboard boxes too, to segregate and store. Fill the boxes and shove them into your shelves.
2. You need not worry about ruining ironed clothes—loose folding will not damage the creases.
3. For Indian type of clothes such as sarees, kurtas, salwars, and so on, the folding has to be modified—the fundamental idea is to be able to stack them comfortably for storage and retrieval. **(Refer pictures).**

Trousers / T-shirts arranged
Kon Mai style.



Saree in t-shirts
arranged in
a cardboard
box saved from
online shopping



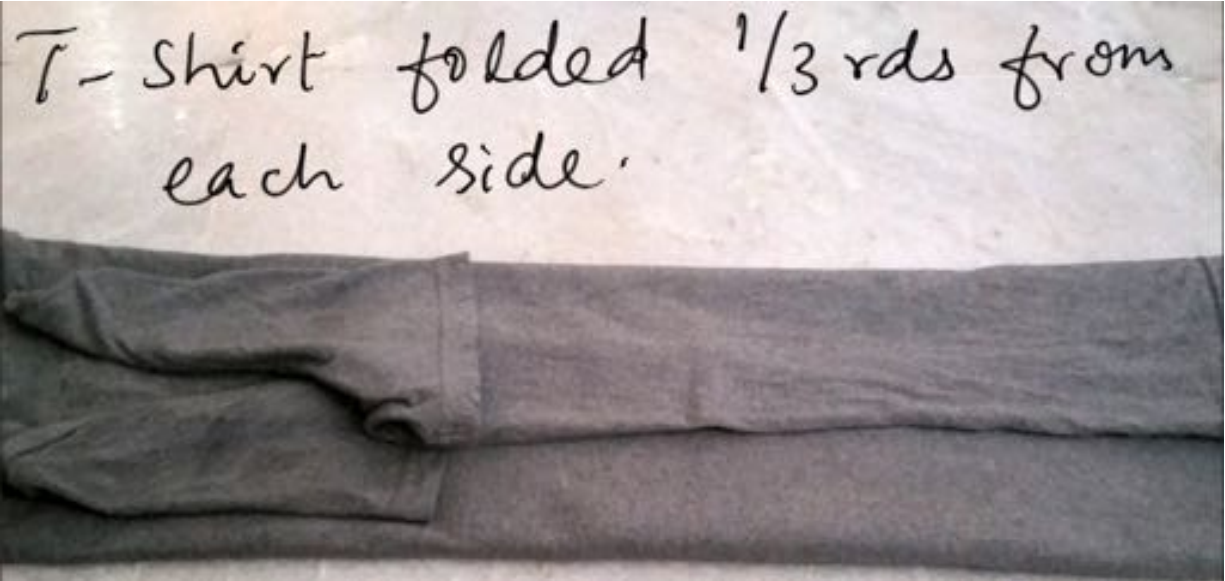
With KonMari, you can keep all your stuff visible to you all at once. The folding and stacking is done vertically. For example, if you have t-shirts, you fold and store them like books. (Refer pictures one to six). You spread the t-shirt on its front.



Fold one side over one-third of the way. Tuck in the sleeve.



Fold the other side over one-third of the way. Tuck in the other sleeve.



Now the t-shirt is symmetrical. Then fold the t-shirt in half.



Then, once again, fold in one-thirds.



Now, try placing the t-shirt vertically on a flat surface. If it stands balanced, it is ready for stacking.



Else, try different folding styles (like more folds or lesser

folds) till you get the garment to stand vertically. Now, arrange all your t-shirts in your shelf like books. Voilà! You can now see them all in one shot. KonMari also recommends stacking similar colours, similar materials etc. together. For instance, when arranging books, storage containers and so on, KonMari recommends shorter to longer objects from left to right: this gradient lends aesthetic value and also represents progress.

For papers, Marie Kondo suggests getting rid of anything that can be acquired in other ways. For instance, if you have a washing m/c or microwave or PC manual, it is unlikely you would refer to them. You learn a device's functions as soon as you get it and then when there are problems, you call the mechanic or refer on the web. To give a personal example: I had bought a Singer sewing m/c and misplaced the manual. When the needle broke, I simply found the manual on the web and did the needful! And when I found the manual in the physical book form, I discarded it, because I have its digital version now! Marie suggests storing all papers that need frequent accessing such as deposit receipts, cheque books, passbooks etc. in one single clear folder. The others such as property tax, EB book, water tax etc. can go into a separate folder. In fact, I found that if you can convert all this to online payments, the related paperwork will vanish altogether. Property documents, loan documents etc. can go in another folder. It would be ideal to label these folders. For miscellaneous and sentimental items too, the rule is to retain things that give joy and discarding the rest.

Arranging them can be as per one's convenience and creativity. But, grouping things logically is again central. For instance, store extra grocery in one shelf; baking items together etc; vehicle papers, land papers, home papers etc.



For more details on KonMari, you could go online. Marie Kondo's audio book (http://youtu.be/F7EdleXy_1Q), her short videos and videos by several other people who have benefitted from KonMari are readily available.

Readers, it's summer and holiday time. You, your spouse and your kids are sure to have some leisure. Invest in

KonMari and reap the rewards of a tidy and organised home in the coming year!