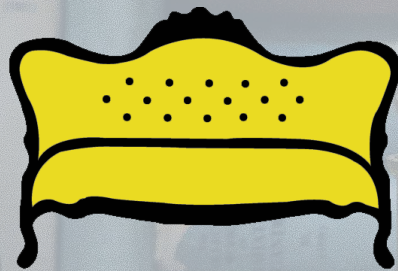


# Declutter & Organize

## 5 WAYS TO SHIFT YOUR MINDSET



LITTLE YELLOW COUCH  
&  
THE STYLE MATTERSPodcast



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## "BUT HOW DO I KNOW IF I ACTUALLY LIKE SOMETHING I OWN OR IF I'M HOLDING ON TO IT FOR THE WRONG REASONS?"

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When I say the words "declutter and organize" to you feel a burst of energy to get out the label maker and clear out every cabinet in your kitchen? Or do you feel a huge black cloud of dread hanging over your head? Either way, at some point during the process you'll probably be asking, "how do I know if I actually like this thing or if I'm holding on to it for the wrong reasons?" This is a question I get asked a lot.

And the most common follow up question: "how do I know if this (fabric/painting/vase/lamp/rug) will work with my style?"

Before you buy another throw pillow (or try to define your entire personal aesthetic, for that matter), you should practice getting very clear on what you love by sorting through the stuff you already own.

You've probably heard Marie Kondo's popular "magic question" when it comes to decluttering. She tells you to hold the object in your hands and simply ask yourself, "does this spark joy?" And if the answer is no, it doesn't belong in your house.

In principle, I totally agree with this. But I work with tons of people who, in actual practice, have trouble answering this question. And I think that's because it's too simplistic.

I believe there are other issues at play that you might need to work through first, before you can boil it down to whether or not it sparks joy.

**AND THAT'S WHERE SHIFTING YOUR MINDSET ABOUT  
YOUR STUFF COMES IN.**

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# The Five

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## MINDSET SHIFT #1

The biggest mental block we have is around feelings of guilt. When you go to get rid of something, are you worried you're dishonoring someone? In reality, you're not throwing away the person who gave that thing to you. Just because you don't keep your grandmother's needlepoint pillow of a rose doesn't mean you'll forget about her. Either figure out how to display her talents in a way that makes you happy, or let the piece go. Just know that you're not tossing out grandma. And think about it this way. If someone else could actually use and love something, isn't that the best way to honor where it came from? By keeping it in use and giving it a longer life, the gift you've been given is making someone else happier.

## MINDSET SHIFT #2

Another way guilt comes crawling into our minds is when we've paid a decent amount of money for something that we no longer like. Whether it's a pair of jeans or a couch, ask yourself, what is the cost of holding on to it? You have to store it. You have to care for it and keep it clean. Maybe you have to look at it every day and it makes you feel drained. Ultimately, it's just not worth it to NOT get rid of it. Holding on to things that make us feel guilty, suffocated and depressed costs us so much more than the money we initially spent on it. And anyway, it's not like you're getting your actual money back simply because you store that pair of jeans in your closet. The money itself is already gone.

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# The Five

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## MINDSET SHIFT #3

What about worrying that you might need something...someday? Some of us are wired to be sensitive toward scarcity. Maybe we've grown up with a serious lack of funds. Or maybe our parents were careless with money and we've reacted by being the opposite. This is a tricky one because I think it's about finding a balance between being thrifty and resourceful while not becoming a hoarder. And that balance is different for everyone. Similar to feelings of guilt around that expensive pair of jeans you bought and only wore once, we don't want to be wasteful. I can hear my grandmother now, saying to me "you might as well have thrown that money down the drain" whenever I bought something that didn't hold my interest for more than a week. (To be fair, I was 6 and had a short attention span). So in terms of keeping something for Some Day, ask yourself if you've needed it in the last year. If not, Some Day might never come and if it does, you can most likely buy it again. In the meantime, you haven't wasted precious storage space or gone into a zone of anxiety because of overflowing, over crammed closets. And in terms of keeping extras of things "just in case," maybe just keeping one of the extras instead of twelve might be a good compromise.

## MINDSET SHIFT #4

Another big issue we all face from time to time is the feeling of being overwhelmed by the idea of decluttering. Sometimes looking at the piles of stuff we'd have to sort through is just so daunting we don't have the energy to start. But if you break the tasks down into bite size pieces, you know you'll find it much less overwhelming.

[cont. on next page](#)



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# The Five

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## MINDSET SHIFT #4 CONT.

I really don't need to tell you this.... I'm just reminding you! So give yourself a little pep talk and then start in one corner, or in one drawer or on one pile of paper. One step at a time. When your goal is to whip just one room in shape, you can do so in less than a day. Just don't get distracted by all of the other piles in all of the other rooms!

## MINDSET SHIFT #5

Soon after you're feeling overwhelmed, you'll probably encounter the feeling of "why bother?" As in, why bother getting super organized if it's just going to get messy again? The truth is, managing clutter is not a one-time task that you handle over a weekend of purging and buying cute little storage bins. Sorry to break it to you. But on the other hand, maybe this little tru-ism will keep you from beating yourself up every time a new pile appears on your counters. Here's the deal. Life brings clutter. It brings paperwork, mismatched socks, multiple cans of beans, unwanted gifts and seasonal items we're too tired to put away. So rather than thinking that none of your systems have worked in the past, ask yourself if you're expecting these systems to completely absolve you of clutter for the rest of your life. If so, forget about it. Not gonna happen. Instead, ask yourself if you're actually USING the system you've put in place, and if not, why? Is it too cumbersome? Is it easy enough to use on a daily or weekly basis? Maybe you need to tweak it. But let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater. A simple rule of thumb is to store things as close as possible to where you use them. That's because the more steps you have to take to put something back where it belongs, the less likely you are to do it.

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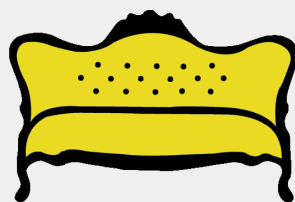
# Notes

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## SO.... DOES IT SPARK JOY?

After you've made peace with your ancestors, let go of things that no longer fit, won't realistically repair or haven't used in over a year, you can finally ask yourself, does this spark joy? If you really hate something, that's an easy fix. If you're on the fence, keep it a little longer but keep it in sight. Look at it every day and after a month, ask yourself if you'd be just fine never seeing it again. If you're still not sure, hang on because I've got a few more ideas for you coming down the pike at Little Yellow Couch. Not that I want to keep you hanging. But I think after reading and doing all of this stuff, you've got enough to keep you busy for awhile!



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