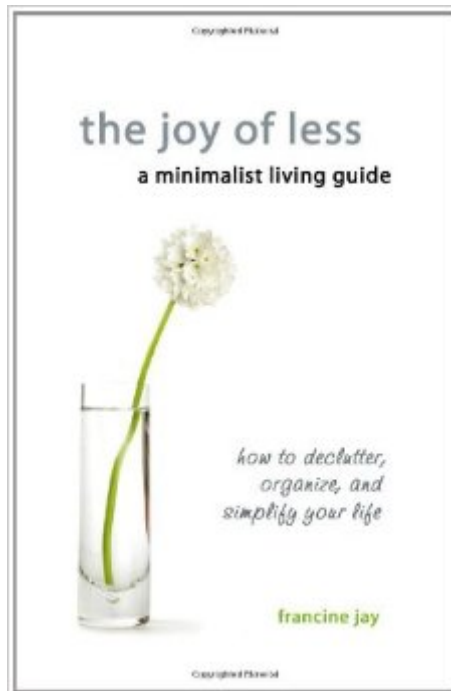


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# The Joy Of Less, A Minimalist Living Guide: How To Declutter, Organize, And Simplify Your Life



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Wow! If you are looking for a comprehensive handbook on minimalism, decluttering, streamlining, and essentially re-wiring your preconceptions about why you have the stuff you have, this is the book for you. Francine Jay, aka Miss Minimalist to those in her blogosphere, has written *The Joy of Less, A Minimalist Living Guide: How to Declutter, Organize, and Simplify Your Life*, her second book on achieving the good life by consuming less. She's a minimalist after my own heart, and unless I'm projecting too much of my own experience onto hers, appreciates the epiphany one gets by suddenly having lots of space and just a few true treasures. Francine starts right out with the mindset, the philosophy/attitude one needs to have before seriously tackling a reduction in clutter and possessions, likening this important step to changing one's eating habits as opposed to simply

going on a diet. If you don't get in the mindset, you'll just backslide. I know all too well what she means by this, having done binge-purge decluttering several times over the course of my adult life until a few years ago. This book is a well-structured, wholesale plan of attack, as opposed to loads of personal stories or autobiography. Part One tackles the the relationship we have to our stuff and why we think we have to own it. As Francine puts it: "In pursuing a minimalist lifestyle, we need to resist the temptation to recreate the outside world within our abodes." She then cites examples such as media rooms and bathroom "spas," and the dreaded home cappuccino makers. Oh yes. The section concludes with her challenge to make a list of every single thing you own-right down to every single thing in every single drawer. My brain wanted scream at the prospect of doing that-AND I've already decluttered!!! The woman isn't taking prisoners. Part Two is entitled STREAMLINE, and each letter of that word stands for a step in the author's minimalizing process. We are to remember that "the idea is not to choose the things we'll get rid of, but to choose the things we'll keep." This perspective turns the usual decluttering process on its head, by literally getting everything out of each room and only bringing back in the most essential, and the most worthy of our precious time and space. This section is the strategy session before the big game, as it were, illustrated by some of the many quote-worthy passages: ...the things with which we choose to surround ourselves tell our story... ...take responsibility for the entire life cycle of what we buy...(from how it was made to how it will need to be disposed of) Think of all the things we can't do when our surfaces are cluttered:we don't have room to prepare a delicious dinner, we don't have a place to sit down with our families and enjoy it, and we don't have the space to play a board game afterwards. We don't have a spot to pay our bills, do our homework, or enjoy our hobbies. In some cases, we may not even have a place to lie down at the end of the day. Re books: Perhaps the bigger our library, the more intellectual we feel. Re crafts (and this one made me feel the pain): ...reality check: do you enjoy doing the craft as much as collecting the materials for it? If not, perhaps you should rethink your hobby....One of the concepts Francine writes about is the idea of Limits, and it is here that I sense the heart of her minimalist passion: you may initially think that limits will be stifling; but you'll soon discover that they're absolutely liberating! In a culture where we're conditioned to want more, buy more, and do more, they're a wonderful breath of relief...you'll be inspired to apply them to other parts of your life...the possibilities are, well...unlimited!Part Three is the down to brass tacks stuff, sectioned room by room, and while the methodology of uncluttering each room is pretty much the same, there's plenty of perspective on the specifics, such as, when uncluttering our wardrobes, we wonder how we acquired so many unwearable things: ...often, such excess is the result of chasing perfection....The "chasing perfection" also applies to buying grooming

and beauty products which promise perfection, and suck us in every time. There's also lots about how to keep on top of clutter, especially the clutter created by family members who are not yet with the program. A firm but gentle persistence is urged, and with the hope that once there's not so much crap laying around, it'll be fairly easy to keep on top of things, and thus easier to get the rest of one's household to participate of their own free will. This is the other usefulness of preparing your mindset before actually tackling minimalism-it will help you resist the laggards in your own family as well as the pressures of a consumerist society. Part Four considers life outside of your home in your schedule and in the impact on the world by your purchases/lack of purchases. Francine encourages us to apply the word "No" with courage even if we are naturally people-pleasers, in order to retain time for ourselves and for the most important things in our lives. She also, in a telling autobiographical example, encourages us to embrace the concept of "good enough:" when her young inner-perfectionist self stared in horror at carpeting her husband hadn't quite perfectly laid he said, "it's good enough." Fortunately the message got through and she's embraced it ever since, as should we. A greater mindfulness about what we purchase and consume leads in turn to better things for the world around us, as we consider what something is made of, who has made it, how it is packaged, and how it can be recycled or disposed of when its usefulness is over. Francine adds to these benefits the beauty of sharing possessions and of setting a happy example of treading lightly on the earth as "minsumers," her own word for minimal-consumers. She concludes that sometimes minimalism can feel like swimming upstream, but the personal liberation we will feel once we step back from consumerism will be enough to sustain us and gently inspire those around us.

I've read various books and articles on how to reduce clutter but none of them have spoken to me like "The Joy of Less, A Minimalist Living Guide: how to get rid of clutter and simplify your life" by Francine Jay. This book deals with every aspect of wiping out clutter and living a simpler, joyous life. Francine Jay writes about the issue both from a philosophical and practical perspective. The book is written in a way that makes it seem as though the author is talking to you, with kindness and yet with authority. This is what I needed! Jay shows you how to get started right away and then leads you through the process, step by step, room by room, giving solutions for every aspect of decluttering and simplifying your life. The author offers solutions that are totally realistic and doable. I am amazed at the progress I have made from reading this book. My closet is now half empty and my kitchen counters are clean and free of clutter! I think that is because the book has also helped me change my way of thinking, helping me to move from a place of uncertainty to one of confidence

as I go through this process. I highly recommend it!

There are lots of books out there on living the minimalist life, but this book is different. It makes you want to run to your kitchen and start throwing out all those silver party trays you've had since you got married but never use. You suddenly feel inspired to get rid of your skinny clothes because the chances of fitting into a size 4 again are pretty slim (yes, pun intended!) I for one could not wait to hit my make-up drawer. I thought I was down-sized with my eleven compacts of eye make-up, five mascaras, 6 tubes of lipstick and various odds n ends that I haven't touched in years much less put on my face. It was so liberating to throw out all those beauty supplies that I will never get around to using. The whole premise of this book is that having less stuff is the key to happiness. I couldn't agree more. The thing I like most about this book is it doesn't just tell you to start purging your possessions willy-nilly but it poses questions to ask yourself about everything that you own. The reader decides what gives their life value not the author. She guides you through the process and you come up with the answers. Contrary to what the status quo would have us believe, having a lot of material possessions does not make us rich. Most of us have way too much stuff but not enough time to enjoy it all. This book is about the power of minimalist living. It's about getting rid of the excess so we can make room for new experiences and the things we truly love. Her musings on how to handle gifts and sentimental items is especially valuable. She reminds us that gifts are symbols of the giver's love. It's the intention of the giver that matters not the gift. Relish the intention and if you don't need it or want it, pass that gift along to someone else who can use it. I can't pinpoint exactly what it was about this book that inspired me to go even deeper in my simplifying journey, but it did. Maybe it's the fact that the author takes the subject seriously but not in a judgmental way. We've all read those books that make you feel like a loser because you can't just tear through your house like a Kansas tornado and rid yourself of all the excess in one quick swoop. I wholeheartedly recommend this book. It is supportive and kind. Francine Jay is likable and you wish she could personally visit your home and help you go through all your junk. But since she probably can't visit each of us personally, her book is the next best thing.

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