

MORE FROM THE HOMEPAGE

Push begins in Minnesota to allow driver's licenses for all

Somali-born U.S. citizen arrested in Minneapolis, charged with taking

Act of kindness reunites Minneapolis peace activist with dying mother

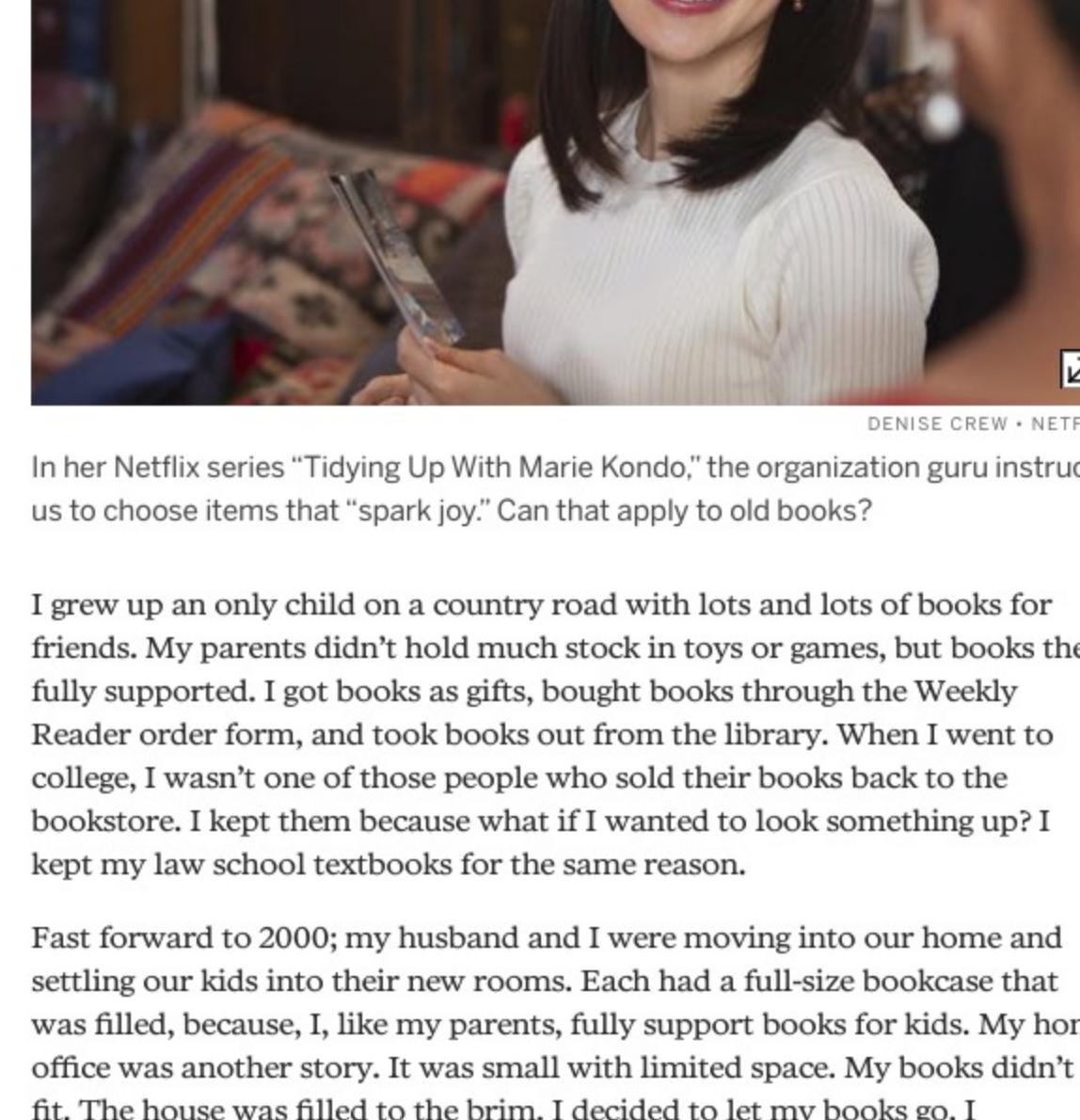
Target adds new \$9.99 wine, marketed as a 'premium' line

THE GOOD LIFE

How Marie Kondo talked me into getting more books

Restocking beloved favorites brings back joyous feelings for one writer.

By Brette Sember Next Avenue | FEBRUARY 19, 2019 — 3:22PM



DENISE CREW / NETFLIX

In her Netflix series "Tidying Up With Marie Kondo," the organization guru instructs us to choose items that "spark joy." Can that apply to old books?

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MORE

I grew up on only child on a country road with lots and lots of books for friends. My parents didn't hold much stock in toys or games, but books they fully supported. I got books as gifts, bought books through the Weekly Reader order form, and took books out from the library. When I went to college, I wasn't one of those people who sold their books back to the bookstore. I kept them because what if I wanted to look something up? I kept my law school textbooks for the same reason.

Fast forward to 2000; my husband and I were moving into our home and settling our kids into their new rooms. Each had a full-size bookcase that was filled, because, I, like my parents, fully support books for kids. My home office was another story. It was small with limited space. My books didn't fit. The house was filled to the brim. I decided to let my books go. I rationalized that in this day and age you can get your hands on any book you might want within a few days between Kindles and online used booksellers and Amazon. There was no reason to keep them. I sold or donated almost everything, keeping only a handful of reference books and copies of books I'd written. I didn't miss them.

Since then, books have flowed in and out of my house with ease. When I can, I get books from the library in hard copy or digital form. When I buy books, I read them and then donate them to our library when I'm done. I don't keep them. This system worked, and I never had to struggle to store books and never had a toppling stack dangerously teetering on a desk or a dresser with nowhere to put it all.

Marie Kondo: Choosing items that spark joy

My life has changed again, though, and my children are now grown and gone. Their bedrooms are empty guest rooms 99 percent of the time. My home office is still small, but I've started to spread out into those spare rooms bit by bit, storing off-season clothes in the closets and slowly taking over some of the drawers with wrapping paper. I have more time on my hands, time that used to be spent driving kids, talking through college applications or going to their events.

I read "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up" by organizer extraordinaire Marie Kondo several years ago when it was first out and was hot. Some of it made a lot of sense to me and I was blown away by her method of folding clothes and standing them up in drawers. I didn't pay any attention to her advice about unloading books, since I really had so few. I took what made sense to me from her book and then promptly donated it to the library.

When Kondo's new Netflix show, "Tidying Up With Marie Kondo," became available recently, I started watching it and saw Kondo talking about choosing items that spark joy and encouraging people to touch things and think about what they feel. I watched the people on it feeling and finding that joy as they touched their belongings.

Around the same time, "Mary Poppins Returns" came out and I saw it with my grown daughter. I enjoyed the film, but it made me reminisce about P.L. Travers' Mary Poppins books which I read as a child. I got one from the library and fell in love with it again. Holding that book sparked joy. I wanted (needed!) to own it so I could see it on a shelf in my home, read passages when I wanted and dream about sharing it with (future, I hope) grandchildren. I needed to be able to touch it and feel that joy.

Filling in a bookshelf again

This revelation started an avalanche of longing for all my old favorites. So, I started ordering them. "Mary Poppins" and "Winnie-the-Pooh" were followed by volumes from the Trixie Belden girl detective series, "Pippi Longstocking" and even old, old things I'd read as flea market finds like Cherry Ames mysteries, "Five Little Peppers" and "Polyanna." The joy of holding those books and rereading them urged me on.

"Jonathan Livingston Seagull" needed to be on my shelf. "84 Charing Cross Road." "The Thorn Birds." "The Clan of the Cave Bear." It doesn't matter to me if the book is considered a classic or just pulp, because it meant something to me when I read it the first time and now I want those feelings back.

The bookcase in one of those spare rooms is slowly filling in, with each volume one that sparks joy in me when I hold it. Seeing them gathered together on the shelves is like finally putting things to rights somehow. The missing pieces of my life are back.

Brette Sember is the author of many books about divorce, child custody, business, health, food and travel. This article originally appeared on NextAvenue.org.

0 SHOW COMMENTS

MORE FROM VARIETY

3 MINUTES AGO

Dominick Argento, acclaimed Minnesota opera composer, dies at 91

Dominick Argento's music made its way to grand stages in New York and Washington, D.C. But oftentimes, Minnesota audiences heard it first. The Pulitzer Prize-winning song...



3 MINUTES AGO

Prosecutors: Smollett paid brothers \$3,500 for staged attack

Two brothers who told police that Jussie Smollett paid them \$3,500 to help stage an attack on himself were linked to the actor through the "Empire" television series, and court documents filed Thursday allege one of the men provided Smollett with designer drugs.

8 MINUTES AGO

The Latest: AP source: Smollett earns \$100K-plus per episode

The Latest on the attack reported by Jussie Smollett (all times local):

13 MINUTES AGO

A look at why brothers in alleged hoax appear off the hook

Two brothers who played central roles in what Chicago police say was a staged racist and homophobic attack on Jussie Smollett are, compared to the "Empire" actor, so far walking away legally unscathed.

18 MINUTES AGO

Nestle, AT&T pull YouTube ads over pedophile concerns

Several companies, including AT&T and Nestle, are pulling advertisements from YouTube over concerns about inappropriate comments on videos of children.

TASTE



- The meat raffle: Everything you need to know about our weirdest bar game
- Downtown Minneapolis' Eastside restaurant shines under new ownership

HOME & GARDEN



- \$10M castle home in Orono has 'surprise' inside
- 'Property Brothers' dish on what it'll take for them to do makeover show in Minn.

CELEBRITIES



- Gwyneth Paltrow: Skier sued me to exploit my fame, wealth
- Amal Clooney among the gang at Meghan Markle's baby shower

NEW APP



Star Tribune launches redesigned, updated news app

The new app works on Apple and Android smartphones and tablets.

INSPIRED



- These young women aren't waiting around to spark real change in Minnesota

Childhood friends from Edina recycle flowers into bouquets of beauty for seniors

THE GOOD LIFE



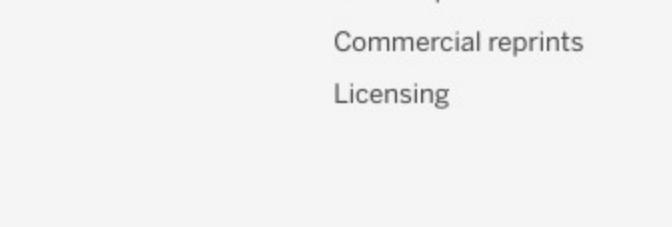
- Twin Cities theater companies put a new spotlight on aging
- How Marie Kondo talked me into getting more books

WEEKLY FEATURE



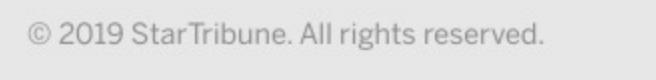
- Streetscapes: Each Saturday, Star Tribune writers showcase Minnesota architecture.

MUSIC



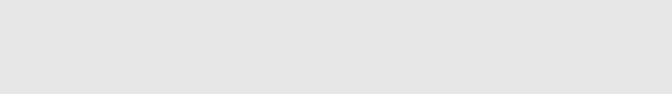
- Grammy winner Angelique Kidjo gets Afro funky covering Talking Heads in Minneapolis
- The good, the bad and the Elton: 30 milestones on the Yellow Brick Road

TV & MEDIA



- Jordan Peele offers viewers a trip to 'Weird City'
- Minnesota's Rachael Leigh Cook is still 'all that,' but now stars in Hallmark romances

STAGE & ARTS



- Director tackles massive Sondheim musical 'Into The Woods' for Ten Thousand Things debut
- Park Square Theatre turns 'Antigone' into modern, relatable antiheroine

BOOKS

- Review: 'Bangkok Wakes to Rain,' by Pitchaya Sudbanthad
- Need to find a writer? The new Minnesota Writers Directory can help

EAT & DRINK

- Our food critic loves these 5 Twin Cities restaurants
- Downtown Minneapolis' Eastside restaurant shines under new ownership

MOVIES

- Finale to 'How to Train Your Dragon' series soars
- Dwayne Johnson's 'Fighting With My Family' wrestles with family dysfunction

TRAVEL

- A winter winery crawl on the Twin Cities' western edge
- Andrew Zimmer's book brings kids on an adventure, where food and travel intertwine

• A winter winery crawl on the Twin Cities' western edge

• Andrew Zimmer's book brings kids on an adventure, where food and travel intertwine

GIVING BACK

- Giving Back: FoodRx program embraces Food as Medicine

• Meet Herman Milligan, arts board member extraordinaire