

DELIGHTING IN *decluttering*

Is it time you took control of your closet, pantry, office or shed?

WORDS **PETER BARRETT**

A FRIEND I USED to live with once told me: “A messy room betrays a messy mind.” I didn’t take it as a compliment at the time, and I don’t think he meant it that way.

Tidying for me happens in fits and starts. But there’s no denying the pleasing sense of calm satisfaction that descends thereafter.

For plenty of people, that post-tidying buzz is addictive. A swag of decluttering and mindfulness books have hit the shelves recently, including those of Japanese tidying guru, Marie Kondo. So popular is Marie, her surname has become a verb. As in: “I was waiting for the kettle to boil, so I Kondooed the heck out of my pantry.”

Carol Martyn is an Australian professional organiser and founder of tidying-up business Dr DeClutter. She believes decluttering is all about giving yourself more time to do the things you want to do – and feeling better about the space you live in.

“There’s a huge link between the emotional wellbeing of people and for some there’s a [positive] emotional link between feeling ‘lighter’ when they declutter,” she says.

Take control
of your life



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Top tips

1. What do you constantly move aside when reaching for something else in your closet/kitchen drawer/garage? Seek and destroy it.
2. Start small. Do one cupboard or drawer and nail that.
3. Every object should earn its place in your life. Ask yourself how each object contributes to your health, wellbeing and happiness.
4. Keep a charity bag handy in a high-traffic areas. Make regular, even weekly, donations.
5. Find ways to display mementoes squirreled away in shoeboxes; or, simply photograph them.

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Coming out of the closet: my personal list of guilty hoarding

- **Shoes.** Particularly runners. I still have a pair of Dunlop Volleys (blue) that I used to play tennis in, 25 years ago.
- **Business shirts.** It’s been more than a decade since I’ve

worked in a formal office environment, but I still have a business shirt for every occasion.

- **Cigars.** My mates gave cigars to me as presents when my children were born years ago. I dutifully smoked one or two and have been unable to throw out the rest. ✈