

Kondo is back with more tidying advice in *Spark Joy*

By Katherine Roth
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Marie Kondo is back. Author of the international bestseller *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* (Ten Speed Press, 2014), Kondo became famous for advising readers how to transform their lives by sifting through their belongings one by one, embracing those that “spark joy,” and bidding a fond but hasty farewell to the rest.

Her new book, *Spark Joy: An Illustrated Master Class on the Art of Organizing and Tidying Up* (Ten Speed), provides illustrations and more detail.

“After I published my first book, a lot of readers came with a lot of questions,” the petite, soft-spoken Kondo told The Associated Press, in Japanese, after a presentation to a packed auditorium at the Japan Society in New York.

Kondo is still communing lovingly with socks and blouses, folding clothes like origami, and bowing in gratitude to her home. She also has a fresh perspective as a new mother.

“My daughter is only six months old, so my method hasn’t changed ... She cannot make a mess yet. What has surprised me most is the amount of stuff a baby needs,” Kondo said, sitting primly at the edge of her seat in an impeccable white top over a pale blue print dress.

“Once she gets older, I’m sure there will be a little bit of adjustment.”

With an understated sense of humor, she notes in her new book that one of the people with whom she has had to share her storage methods is her new husband, himself so minimalist that he moved in with only four cardboard boxes of belongings.

“I am learning that unspoken family rules differ from one household to another, and that storage methods I had assumed were obvious need to be properly shared and explained,” she writes.

Kondo’s earlier book had no illustrations; *Spark Joy* is full of her charming, child-like drawings of everything from organized kitchen cupboards, to folding techniques for clothes ranging from underwear to frilly blouses to hoodies.

“It is very important that you know how to fold clothes in the correct way,” she informed the crowd at the Japan



Society, before daintily approaching a demonstration table where a small pile of unfolded clothing awaited. For one thing, “make sure you put a lot of love through your palms,” she said.

The audience — die-hard fans and those new to her KonMari Method — applauded as Kondo quickly folded one item after another into a tiny cube, balanced each on edge to show how tightly wound it was, then tucked them neatly into what resembled a lidless shoe box.

“Wow, that’s so cool. How did she do that?” a man in the second row whispered to his neighbor.

Kondo suggests setting the boxes of origami-esque parcels in drawers so that each is a joy-provoking bento of delights.

What about those pesky possessions that fail to spark joy yet are undeniably useful? Well, functionality can be beautiful too.

“After discarding a hammer because the handle was worn out, I used my frying pan to pound in any nails,” Kondo writes. But after she threw out a screwdriver, “I

SPARKING JOY. Marie Kondo, author of the international bestseller, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, has released her latest book, *Spark Joy: An Illustrated Master Class on the Art of Organizing and Tidying Up*. (Photo/Natsuno Ichigo/Ten Speed Press via AP)

tried using a ruler to tighten a loose screw, but it snapped down the middle. This almost reduced me to tears as it was one I really liked.”

“All these incidents stemmed from youthful inexperience and thoughtlessness,” she continues. Things that make life simpler, “the recognition that a possession is useful in our lives — these, too, indicate joy.”

Spark Joy includes advice on moving, packing, and decorating with tiny, cheerful knickknacks (this is smile-inducing minimalism).

She even gives a nod to those who don’t thrill to tidying up. Kondo admitted to her New York audience that she regrets some of her earlier zeal in discarding her family’s belongings.

Or, as she says in the new book, “Only when we accept unconditionally people whose values differ from our own can we really say that we have finished tidying.”

That said, her tidying empire is gaining ground. Kondo’s books have been translated into numerous languages, her speaking engagements draw crowds, and her waitlist for clients is more than three months long.

She recently published a blank journal, *Life-Changing Magic* (Ten Speed), to help readers “spark joy every day”; she runs the Japan Joy-Sparking Tidying-Up Association (with two levels of membership fees); and she offers courses in Japan in tidying up and becoming a tidying consultant.

In the United States, Kondo told The AP, she has an app coming out this spring that “features a checklist of tidying, and also shows your progress in tidying.” And she is preparing to open a U.S. branch of her consultancy.

While she may have mellowed in some respects, her goals are in no way diminished. Proper tidying up, she happily announced to the rapt audience, brings not only life-changing magic but a sense of joy that can spread from household to household, country to country.

“I believe my method will lead to world peace in the end,” she said, smiling sweetly.

Or at least a lot of astoundingly well-folded socks.

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