



GRANDPARENTS' STUFF

Q. What do I do with sentimental items from my grandparents that are crammed into cupboards, taking up space, serving no purpose. It feels wrong to get rid of them?

Here are my top ten tips:

1. If you are decluttering leave sentimental items to last. Build up your decluttering muscles first on easier, less sentimental belongings.
2. Make a decision about how much of your home you want to devote to sentimental items. That might be a box, a shelf, a cupboard. The size is not important. The creation of a limit is important. This is your container limit and it's totally up to you.
3. If there are items where you know the story behind them and why they may have been important to your grandparents, share the story with someone. That can help release any need to hold onto the item as a talisman.
4. If there are any items like chinaware that you'd like to use, use them. Allowing functional items to fulfil their purpose will give you more opportunities for remembering and sharing family stories.
5. If there are any items that you want to keep but don't want stored away in a sentimental memory box, display them.
6. Fill your designated sentimental space or memory box with any items you want to keep. If you reach a limit and still have items, don't add another box or shelf. Keep the items that you value enough for them to deserve the space in your memory box. Consider taking photos of items that didn't make the cut.
7. Donate, sell or trash what you don't want. It's highly unlikely that your grandparents would want their items to be a burden to you and for those items to inhibit your home's functionality. They wouldn't want your memories of them being clouded by the stress or irritation you feel at trying to manage their items.
8. Don't try to do it all in one hit. Sentimental items bring up a lot of emotion and that takes a physical, mental and emotional toll. Smaller sessions are your friend here. Be kind to yourself.
9. Consider having a body double with you. A friend that won't impose their view, but will simply listen and help take items to donation centres.
10. Finally, it's not wrong to get rid of these items. There is zero moral weight to keeping them or discarding them. Remember they will all eventually be discarded and become landfill at some point in the future, whether it's with your generation, the next, or the one after. You are not required to be the custodian and curator of your grandparents' life.

You have your memories of your grandparents and you can share stories about them with or without any of their belongings.

Keeping their belongings is neither here nor there.

Being loved and remembered is what is important.



Share the story