



Where OKC parents find fun & resources

The power in decluttering: 5 things I learned

Reading Time: 3 minutes

Last year on the day after Christmas, we emptied two car-loads of kid ...”stuff” into our home. I stood in the middle of my living room and told my husband, “I’m going to organize the kids’ craft area so I have some room to put these Christmas gifts. Would you organize the toys in the ottoman?”



Three weeks, 18 meltdowns, and 87 bags of trash later, I had purged my entire home. Oh, did I mention I was also 4-7 weeks pregnant at the time? Hormones, man.

So here’s what I learned:

It’s not the stuff. It’s who the stuff makes you become. An amazing thing happened as I purged my house of clutter. I began to see opportunities pop up that I didn’t see before. It was a whole “I Can See Clearly Now, The Rain is Gone” moment. My mental clutter cleared with the physical clutter.

The further I went, the easier it got. Every cabinet, drawer, shelf—it all became, dare I say, a fun challenge? No, I take that back, it was terrible. However, I got kind of good at it. I opened a silverware drawer one day and quickly organized it and set up a system where it wouldn't get messy again. I was beginning to not recognize myself anymore.

My kids helped me. We took these piles of “stuff” they hadn't played with in ages and they got to choose items to donate. I gave them the power to decide what they wanted to give away. Oh, that baby doll I gave you when you were a tiny infant? No, honey, I know you want to donate it but the Goodwill won't take it because it...doesn't meet their criteria. ::cries in corner::

A house I felt controlled me became a house I controlled. Don't picture Cinderella's stepmother here (actually, yes, that was totally what it was like). Finally the things that came into the house had a place to go because we defined spaces for everything. No longer did I have “crap stacks” in various places that I didn't know what to do with.

It prepared me for the future. Little did I know that at 7 months pregnant we would find a house we wanted to buy. We listed our house, sold it and moved when I was 8 months pregnant. Because everything had been tidied, I didn't

have to purge and then pack. I just packed and moved. I remember thinking at least 765 times how glad I was that we had purged before.

If you feel a little crazy after the holidays and you want to scare your family, look into the KonMari method or just google Marie Kondo and you'll find a million resources. I found her along the way and loved/cursed her each day. There is also a Netflix special called "Tidying Up" that you can binge for a day or two as you lie on your bedroom floor writhing with regret.



When I saw Marie walk into people's homes and bow down and literally thank the house, I cried. Because a house does everything for us. It keeps us warm, keeps us safe and contains the most precious things we own. If we don't feel like we can dream and grow there because it is weighing us down, it's time to grab 87 trash bags and get to work.