



The Minimalist

HOLIDAY HANDBOOK

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HI, I'M NAEEMAH

This e-book is going to focus on the minimalist approach to holiday celebrations. We'll talk about how you can start creating more intentional holidays by implementing the Four-Gift Rule, streamlined decorating systems, and experience-based traditions that prioritize meaning over materialism.

Naeemah



Introduction

THE CASE FOR MINIMALIST HOLIDAYS

Close your eyes and imagine it's December 26th. You walk into your home and feel... peaceful. Not overwhelmed by boxes of decorations waiting to be stored. Not stressed about finding space for new gifts. Not exhausted from managing mountains of stuff. Instead, you feel satisfied, grateful, and ready to enjoy the beautiful memories you just created with the people you love.

This isn't a fantasy. This is what minimalist holidays can give you

WHAT THIS BOOK IS (AND ISN'T)

This book is NOT about:

- Being cheap or depriving your family
- Eliminating all traditions or joy
- Being the "Grinch" of the holidays
- Forcing everyone to live exactly the same way

This book IS about:

- Intentional choices that align with your values
- Creating meaningful experiences over accumulating stuff
- Reducing stress during an already hectic season
- Celebrating in ways that feel authentic to you
- Having exactly what brings joy without the burden of excess

THE MINIMALIST HOLIDAY PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Intentional. Every item you bring into your home and every activity you plan serves a meaningful purpose. You're not decorating just because you think you should, or buying gifts just to have something to wrap.

Principle 2: Experience-Focused. Instead of prioritizing material accumulation, you prioritize creating memories and meaningful moments with people you love.

Principle 3: Sustainable. You make choices you can feel good about long-term. Environmentally and financially. No financial stress, no environmental guilt.

Principle 4: Peaceful. By reducing the management of stuff, you have more mental and emotional energy for what really matters. Less stress, more presence.

Principle 5: Authentic. You celebrate in ways that truly align with your family values and what brings you genuine joy, not what you feel obligated to do.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK



EACH CHAPTER FOCUSES ON ONE KEY ASPECT OF MINIMALIST HOLIDAYS

Chapter 1 shows you how to limit gift-giving thoughtfully using the Four-Gift Rule.

Chapter 2 provides experience gift ideas for all ages.

Chapter 3 guides you through streamlined decorating that creates maximum impact.

Chapter 4 teaches the One-Bin Storage System to prevent accumulation.

Chapter 5 offers consumable gift ideas that bring joy without clutter.

Chapter 6 helps you prepare your home before the holidays.

Chapter 7 shows you how to create meaningful traditions focused on experiences.

Chapter 8 gives you mindset mantras to help maintain your minimalist values.

What You'll Gain

By embracing minimalist holidays, you'll experience:

- More time for what matters (less time shopping, wrapping, decorating, managing)
- More money (intentional spending, less impulse buying, no duplicates)
- More peace (less visual clutter, less mental overwhelm, calmer spaces)
- More meaning (focus on experiences and connection, not stuff)
- More presence (less distraction from worry about mess and obligations)

The holidays don't have to be about more. More spending, more stuff, more stress. They can be about depth instead of breadth. Quality instead of quantity. Presence instead of presents.

You don't need to implement everything at once. Choose what resonates most with your current challenges and start there.

CHAPTER 1



The Four-Gift Rule Thoughtful Giving Without Excess

The Four Gift Rule is a simple framework that revolutionizes gift-giving. Instead of buying numerous random gifts hoping something will delight the recipient, you choose four carefully selected items that cover different aspects of their needs and interests.

THE FRAMEWORK

For each person you're giving gifts to, you choose:

1. Something they WANT
2. Something they NEED
3. Something to WEAR
4. Something to READ (or EXPERIENCE)

This framework naturally limits quantity while ensuring thoughtfulness and usefulness. Instead of seven or eight random gifts, you're choosing four carefully selected items.

HOW IT WORKS IN PRACTICE

For Children

Something they WANT:

- That toy they've been talking about all year
- The game they've been asking for
- The book series they're excited about
- The art supplies for their current obsession

Something they NEED:

- New lunch box for school (the old one is falling apart)
- Winter boots (they've outgrown last years)
- Desk supplies for homework
- Sports equipment they actually need

Something to WEAR:

- Special holiday outfit
- Cozy pajamas they'll actually use
- Those sneakers they need anyway
- Fun accessories (scarf, hat, special socks)

Something to READ or EXPERIENCE:

- New book series
- Magazine subscription
- Educational books they're interested in
- Graphic novels or comics
- Movie theater gift card + snacks
- Game café/arcade credits



For Adults

Something they WANT:

- Gift certificate to favorite restaurant
- Tickets to concert or show they mentioned
- That kitchen gadget they've been eyeing
- Subscription to service they'd enjoy

Something they NEED:

- Quality tool that's broken or missing
- Household item they need to replace
- Professional item for work
- Practical everyday item (nice wallet, new bag)

Something to WEAR:

- Beautiful scarf in their favorite color
- Cozy sweater
- Quality basics they'd appreciate
- Comfortable slippers or loungewear

Something to READ or EXPERIENCE:

- Cooking class they'd love
- Spa day or massage
- Museum membership
- Weekend getaway contribution
- Streaming service subscription
- Magazine subscription

Common Questions

"Won't kids be disappointed with only four gifts?"

Research and experience show children actually prefer fewer, higher-quality gifts they can deeply engage with. When not overstimulated by many items, they're more grateful for what they receive and play more creatively with fewer toys.

"What about extended family who give many gifts?"

You control only your giving. Explain your approach if asked, but don't force it on others. You can request experiences or specific needed items instead of random stuff.

"My family expects more gifts from me."

Have an honest conversation about why you're making this change. Most people understand once they hear the reasoning. If they resist, stay firm in your values.

"What if I can't fill all four categories?"

That's okay! Maybe you do three gifts, or combine categories. The rule is a framework, not a rigid law. Adapt it to work for you.



The Planning Process

STEPS

01

CREATE YOUR LIST

Write down each recipient's name. Under each name, create four categories: Want, need, wear, read or experience.

02

SET YOUR BUDGET

Decide on the total budget per person, then allocate across four categories. They don't have to be equal. Maybe "want" gets more budget, "need" gets less because it's practical and less expensive.

03

GATHER IDEAS

Throughout the year (or right now if you're starting last minute), note:

- What they mention wanting
- What you notice them needing
- Their style preferences for clothing
- Their interests for experiences

04

SHOP INTENTIONALLY

With your four categories filled in, shop with purpose. No wandering stores hoping something jumps out. No impulse purchases because you think you should have more gifts.

You know exactly what you're getting. Shopping becomes efficient and stress-free.

CHAPTER 2



Experience Gift Ideas Creating Memories, Not Clutter

Experience gifts create joy, memories, and connection without adding any physical clutter to someone's home. They often end up being far more meaningful than material items because the memories last long after a physical gift might be broken, outgrown, or forgotten.

WHY EXPERIENCE GIFTS MATTER

The research is clear:

- People gain more lasting happiness from experiences than possessions
- Shared experiences strengthen relationships
- Memories don't take up physical space
- No maintenance, storage, or disposal needed
- Often creates anticipation (the gift of looking forward)

The practical benefits:

- Zero clutter
- Flexible timing
- Can be shared (couples, families)
- Often more memorable than physical items
- Can become annual traditions



EXPERIENCE GIFT GUIDE

Adults

Arts & Culture

- Local community theater tickets
- Museum day pass
- Art gallery opening passes
- Concert tickets
- Pottery or art class
- Wine or beer tasting experience
- Cooking class
- Photography workshop series

Wellness & Self-Care

- Yoga class drop-in pass
- Meditation app subscription
- Guided nature walk or hike
- Spa day or massage gift certificate
- Personal training sessions
- Wellness retreat
- Float therapy or salt cave experience
- Spa weekend

Adventure & Outdoors

- State park annual pass
- Guided nature center tour
- Bike rental for weekend adventure
- Camping gear rental for weekend trip
- Rock climbing gym membership
- Adventure tour (zip-lining, rafting)
- Ski lift tickets and equipment rental
- Hot air balloon ride

Children

Creative & Artistic

- Children's museum membership
- Story time + craft at bookstore
- Pottery or art class
- Children's theater performance
- Art class
- Craft workshop

Active & Outdoor

- Zoo or aquarium membership
- Nature center classes
- Swimming lesson package
- Tumbling or gymnastics intro class
- Petting zoo or farm visit
- Horseback riding lessons

Educational & Discovery

- Science museum membership
- Planetarium show tickets
- Nature discovery programs
- History museum
- Coding class
- Driver's education course

Social & Interactive

- Escape room experience with friends
- Bowling or laser tag
- Concert tickets (age-appropriate artist)
- Amusement park tickets
- Sporting event tickets
- Adventure course (zip-line, ropes)

HOW TO GIVE

Experience Gifts





PRESENTATION IDEAS

- Create a gift certificate by designing a simple certificate explaining the experience. Add a photo representing the experience, and put it in a nice envelope or frame
- Assemble a preview box. For a spa day, include small lotions and a candle with the certificate. For cooking class, include a wooden spoon and recipe card. This will make unwrapping more exciting



MAKING EXPERIENCE GIFTS MEANINGFUL

- Include personal touches by choosing based on their specific interests. Add notes about why you chose this experience.
- Remember, experience gifts create memories that last and strengthen relationships. They align perfectly with minimalist values.

CHAPTER 3



Minimalist Decoration Planning Beautiful Spaces with Less

Minimalist decorating isn't about bare walls and zero festivity. It's about creating beautiful, impactful holiday ambiance with intentionally fewer items. This chapter shows you how to decorate in ways that feel special without creating overwhelming clutter.

THE "ONE THEME, THREE COLORS" RULE

Instead of mixing multiple decorating styles and using every color, you create cohesion and visual calm by limiting your choices.



CHOOSE ONE THEME

Theme options:

- Traditional Classic: Timeless holiday elegance
 - Rustic Natural: Organic materials, nature-inspired
 - Modern Minimalist: Clean lines, contemporary feel
 - Elegant Sophisticate: Upscale, refined touches
 - Cozy: Warm, comfortable, inviting
 - Whimsical Fun: Playful, lighthearted, joyful
-

SELECT A SINGLE DECORATING AESTHETIC FOR YOUR ENTIRE HOME

Choose three colors maximum for all your decorating:

Classic combinations:

- Red, green, gold
- White, silver, blue
- Cream, natural wood, forest green
- Black, white, one accent color
- Deep red, cream, natural wood

Why This Works

Visual cohesion:

- Everything works together
- No competing color schemes
- Looks intentional, not random
- Professional appearance

Easier decisions:

- Clear parameters for new purchases
- Easy to say no to items outside your palette
- Shopping becomes simpler
- Eliminates decision fatigue

Less is more:

- Fewer items needed to create impact
- Each item stands out more
- Visual calm instead of chaos
- Breathing room in your spaces



ROOM-BY-ROOM

Decoration Limits

01

LIVING ROOM - MAXIMUM 5 ITEMS

1. Statement piece: Large wreath, garland, or tree
2. Throw pillows or blanket: In holiday colors
3. Candles or lighting element: Creates ambiance
4. Table centerpiece or mantle decoration: Focal point
5. One wall decoration or seasonal artwork: Finishing touch

02

DINING ROOM - MAXIMUM 4 ITEMS

1. Table centerpiece: Main focal point
2. Chair decorations or table runner: Textile element
3. Buffet or sideboard styling: Secondary surface
4. One wall or window element: Completing the space

03

KITCHEN - MAXIMUM 3 ITEMS

1. Countertop display: Bowl of ornaments, small tree
2. Window decoration: Visible from inside and outside
3. Seasonal towels or small accessories: Functional decor

04

ENTRYWAY - MAXIMUM 3 ITEMS

1. Door decoration: Wreath or garland (first impression)
2. Welcome mat or entry styling: Ground level impact
3. Interior entry table decoration: Inside welcome

05

BEDROOMS - MAXIMUM 2 ITEMS

1. Seasonal bedding or throw pillows: Functional and festive
2. Small nightstand or dresser decoration: Subtle touch

CHAPTER 4



The One-Bin Storage System Preventing Accumulation

The One-Bin Storage System is a simple but powerful rule: Each category of holiday decorations must fit in ONE designated container. If it doesn't fit, something must go. This system naturally prevents the unlimited accumulation that happens over the years.

THE SYSTEM EXPLAINED

The core rule:

- Each category gets exactly one storage container
- Everything in that category must fit in that container
- If you want to add something new, something old must go
- No overflowing, no second containers, no "just this one more bin"

Why this works:

- It creates natural limits
- Forces annual evaluation
- Prevents gradual accumulation
- Makes storage manageable

The Five **ESSENTIAL BINS**



BIN 1: TREE ORNAMENTS & SMALL DECORATIONS

Contains: All ornaments and tree decorations, tree topper, small figurines or holiday collectibles, and specialty small decorations.



BIN 2: LIGHTING & ELECTRICAL

Contains: All holiday lights (indoor and outdoor), extension cords and timers, light-up decorations, battery-operated items, and extra bulbs.



BIN 3: GARLAND, WREATHS & LARGE DECORATIONS

Contains: Door wreaths and garland, mantle and/or bannister garland, large decorative pieces, outdoor decorations, and seasonal door mats.



BIN 4: TABLE SETTINGS & LINENS

Contains: Holiday tablecloths and runners, placemats and napkins (cloth), seasonal dinnerware, centerpiece components, and candles and holders for the table.



BIN 5: MISCELLANEOUS & SPECIALTY ITEMS

Contains: Everything else that doesn't fit categories 1-4, specialty items, sentimental pieces that get displayed, room-specific decorations, and craft supplies for annual projects.

CHAPTER 5



Consumable Gifts Pleasure Without Permanence

Consumable gifts bring immediate joy and pleasure without requiring long-term storage or creating clutter. They're enjoyed completely and then they're gone. No guilt about keeping items you don't need, no struggle to find space, no obligation to display things.

WHY CONSUMABLE GIFTS WORK

The benefits:

- Often more personal than general items
- Budget-friendly options available at every price point
- Recipients can enjoy without clutter guilt
- Can be shared with others
- Works for people who "have everything"

Perfect for:

- Minimalists
- People in small spaces
- Those who are downsizing
- Anyone who has everything they need
- People you don't know extremely well
- Teachers, coworkers, and neighbors



CONSUMABLE GIFT GUIDE

Food & Beverage

- Baked goods
- Local honey or specialty jam
- Artisanal hot sauce or condiments
- Specialty tea sampler or quality coffee
- Gourmet popcorn or nuts
- Quality chocolate bars
- Wine or craft beer selection
- Cheese and charcuterie items
- High-quality olive oil or balsamic vinegar
- Luxury tea or coffee sampler with accessories
- Gourmet food gift basket

Personal Care

- Artisanal soap or soap set
- Bath salts or bombs
- Quality lip balm set
- Hand cream or lotion
- Professional-grade spa products
- Natural body care collection
- Luxury skincare or beauty set
- Professional spa product collection
- High-end fragrance or cologne

Consumable Gift Basket Themes:

Coffee Lover:

- Specialty coffee beans
- Flavored syrups
- Biscotti or cookies
- Unique sweeteners
- Reusable mug

Movie Night:

- Gourmet popcorn kernels
- Flavored salts or seasonings
- Candy selection
- Hot chocolate mix
- Streaming service subscription

Spa Day at Home:

- Bath salts and bombs
- Face masks
- Luxury soap
- Body scrub
- Candles

Baker's Dream:

- Specialty extracts
- Gourmet chocolate chips
- Unique flour or sugars
- Baking spices
- Recipe cards

CHAPTER 6



Pre-Holiday Decluttering Making Space for What Matters

Before the holidays begin and new items start flowing into your home, you need to make space (both physical and mental). Pre-holiday decluttering prepares your home to receive without becoming overwhelmed.

WHY PRE-HOLIDAY DECLUTTERING MATTERS

Physical benefits:

- Space for incoming decorations
- Room for new gifts
- Functional surfaces available
- Reduced visual chaos

Mental benefits:

- Start the holiday season with clean slate
- Reduces anxiety about clutter
- Creates sense of control
- Makes decorating easier and more enjoyable

Practical benefits:

- Find things more easily
- Know what you have (prevents duplicate purchases)
- Hosting is less stressful
- Post-holiday cleanup is manageable

HOLIDAY DECLUTTER GUIDE

These items should be decluttered before holiday decorating or receiving gifts.

Living Spaces

Clear all surfaces:

- Coffee tables
- End tables
- Mantle or shelves
- Entertainment center

Process:

1. Remove everything from surface
2. Clean surface thoroughly
3. Decide what returns:
 - Daily use items only
 - 1-2 decorative pieces max
 - Everything else gets stored or discarded
4. Pack away items being replaced by holiday decor

Declutter shelves:

- Books you'll never read again
- Decorative items you don't love
- Anything broken or unused
- Create space for holiday items

Organize media:

- DVDs, games, etc.
- Donate what you don't use
- Makes room for seasonal movies/games

Gift Receiving Areas

Children's rooms/toy areas:

- Remove broken toys
- Donate outgrown items
- Pass along toys no longer played with
- Involve kids in process: "Let's make room for new favorites"

The one-in-one-out conversation:

- For every new toy, one current toy goes to another child
- Make it positive: "sharing joy with others"
- Start early so it's not a surprise

Process:

1. Sort toys into keep/donate/toss
2. Kids participate in decisions (age-appropriate)
3. Take photos of sentimental items if needed
4. Donate immediately (before kids change minds)

Adult gift spaces:

Closets:

- Remove clothes that don't fit
- Donate items not worn in year
- Discard damaged items
- Make space on hangers and shelves

Bookshelves:

- Donate books you won't read again
- Clear space for new additions
- Consider e-reader for space-saving

Kitchen:

- Remove unused gadgets
- Discard duplicate items
- Clear drawer and cabinet space



ITEMS PERFECT FOR HOLIDAY DONATIONS

Toys and games:

- Organizations gear up for holiday giving
- High demand for children's items
- Your donation directly helps families
- Feels good to give during giving season

Clothing:

- Winter items especially needed
- Coats, sweaters, boots
- Professional clothing for job seekers
- Kids' clothing (always in demand)

Books and media:

- Libraries often have book sales
- Schools and teachers need books
- Literacy organizations
- Movie and game collections

Kitchen items:

- People setting up new homes
- Organizations furnishing family housing
- Community kitchens

Holiday decorations you're releasing:

- Others will enjoy them
- Perfect timing as people are decorating
- Nothing goes to waste



CHAPTER 7



Minimalist Traditions Creating Lasting Memories

Minimalist traditions focus on experiences and connections rather than stuff. They create the magic and meaning of holidays without creating clutter, stress, or financial burden. This chapter helps you build traditions that everyone looks forward to year after year.

WHY EXPERIENCE-BASED TRADITIONS MATTER

Memory creation:

- Experiences create stronger memories
- Shared activities bond families
- Building family culture

Authentic:

- Chosen based on what you enjoy
- Reflects your family's values
- Meaningful rather than obligatory

No clutter:

- Nothing to store
- Nothing to maintain
- Nothing to eventually discard
- Only memories remain

Simple Holiday **TRADITIONS**

Sunday Holiday Movie with Homemade Cocoa:

- Everyone in pajamas
- Homemade hot chocolate (from scratch)
- Special mugs kept just for this
- Popcorn or holiday cookies
- Rotate who picks movie
- No phones or distractions

Holiday Light Tour:

- Bring hot cocoa in travel mugs
- Vote on favorite displays
- Take photos of favorites

Holiday Baking Together:

- Try new recipes together
- Enjoy what you bake for breakfast/dessert
- Take photos of creations
- Give some away to neighbors

Holiday Volunteer Activity as Family

- Choose cause meaningful to family
- Everyone participates at age-appropriate level
- Discuss experience afterward
- Makes holidays about giving back



Photo Traditions

Annual pajamas family photo:

- Same spot in house every year
- Everyone in holiday pajamas
- Document growth and change
- Digital or print one copy per year

First snow photo at favorite location:

- Special spot in your area
- When first snow arrives
- Captures seasonal moment
- Becomes collection over years

Holiday activities documentation:

- Photo of cookie baking
- Photo of decorating tree
- Photo of special moments
- Select best to print or display

"Behind the scenes" of holiday prep:

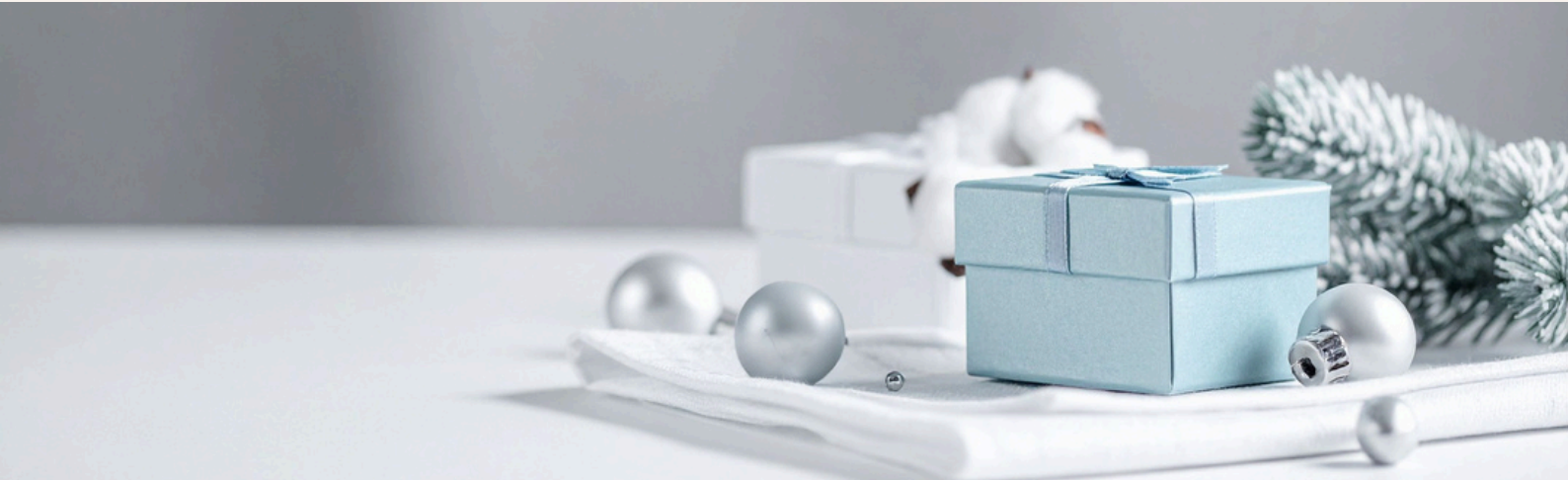
- Wrapping presents
- Decorating together
- Cooking special meals
- Real candid moments



Holiday **TRADITIONS**



CHAPTER 8



Staying the Course Your Minimalist Holiday Mindset

Throughout your minimalist holiday journey, you'll face pressure from family, friends, advertising, and your own internalized expectations. This chapter gives you the permission and the mindset tools you need to stay aligned with your values.

PERMISSION SLIPS FOR MINIMALIST HOLIDAYS

You have permission to:

- Skip traditions that no longer serve your family
- Set boundaries on gift-giving expectations
- Say no to events that cause stress without adding joy
- Modify traditions to fit your current season of life
- Create new traditions that reflect your values

THE MINIMALIST HOLIDAY MINDSET MANTRAS

When you're struggling with decisions, doubting your choices, or feeling pressure to do more, return to these mantras:

"Less stuff, more meaning."

Use when: You're tempted to buy more gifts, more decorations, more anything just because it's on sale or everyone else is doing it.

The truth: Things don't create meaning. Experiences, connections, and intentional choices create meaning. Every time you choose to buy less, you're choosing more of what actually matters.

Apply it: Before any purchase, ask "Does this add meaning or just add stuff?"

"No is a complete sentence."

Use when: Someone is pressuring you to host, attend, participate, or spend in ways that don't align with your values or capacity.

The truth: You don't owe anyone an explanation for your choices. Your "no" doesn't require justification, elaborate excuses, or apologies.

Apply it: Practice saying "No, that won't work for us" without adding "because..." You'll be amazed how often that's all that is needed.



MORE HOLIDAY MINDSET MANTRAS

"Progress over perfection."

Use when: You're beating yourself up for not implementing everything perfectly, for caving to pressure, or for making choices you regret.

The truth: You're learning a new way of doing holidays. You won't get everything right. That's not just okay, it's expected. Better than before is success.

Apply it: When you notice yourself being self-critical, literally say out loud "Progress over perfection" and give yourself grace.

"Our holidays, our way."

Use when: You're comparing your celebrations to others' (especially on social media), feeling inadequate, or wondering if you're doing it "right."

The truth: There is no "right" way to do holidays. There's only your way—the way that aligns with your values, fits your budget, works for your family, and brings you actual joy.

Apply it: When comparison creeps in, close social media and focus on what's in front of you. Your real life, not others' highlight reels.

"When in doubt, leave it out."

Use when: You're unsure whether to buy something, commit to something, or keep something.

The truth: In our consumer culture, we're trained to default to "more" and "yes." Minimalism means defaulting to "less" and "no"—and then selectively adding what truly adds value.

Apply it: Make "no" your default answer. Then consciously choose "yes" only when something clearly aligns with your values and adds genuine value.

STAY CONSISTENT
IN YOUR OWN



minimalism JOURNEY
AND CELEBRATE
YOUR *success.*





CONCLUSION: YOUR MINIMALIST HOLIDAY JOURNEY

**YOU NOW HAVE THE TOOLS, FRAMEWORK, AND STRATEGIES TO CREATE
MINIMALIST HOLIDAYS THAT FEEL MEANINGFUL, JOYFUL, AND
AUTHENTICALLY YOURS**

When you embrace these principles, you will experience:

More time because you're not:

- Shopping endlessly for numerous gifts
- Decorating every surface
- Managing overwhelming amounts of stuff
- Cleaning up excessive clutter

More money because you're:

- Buying thoughtfully, not impulsively
- Choosing quality over quantity
- Avoiding duplicate purchases
- Not buying decorations and items you don't need

More peace because you're:

- Living in visually calm spaces
- Not overwhelmed by obligations
- Making decisions aligned with values
- Not comparing yourself to other

More meaning because you're:

- Focusing on experiences and connections
- Creating traditions that matter
- Teaching children about what's truly important
- Living authentically

More presence because you're:

- Not distracted by managing stuff
- Not stressed about mess and chaos
- Able to be fully present with people you love
- Actually enjoying the season



Thank you **FOR READING**

The holidays are not about how much you buy, how many decorations you display, or how elaborate your celebrations are.

The holidays are about connection, love, gratitude, and joy.

Everything in this book serves those purposes. When you strip away the excess, what remains is what truly matters, time with people you love, traditions that bring meaning, experiences that create memories, and the peace that comes from living aligned with your values.

You don't need more to have meaningful holidays. You need less.
Less stress. Less obligation. Less overwhelm.

And in that space created by less, you'll find more.

Welcome to minimalist holidays.



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