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welcome!

Hi Friend,

I don't know what your relationship with *stuff* has been like until now but I am so excited for you to enter into the world of minimalism. A world where there is less stuff, less overwhelm and yet more freedom. That's what I call a win-win-win!

My goal is to help moms be able to live with more intention and I see having less stuff as a stepping block to an intentional life.

We only get this one life to live and we have these little humans we are raising. When they see us living our lives, what would they say our priorities are? Having more stuff? Keeping up with the Joneses? Or enjoying their childhood and enjoying life?

It is my hope and prayer that this short little guide to minimalism will help give you the boost you need to start living *an intentional life*.

Let's dive in!

chantel



let's get started

I don't know anybody who wouldn't call themselves busy these days. Some of us are busy doing things we love and others of us are busy doing things we dread but feel that we are expected to do so we do them anyway. We are all busy with something.

When brainstorming how I could help other women jump start their minimalist journey I knew I wanted the beginning of the process to be simple. Big wins at the beginning of any process help us feel motivated to continue.

Despite our busy lives we can all find 15 minutes in the day. Maybe that means you watch one less TV show in the evening, or you don't paint your nails one day or maybe it means not endlessly scrolling social media for the umpteenth time that day.

Before we jump right in, I want to say that I am coming to you as a real mother who used to struggle with some major packrat tendencies. We don't have enough hours in the day for me to tell you story after story of random junk I've stored and collected (remember, I know you are busy). But when I came across the idea of minimalism and simple living something just clicked, *it just made sense*.

I now buy less (save money) and have less (less cleaning) and relax more. Can you get a better deal than that?! I'm actually willing to bet that a lot of what you are busy with each day is a result of clutter in your life and if you are serious about starting your minimalism journey you'll soon notice a dramatic reduction of stress and overwhelm.

so, what is minimalism?

First off, let's clear something up, what exactly is minimalism? I would strongly encourage you to create your own definition or search the internet for one that works for you.

My personal definition of minimalism is:

***Only owning what I am going to use or benefit from
and getting rid of the excess.***

You'll notice my definition is pretty grey, there are no black and white phrases like "only owning 30 pieces of clothing" or "only buying books I am going to read over and over again", because personally, I probably own a lot less clothes than the average person and a lot more books. It's about priorities (and you can clearly see where mine lie).

If this definition of minimalism works for you, go ahead and use it, if not, create your own!

For the record, the basis of my minimalism definition comes from the quote by William Morris where he says: "Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful." **mic drop** I think that's all that needs to be said on that topic.

So, now let's get into how to jump start your minimalism in just 15 minutes!

minimalism in 15 minutes

The best way to jump start your minimalism is to pick one area that is overwhelming you the most. Here are some ideas:

- hobby supplies
- your clothes
- your kids clothes
- toys
- kitchenware
- your desk or office
- your bedroom
- the linen closet
- the entry
- or a different area that is your biggest struggle

Before you start the timer I want you to grab two bins and a garbage bag. The bins can be two cardboard boxes, two laundry baskets, two buckets or if you don't have any, you can use two blankets spread out, put these outside of the area you are cleaning so you have space. So, if you are cleaning out your closet put the bins in your room, if you are cleaning out your kids' playroom put the bins in the hallway.

The second pre-step is to take a picture of the area/room/closet/whatever it may be before you start. Save it to a folder or upload it somewhere so you can look back on it later. Take a second to think about how the room makes you feel. What kind of words come to mind? Cluttered? Overwhelmed? Stuffed? Stressed?

Okay, now here is what you are going to do. When you start the timer (and for the record, you don't really have to set a timer, but if you like to compete with yourself, go right ahead), you will go through the room quickly and place anything that has not been used in the last month (approximately) in one of the bins.

One bin is for the thrift store; stuff that you know you have no use for will go in this bin, and the other bin is for things that you know you haven't used but don't feel ready to part with just yet (your "undecided" bin). And I think it's fairly obvious what the garbage bag is for (it's for garbage).

While you go throughout the room, make a decision on an item *before you touch it*, this is very important. I know it sounds kind of hokey but once you touch an item you feel more sentiment towards it, something that didn't matter to you before you touched it suddenly matters to you as soon as you touch it. It sounds strange but it's actually true!

As you start going through the room do a wide sweep and grab things that are out in the open that you know you haven't used in the last month right away. Then as you finish the more prominent stuff start digging a little deeper to find the stuff that you haven't used in awhile that has gotten tucked away.

Go ahead and keep any obvious treasures where they are at in the room. But everything else that hasn't been used in the last month has to go in one of the bins. If you are freezing when it gets to deciding if something should go in the thrift store bin or the undecided bin. Go ahead and put it in the undecided one.

Once your 15 minutes is up or you feel like you are done in that space, take a picture of the empty space, save that to the same place you backed up the first photo. Take a minute to look at the space and feel the difference. If you had used words like: cluttered, overwhelming, messy before, what words would you use to describe it now, calm, empty, relaxing?

Then you are going to box up the thrift store bin and put it in your vehicle right away, those are heading to the thrift store the next time you head out.

Your “undecided” bin is going to go into storage. These are the items that you haven’t used in a month so they aren’t very useful but for whatever reason you aren’t quite ready to let them go yet. Put a date in your calendar to go through the bin one month from now. In the next month if you realize you need something from that bin you can go ahead and dig it out.

When your alert pops up in a month you can go through your “undecided” bin and figure out what needs to be donated and what you actually want to keep. *But* before you decide you want to keep it all, look back on the photo you took before you started purging your space and compare that to the photo you took when you were done. Do you really want to go back to that before photo? Is the stuff left in your undecided bin really worth it to you?

just keep swimming

Thank you so much for jumping into this challenge! I would love for you to reach out and let me know how it went for you!

But why stop at just a jump start? You now have some great skills under your belt to start tackling your home one area at a time. You can do this, mama! Like Dory says, "just keep swimming, just keep swimming".

Want to see snippets of my intentional life? I love sharing snippets of our daily life over on Instagram, come on over and say hello! I'm over at [@anintentionallife.me](https://www.instagram.com/anintentionallife.me) - that's just one way I try to remind myself to live with intentional daily.

Here are a few other resources you may enjoy:

- [Eliminating Kids Clutter](#) - a free mini course!
- [Things I No Longer Buy](#)
- [I Took My Kids' Toys Away](#)
- [all my simple living and minimalism posts](#)

ciao,
chantel

