

what to keep is to pick up each item and ask yourself, "Does this spark joy?"

Let me tell you about a client of mine whom I'll call "A." She was a thirty-year-old mother of two in a five-member household. When I visited her house for our second session, it was obvious that the number of things in her home had decreased. "You really worked hard," I said. "It looks like you must have gotten rid of about thirty bags' worth of stuff."

Looking very pleased, she said, "Yes, I did! I sent all my keepsakes to my mother's place." I could hardly believe my ears. She had used the "send it to my parents" method of tidying. When I first started this business, I actually thought that being able to send things "home" was the privilege of people who came from large houses in the country. The majority of my clients were single women or young mothers living in Tokyo. If they asked permission to send things to their parents' house, I said, "Sure. As long as you do it right away." I never thought anything of this until my clientele expanded to homes in rural towns. When I learned the true state of parents' houses, I was forced to retract my rash words.

Now I realize that people who have a convenient place to send things, such as a parents' house, are actually quite unfortunate. Even if the house is large with rooms to spare, it is not some infinitely expanding fourth dimension. **People never retrieve the boxes they send "home." Once sent, they will never again be opened.**