



YOUR KINDLE NOTES FOR:

Outer Order, Inner Calm: Declutter and Organize to Make More Room for Happiness

by Gretchen Rubin

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32 Highlights

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 65

By getting rid of the things I don't use, don't need, or don't love, as well as the things that don't work, don't fit, or don't suit, I free my mind—and my shelves—for what I truly value.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 79

1 OUTER ORDER SAVES TIME, MONEY, SPACE, ENERGY, AND PATIENCE. I move more smoothly through my days. I don't waste time searching for things; I don't struggle to put things away; I don't have to run out to buy a duplicate of something I already own. It's easier to clean. I feel less frustrated, less rushed, and less cramped. I'm not frittering my life away on trivial chores and annoyances.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 84

2 OUTER ORDER FOSTERS PEACE WITHIN RELATIONSHIPS. I spend less time nagging at or arguing with other people. I avoid boring questions like "Where's my passport?" "Where's the toner?" "Who left the mess in that room?" "Where does this go?"

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 87

3 OUTER ORDER CREATES A FEELING OF SANCTUARY. I experience true leisure because I don't feel pressured to jump up and deal with a mess. Once visual noise is eliminated, I feel more focused and there's more room in my mind, my schedule, and my space for creative activity. Instead of being sources of stress, my home and my office are places of comfort and energy. I can revel in the beauty of my possessions because I can see and reach everything easily. I have plenty of room for everything that's important to me. Our physical experience colors our emotional experience, and when my body is in a place that's orderly, my mind becomes more serene.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 94

4 OUTER ORDER REDUCES GUILT. I feel relieved of guilt about the possessions I've never used and the projects I've never finished. Because I make better use of what I already own, I can buy less in the future. And I know I'll leave a lighter burden for others to handle after I'm gone.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 98

5 OUTER ORDER ALLOWS ME TO PROJECT A MORE POSITIVE IDENTITY TO MYSELF AND TO THE WORLD. I feel greater self-possession; I feel more self-assured and capable. Once I've cleared away the things I don't need, use, or love, my surroundings reveal to me, and to others, the things that matter most to me. Careful curation means that my space and my possessions reflect my truest identity.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 102

6 OUTER ORDER RELIEVES ME OF THE FEAR OF PEOPLE'S JUDGMENT. I'm more hospitable because I can invite people over without hours of preparatory cleaning. I don't panic at the prospect of an unexpected guest or an emergency repair. I'm pleased to show my space to others.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 106

7 OUTER ORDER REFLECTS WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW IN MY LIFE. Because I've let go of things that once—but no longer—played an active role in my life, I have more time for what's important right now. No more giant toys from my children's babyhood, no more rows of thick law books crowding my office bookshelves. I keep a few precious mementos from the old days, but most of my space is devoted to what's important now.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 111

8 OUTER ORDER CREATES A SENSE OF POSSIBILITY. When too much stuff piles up, I feel paralyzed. Digging myself out of the mess seems insurmountable, so I stay stuck. When clutter is gone, I have more choices about the future: what to buy, what to do, where and how to live. Because I'm no longer hemmed in by possessions, I feel a sense of renewal.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 115

9 OUTER ORDER SHARPENS MY SENSE OF PURPOSEFULNESS. I know what I have, why I have it, and where it belongs. I make good use of everything I own. There's nothing random, no uncertainty, no default choices. I'm surrounded by meaningful possessions that are ready for me to use them.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 129

We've achieved the right level of order when we can find what we need, feel good in our space, and don't feel hindered by stuff. For some people, what looks like disorder works just fine.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 139

Some people ask me, "Given the problems of the world, isn't it superficial and silly to devote time, energy, money, or concern to tackling clutter?" We may be deeply worried about the problems of the world, and we're right to be worried. Yet the promise of outer order is something that we can tackle on our own right now. By

doing so, we help restore our equanimity—and this isn't a futile or selfish gesture, because that equanimity makes us more effective when we seek to address the problems of the world.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 159

If you want a golden rule that will fit everybody, this is it: Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful. WILLIAM MORRIS

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 194

At the same time, it's important to remember that outer order isn't simply a matter of having less or having more; it's a matter of wanting what we have.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 206

When trying to decide the fate of a possession, ask yourself: Do I need it? Do I love it? Do I use it? Sometimes, you use something that you don't love or you need something even though you use it only once every five years. Or perhaps you love something that you never use. That's okay—just because something isn't being used doesn't mean it's useless. But if you don't need it, love it, or use it, you should probably get rid of it.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 342

In many situations, we don't need to make a perfect choice but just a good-enough choice.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 417

To decide what to keep and what to toss, ask: Do you actually need this piece of paper or receipt? What specific use does it serve? Have you ever used it? How easy would it be to replace it if you needed it? Except for items like old letters and journals, most things can be replaced. Will it quickly become dated—like travel or shopping information? Does the internet mean that it's no longer necessary? For instance, the instruction manuals for most appliances are now online. What's the consequence of not having it if you do need it? Was it once necessary but is now related to a part of your life that's over? Could you scan it, so that you have a copy if you need it? At work, does someone else have a copy of it? Have you verified your assumptions? For instance, when you took your current position, your coworker told you, "I always keep these receipts," so you assumed that you need to keep them, too. But maybe you don't.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 577

CREATE A "TECH SACK." Gather any tech items you often use—such as a power cord, wall adapter, headphones, headphone adapter, external power supply—and create a "tech sack" that you can store in a drawer or throw into your briefcase, backpack, purse, or luggage.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 595

Brass shines with constant usage, a beautiful dress needs wearing; leave a house empty, it rots. OVID

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 711

The things that we love tell us what we are. THOMAS MERTON

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 760

Do you still subscribe to The New Yorker, even though you never read it anymore? Sometimes, we haven't noticed that our identity has evolved and that items once useful or appealing no longer suit us.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 817

I remind myself that the things that annoy me now are the things that I'll remember with longing in the future. Although at one time keeping a stroller in the hallway drove me crazy, now I think back with intense nostalgia, Ah, remember those days when we had a baby and a stroller! The days are long, but the years are short.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 833

You learn more about a person by living in his house for a week than by years of running into him at social gatherings. PHILLIP LOPATE

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 848

Many people reach a point where they don't want any more "stuff." If so, give the gift of an experience rather than a possession, by taking them to a restaurant, cooking them a meal, taking them to a performance or an exhibit, paying for exercise sessions for them, volunteering to tackle a necessary chore for them, or the like.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 928

FEELING BLUE? TRY CLEANING UP. This strategy won't work for everyone, but some people (like me) find it soothing to clear clutter. The gentle activity, the action of putting things in their proper places, and the visual gratification of seeing order emerge from a mess combine to give a big boost. Give it a shot. The next time you feel angry, anxious, or unhappy, try establishing some order to your surroundings. You might feel a lot better. I have a friend who was furious with her father, so she spent the day cleaning out her office. Sorting, tossing, creating space, and organizing helped her to calm down.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 981

DO YOU STRUGGLE TO GET RID OF POSSESSIONS THAT ONCE GAVE YOU GREAT PLEASURE OR SERVICE? In The Theory of Moral Sentiments, philosopher Adam Smith observed: We conceive...a sort of gratitude for those inanimated objects, which have been the causes of great, or frequent pleasure to us. The sailor, who, as soon as he got ashore, should mend [build] his fire with the plank upon which he had just escaped from a shipwreck, would seem to be guilty of an unnatural action. We should expect that he would rather preserve it with care and affection, as a monument that was, in some measure, dear to him.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1024

DON'T EXPECT PRAISE OR APPRECIATION. If you clear clutter with the expectation that other people will appreciate and praise your efforts, you may end up feeling very frustrated. Some people (such as me) find it easier to clear clutter when they tell themselves, "I'm doing it for myself." Other people find it easier when they tell themselves, "I'm doing this for someone else—for other members of my family, for guests, for strangers." Either way, don't expect people to react the way you'd like. People aren't always good at saying "Thank you." Or even noticing.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1055

WALKING FROM ROOM TO ROOM? TAKE ONE THING WITH YOU. Whenever you walk from one room to another room, take one thing with you. You don't have to take this item to its final destination, just move it closer. When you walk out of the kitchen, take your sweater with you. Don't take it all the way to your closet right now, just move it closer to your closet. Little by little, things begin to move into place.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1139

I love a broad margin to my life. **HENRY DAVID THOREAU**

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1197

MAKE YOUR BED. When I ask people what habits make them happier, I'm surprised by how many answer, "Making my bed." Why does such an ordinary activity strike such a chord? Making the bed is a quick and manageable task, yet it makes a room look much nicer. Also, the bedroom plays a special part in our home; our bed is a symbol of ourselves. So when the bedroom seems better ordered, we feel better ordered. Some people say that, to the contrary, they revel in not making their beds. Fair enough! Everyone's happiness project is different.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1231

END EACH STAGE OF YOUR DAY WITH THE "TEN-MINUTE CLOSER." We give children transition times to help them move from one activity to the next, and adults benefit from transitions as well. Before you leave work, take ten minutes to put things in order. This transition time helps to mark the end of the day—and it also makes it far more pleasant to return in the morning. Glance over your calendar for the next day (this step has saved me a lot of trouble) Throw away trash, such as food wrappers or dry pens, and remove dirty dishes Put loose change in a change cup Stash pens, paper clips, binder clips, rubber bands, and other supplies (by the end of the day, I have seven pens scattered across my desk) File or discard any papers that you no longer need Close any open drawers or doors Shred Put away anything set in a transitional space, such as folders "temporarily" placed on the floor Pack up anything that belongs at home For extra credit: Do a ten-minute email blast. For ten minutes, go as fast as you can through your email inbox and blast out as many responses as you can. Unsubscribe to any unwanted email newsletters. Set up for the next day by gathering any necessary items (an especially good idea if you are sometimes late for work) Before walking away from your workspace, take a moment to revel at how orderly and clear it looks. At the end of the evening, do a ten-minute closer at home. Put

shoes away Hang up coats Close all drawers, closets, cabinets, and doors Shove chairs back into place Wipe the kitchen counters Put dishes in the dishwasher Put newspapers and magazine in the recycling pile (if, like me, you're old-fashioned enough to read paper newspapers) Set the TV remote control back in its holder Toss junk mail Unpack any delivered packages Before walking to your bedroom, take a moment to revel at how orderly and clear your home looks.

Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1481

Outer order helps us to feel good: we gain a sense of rest, of spaciousness, of organization, of energy. Outer order helps us no longer to feel bad: we get relief from irritation, guilt, frustration, hurry, and resentment of other people. Outer order helps us to feel right: we're able to keep our attention, time, energy, and money trained on the tasks, people, places, activities, and values that matter most to us. Outer order helps us to create an atmosphere of growth: we make visible improvements in our surroundings, in ways that benefit everyone who enters that place, with room to expand, with a sense of renewal.

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