



remembering a
Life

A GOOD DEATH – MODULE SEVEN: Your Possessions

What emotions and thoughts arise when you think about going through your things and potentially decluttering?

If you've ever cleaned out someone else's house, write a paragraph or two about the experience. What do you want to do differently with regard to your own possessions?

Imagine how it would feel to live only with things you love and treasure. Would life feel simpler and more peaceful? Why or why not?

Are you keeping what is called "aspirational clutter," which just ends up making you feel bad? This could be things like cross stitch kits you'll get to 'someday,' old newspapers you think you'll go through and pull out articles you want to read again 'someday,' or furniture you'll refinish or repaint 'someday.' Will those 'somedays' ever realistically come? Items such as these take up mental space and are non-verbally nagging us each time we see them. Can you let them go? Make a list and check back in a week to see if you're ready to discard or donate them.

Try the bathroom exercise:

- Take an empty cardboard box and head into your bathroom
- Put anything in the box you haven't used in a month or have never opened, even to throw away the packaging.
- Place these items in the box and label it with today's date.
- Place the box under your bed. If you need to go into the box to get something in the course of a month, take it out and don't put it back in the box—leave it in your bathroom after you use it.
- After one month, discard anything you haven't used from the box.

This exercise is eye-opening specifically because bathrooms are purely functional spaces, but we spend a lot of time in and out of them during the day. When our bathrooms only contain things we actually use, they become a place of peace. How does it feel at the end of the month to spend time each day in an environment like this?

You can bring this same principle to the rest of the things in other rooms in your house. Go around each room with a roll of painter's tape and put a piece of tape on everything you'd want to take with you if there was a fire and you couldn't be sure you'd be able to get back into your house. Looking at the rest of the items, how do you feel about them?

Once you've completed some of these exercises, you should congratulate yourself. This is HARD WORK, and not many have the courage to tackle it. Your survivors will thank you, and maybe you'll motivate them to do the same!