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LAUREN: Hello, and welcome to this episode of the Talks at Google podcast, where great minds meet. I'm Lauren, bringing you this week's episode. Talks at Google brings the world's most influential thinkers, creators, makers, and doers all to one place. Every episode of this podcast is taken from a video that can be seen at [Youtube.com/TalksatGoogle](https://www.youtube.com/TalksatGoogle). This episode is with world-renowned organizational consultant and author, Marie Kondo. Kondo has written four books on organizing, which have collectively sold millions of copies and have been translated from Japanese into many languages. In particular, her book "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up" has been published in more than 30 countries. Listed as one of "Time" magazine's 100 most influential people in 2015, Kondo just released a Netflix series called "Tidying Up with Marie Kondo", which premiered on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

**00:01:03**

LAUREN: This podcast episode is taken from Marie Kondo's January 2015 Talks at Google event, where she speaks about her revolutionary KonMari method for simplifying, organizing, and storing. Here is Marie Kondo: "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up."

[applause]

MARIE KONDO: Hello, everybody. My name is Marie Kondo. Call me KonMari. KonMari. Yes, I am a Japanese organizing consultant. I usually visit grand home and give her one-to-one organizing lesson. [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So first of all, let me start how I usually work with my clients.

**00:02:01**

INTERPRETER: So this is the first example.

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So she is the lady who lives in this room. She's in the—in her 20s.

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: You already see in this picture, that she has full of stuff on her bed. Actually, that's actually her bed, but you might not see it. And she also had a lot of stuff on the floor. And she first told me that, "Don't you think the bedroom is just like a storage?" So when she comes home after work, she never, ever feel relaxing in her room.

MARIE KONDO: But how about after my lesson? [laughter] Voila.

**00:03:00**

MARIE KONDO: It looks so neat and clean. Of course, nothing is on the floor. [laughter] [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So my job is to consult how to organize. And I've been doing this job for more than ten years.

MARIE KONDO: Characteristics of my consultation is thus—my client never go back to the mess. Because they have been transformed to the organized person. Today, I going to tell you how to make your home—how to make your house, in order, in a way that will change your life forever.

**00:04:00**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: But before I start telling you what to do, let me tell you how I start my job—how I discovered this method. I was only five years old when I got very interested in how to organize things. So I was always picking up every single issue of the magazine that my mother was subscribing. And the magazine was about how to organize the house. So when I turned 15 years old, I started a serious consultation to how to organize things. There was a best seller book in Japan titled How to—“A Technique to Get Rid of Things”.

**00:04:48**

And I read that book and I discovered the method. So you probably wouldn't—you would probably wonder what I started—how I started researching—organizing things. First, I started reading every single book published in Japan on organizing. And I also keep organizing thing. I worked every single day organizing things.

MARIE KONDO: Today my own room. Next today, my brother's room. Next to next today, my sister's room. Followed by the kitchen, living room, bathroom, my friend's room, friend's room, friend's room, my classmate's classroom, classroom, classroom of the school. And again, return to my own room.

**00:06:00**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So I spend most of my teenage years organizing things, just like that. And I started organizing consultation business when I was 19. I also picked this topic in my thesis at college.

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese] So safe to assume that I am a crazy tidying fanatic.  
[laughter] [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So you are perfect to think that I'm a fanatic organizer, at this point.

MARIE KONDO: Yes.

**00:07:00**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So I'd like to present KonMari method which I discovered, to everybody here today. So let me start...

MARIE KONDO: ...KonMari method 1.

INTERPRETER: So number 1 of KonMari method.

MARIE KONDO: Tidy in one shot as quickly and completely as possible. [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: If you think you have to tidy around you every day, gradually, little by little, that's completely wrong. Because you need a shock that change your mind into tidying your thing. So, you want to finish it in very short period of time.

**00:08:02**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So the first important thing is to set the deadline of organizing. Of course, you can set the deadline in one week, assuming you're going to do that every day. Or you decide to do every weekend and set the deadline in three month. So don't think about tidying is every day event. It's a special event, just like a festival. [laughter] So the number one—number two item in KonMari method is how are you going to do it?

MARIE KONDO: KonMari method 2: sort by category, not by location. [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: It's very common to make this mistake if you try to organize things in a specific location.

**00:09:04**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: It never ends if you try to tidy up in just one portion of the closet or one portion of the living room. The right way to do is to organize by category, and do it quickly. For example, if you decide to organize your clothes first, take out all the clothes in your house in one spot. Make a big pile of all the clothes you have in your house. So just in the same way, if you decide to organize your books, take out all your books from your bookcase, and pile them all in one location in the house.

**00:10:00**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: I know it looks hard. It's really messy. I'll tell you why you need to do this. If you bring out all your stuff, books, clothes, in one location, you visually realize how much books, how much clothes—how many clothes, how many books you have. On a daily life, we rarely understand how much stuff we have around us. So it is a great opportunity if you bring out everything in one spot, realize how much stuff you have, how many books you have, so that you can decide which one you want to keep, which one you really need to keep, and which one you can get rid of.

**00:11:02**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So from this point, the next step you have to take is to sort them, or you know, separate them—separate them between your—the things you need and the things you don't. And the criteria of this method, the criteria I recommend in my method is a little bit unique.

MARIE KONDO: KonMari method three.

INTERPRETER: That's number three of KonMari method.

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese] Does it “spark joy”? [laughter] Spark joy, this. [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So does it spark joy? This is the key word. I know I definitely feel weird air in this room right now. [laughter]

MARIE KONDO: Don't worry. I'm used to be the reaction of the audience. [laughter]

**00:12:00**

INTERPRETER: So this is a really common reaction in my seminar.

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So what I mean by saying “spark joy”, I can explain exactly what it is. So if you look at one thing, you should question yourself. If that thing makes you happy? Does it make you impressed? Many people always think first what—which one to get rid of, but it is much more important to think which one to keep—which one you want to keep and live together from now on. So I will tell you how to make a decision.

**00:13:03**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So point number 1: make sure you touch it. Take every single item you can think of in your hand—on your hand. And imagine how your body reacts to that moment, how you feel when you touch the—touch the item.

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese] --spark joy.

INTERPRETER: So spark joy: this is—this is the reaction from your body, the reaction you feel from your body when you touch the item you should keep...

MARIE KONDO: Chooiing. [laughter]

INTERPRETER: ...just like that.

**00:14:03**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So, if you feel every single part of your body freezes up when you touch the item, that's the right feeling. So, on the other hand, if the item doesn't give you any inspiration, for example, this one, [laughter] you start out feeling down. Your whole body started feeling down. I know you are skeptical, but if you really try to do this, you'll realize how your body really reacts.

**00:15:02**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: Definitely after the seminar, when you go home tonight, try part of it. So let me go over my three basic methods: do it quickly in short amount of time; and sort by category; and find the item—if the item sparks joy.

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese] “Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up”— [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So this is my book, and if you need to know more about it, if you’ll like to know more about it, please pick up this book. So I definitely want every one of you to read my book, but I will give you one more technique.

**00:16:02**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So this is that right order of organizing. There’s definitely the right order when you organize stuff, and this is how it goes. Start from clothes, books, document, miscellaneous items, then mementos. Make sure you follow this order. It often happens when you are going through old photos or mementos, the items you were given from my mother, it always stops you from organizing. That’s why I definitely recommend you this order, because this order gives you the sense of spark joy feeling. You definitely learn that feeling with your body.

**00:17:01**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So in this order, while you start with clothes, your body and your mind get trained with spark joy feeling and by the time you reach to mementos, you’re already good at how to do. You already know how to go through mementos. I’d like you to try my method with this order, hopefully tonight. [laughter]

MARIE KONDO: This KonMari method always works. [laughter] I hope you would really try. [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So I explain all my method to you right now—by now. So I would like to open the floor for Q&A session.

**00:18:00**

PERSON: So I wanted to know how do you deal with somebody who has a child, like a one-year-old child, and there’s toys everywhere?

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: Oh, this is not difficult. It depends on the child’s age, but I have two different methods depending on the child’s age. The borderline is about three years old. Because if the child is younger than three years old, most of the cases, parents just organize their stuff. But if the child is over three years old—older than three years old, it’s time to train them how to organize things. And they’re capable of it. And the important thing at this point is, do not tell them to organize the toys, tell them to organize the clothes. That’s important.

**00:19:03**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: Well, I'll tell you why, because clothes is something you always put on every day. So if you learn how to fold the clothes that you always put on and put it back into the closet at the right spot, that's the best way that they learn they need to organize and the importance of organizing things. So number one key is to teach them how to—how to fold the clothes.

PERSON: Okay.

PERSON: So I understand your method in terms of getting yourself into a mindset where you only have to do this once, but I was curious how you deal with things that we acquire. Either things that we acquire ourselves or things like gifts that come into the house. Do you do an inventory annually, or do you just not let them come into the house?

**00:20:00**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: You know in her case, she doesn't really have any criteria, any order, any rules for that. Because her method is completely based on if you were impressed, if you get inspired by the item. Because it depends on the person how often you want to organize, or how much stuff you need to keep around yourself. Because my method, again and again, is based on if you get inspired, you know. If you get, you know, that spark joy feeling, that doesn't really bring you back to the cluttering situation. It really—it's not really depending on how often you should acquire or how you get the stuff in your room.

MARIE KONDO: Thank you.

PERSON: Next question.

MARIE KONDO: Next questions, yes.

**00:21:02**

PERSON: Thank you so much for coming. My question is I have a lot of things that I need but I don't like, but they don't inspire joy. How do I find the balance between keeping versus discarding them?

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: For example, what kind of, like, items?

PERSON: GMAT study books and like very old kitchen utensils that I haven't replaced.

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: If you judge those items are necessary for you right now, that means those items are making you happy. So even if you are not inspired by those items, but if they are necessary to you right now, you should keep them.

**00:22:00**

PERSON: Okay.

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: [laughs] So one recommendation I can give you is that if the item doesn't inspire you—if you don't get the special feeling, you know, try to--try to talk it into it. Try to, you know, convince it—convince yourself that this is a good thing—this is a good thing for you.

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: If you keep doing it, even if the item doesn't inspire you, you started getting positive feeling about it. So, in this way, you'd probably find all of the items you have in your house inspiring.

PERSON: I see. Thank you.

**00:22:56**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

PERSON: Next question.

MARIE KONDO: Next.

PERSON: I'm just curious about how to deal when—how to deal with a case when most of the stuff actually does not belong to you, so it's not your decision to keep it.

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: So those are belonging to someone else, correct? You should prioritize to organize your own items before you started thinking about someone else. So from my experience, you know, in the past ten plus years of my career, I've definitely seen several clients who keep saying that, "Oh, I tried to tidy up my room but my husband doesn't cooperate. My kids don't really cooperate." But if you look at clients saying something like that, they're the ones who are not tidying up correctly. [laughter]

**00:23:56**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: [laughs] So this is true. I know you have to organize stuff no matter what, so the important thing is you organize your stuff, and put them in your space. So separate the space with other people. So you take care of your stuff in your space, and leave the other stuff and other spaces to the other people. And you shouldn't worry about the space allocated to other people, because that's up to them. That's their own business: how to use them, how to organize them. Of course, you can set out rules—a few rules like you shouldn't really, you know, anything shouldn't leak out or, you know, anything shouldn't be exposed, stuff like that. But that's—that's the best way to deal with other people.

PERSON: Thank you.

MARIE KONDO: Thank you. [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: [laughs] Good luck.

**00:24:59**

PERSON: Hi. Thank you for coming. I was—since you talk here about how to initially kind of purge the items you have, just sorting into what to keep and not, do you also have recommendations for then how you go about organizing the items that you decide to keep? Or do you leave that up to the individual person?

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: Yes, there is a clear rule. So make sure to organize the same items in the same category in the same spot. I often see at people's houses the same—the items in the same category here and there. They're kind of scattered around. So my point is to put all of them together in one spot. So as I showed you earlier, organizing by category is very important.

**00:26:00**

INTERPRETER: And another important things I can definitely tell you is how to fold the clothes. That's definitely a big key.

PERSON: Great, thank you.

MARIE KONDO: Thank you.

PERSON: Hi. Thanks for coming here, and thanks for taking the time to write the book. I have a friend who is, you know, a pretty serious hoarder with lots of stuff. And, you know, when you ask him, you know, "Do you need this stuff? Can you throw the stuff away?" The answer is, "Oh, I might need it later" or, you know, "I have this grand plan to use this in such a way." But of course, that never happens and, you know, stuff just keep accumulating. I wonder if you have worked with clients like that, and, you know, what you say to them, and, you know, what the outcome is?

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: Probably you are asking me the advice to somebody who don't even bother organizing?

PERSON: No, actually, it's pretty organized. You know, he can find things. It's just a huge amount of stuff that—

**00:27:00**

INTERPRETER: Oh, so it's not cluttered, but he has a lot of items.

PERSON: It's a lot of items, and it's kind of creeping into the corridor space and so on. You can't walk around in the house, you know.

INTERPRETER: [speaking Japanese]

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: If he is my client, I don't think it's important for me if he has too many items or not. I think it is much more important to figure out if that person is happy with that amount of items. So I



would probably recommend that person to imagine the ideal lifestyle for the person. I think your friend need to figure out what kind of lifestyle he or she wants.

**00:28:00**

INTERPRETER: You know, what kind of—what's their realistic life, you know, your friend wants, so that he or she can figure out how much stuff to keep or what to keep, what not to keep, etcetera. And this is very efficient way of mindset for anybody if you have somebody like that in your family members, you know, friends around you, this is really highly recommended.

PERSON: Okay. Thank you.

PERSON: So we have time for one more question. Those of you that were lucky enough to get here early and got a book, Marie will sign them in the back afterwards.

PERSON: Yeah, my question is related to something that as engineers we think about sometimes a bit too much—that how frequently we should run a task? Like, should we run it in an online, think about it running all the time, or should we run it in a batch? So what do you think about organizing? What's the ideal frequency that you advise? Like should we think--always be running in our mind, "Oh, I just picked a pen."

**00:29:01**

PERSON: "It's probably not that useful anymore, so--" And should we always be thinking about it or should we do it something—like, at the extreme end would be like once in a year which is what I do typically. Like, at the end of the year in December I think all right, this is a bag for Goodwill, this is a bag to throw. And that's like the minimum we do. So what's—and when should we do that? Like, should we do it, like, end of the year? Should we do it every end of day? Or should we constantly be thinking about it every time we, like, encounter a thing in the house or at workplace?

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: Well, my answer is—the only answer is, just do it one time. Talking about when you should do, my answer is right now. It can be any time, but do it now.

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**00:30:00**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: But the reason is—it's not for tidying up your house, tidying up your living space. It's all about how you want to spend the rest of your life from now on. So I highly recommend you to do it right now, ASAP. Good luck.

MARIE KONDO: Yes.

Person: Okay. Any closing comments? Or anything else that Marie wants to say?

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: I know the topic is kind of puzzling, it's very unusual, but, you know, as a conclusion, I would like to tell you why. So I know every one of us has so many items. There are so many items in our life.

**00:31:00**

INTERPRETER: But figuring out what items you have right now is figuring out how you are going to live your life. So my method is telling you to examine every single item in your life. That means you examine; you assess your lifestyle and the life you want to live from now on. So once you find out the inspiration from every item you have, you've probably learned the inspiration on how you want to live, how you want to work, how you want to be succeeded, how you want to make friendship, etcetera. So find out your own inspiration point with item and with your lifestyle.

**00:32:05**

MARIE KONDO: [speaking Japanese]

INTERPRETER: Thank you for listening the KonMari method. And please, please, touch one—each item you have and feel the inspiration from them.

MARIE KONDO: Thank you very much, today. [applause]

[mellow music]

LAUREN: Thanks for listening. If you have any feedback about this or any other episode, we'd love to hear from you. You can visit [g.co/TalksAtGoogle/PodcastFeedback](https://g.co/TalksAtGoogle/PodcastFeedback) to leave your comments. To discover more insightful content, you can always find us via [Youtube.com/TalksAtGoogle](https://Youtube.com/TalksAtGoogle), or via our Twitter handle @GoogleTalks. Talk soon.

[mellow music]