

NOT KON-VINCED

BELOW
Despite their
differing
opinions on
the KonMari
method,
the couple
maintains
a healthy
relationship.

***The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* by Marie Kondo was indeed life-changing for many, even resulting in a loyal fan base called the “Konverts”. However, not all homeowners are won over by her decluttering technique.**

Marie Kondo is the author of four bestselling books about organising, and the creator of a decluttering technique known as the KonMari method. Its main idea is to pick an item up and ask yourself if it “sparks joy” – as in, does it bring you happiness? It also includes a wildly unusual folding technique – essentially, you fold clothes so they stand upright in a drawer instead of laying flat, to save space.

Marie Kondo claims that those who follow her method will never have clutter again, and that it works for everyone.

Larry Ho, 41, an assistant sales manager of Tokuyama Asia Pacific, is one of the few who have remained doubtful about the method. Chia Sin Nee, his wife, is a relationship manager in a bank who recently embarked on the KonMari



TOP
Sin Nee has seen steady results by using Marie Kondo's decluttering technique.

ABOVE
Larry's collectibles are in a “neat but systematic” mess.

RIGHT
Marie Kondo's books are global bestsellers.



decluttering journey, and has seen slow but steady results.

Although she gave him the book a while ago, Larry has yet to – and will probably not – read it. “She passed me the book, so I coined my own method of tidying up – the *Mata Kondo* way,” he joked, “which literally means always putting things off till next time.”

As an avid collector of action figures, his collectibles are kept in a mess – but a “neat and systematic” one. Although Larry and Sin Nee do not completely agree on the KonMari method, it has barely affected their relationship. “I’m all for her decluttering,” he says. “I do my own thing and coordinate with her when she needs things moved around.”

However, not all couples may be as fortunate as them, and may have encountered obstacles in either party’s attempt to declutter. For such couples, Dr Alvin Liew, a psychiatrist at Adult & Child Psychological Wellness Clinic, suggests that both parties openly discuss and view the situation in each other’s perspective. In order to find a middle ground, he recommends decluttering in a small room first, to see if the methods will be useful. “Try to engage in activities like cleaning, especially if it involves a shared site such as a home,” he advises.

He notes that the reason why the KonMari method may not work for everyone, contrary to Marie Kondo’s claim, is because the definition of “messy” differs among people. Also, her methods may not work for those who are overly thrifty, as they would not want to discard anything as long as it is usable.

If your partner is overly thrifty, Dr Liew advises placing yourself in their shoes by understanding why he or she is so thrifty – it could be due to past experiences, or even their cultural background. ●

HAS MARIE KONDO FAILED YOU? TRY SWEDISH DEATH CLEANING INSTEAD

This Swedish cleaning ritual is about clearing out your belongings before you die, after which others will have to do it for you. Although it is recommended to start around the age of 65, it is never too soon to start cleaning!

Step 1 Talk about death cleaning all the time, to everyone and anyone. After all, if you talk about death cleaning enough, you’ll finally get to it, right?

Step 2 Ditch anything that is not sentimental or essential – this includes unworn clothes, plates you will never use, and unwanted presents.

Step 3 When catching up with your friends and family, give them some of your items instead of tossing them.

Step 4 Try to sell as much as you can on Carousell – for example, fast-fashion items, shoes that have never fit you, and bags you have not carried in a decade. You’ll be surprised at how much money you can make off these pieces!

Step 5 Keep items like photographs, love letters, birthday cards, as well as daily necessities.

Step 6 Gather a “throwaway box” of items that are meaningful only to you, with a note to discard it after your passing.

