

Library Lines by Dennis May, Kirkland Town Library

Spring? Spring, is that you? The signs that you have arrived are faint. My grass is a little taller, the sun shines more, it's a little warmer outside, there are purple flowers blooming all over my lawn, and snow only comes once a week. I guess it's time to retire the snow shovels, put on my gardening gloves, wake my lawnmower up from its slumber, and dust off my list of springtime chores.

As the years go by, that list keeps growing longer and longer. For me, the most exciting part of spring is working outside: mowing grass, gardening, and repainting my porch for the hundredth time. However, there's a task that has become a tradition for most people. It's a tradition that some people (me) dread, and some people (my wife) embrace. It's a tradition that, in many ways, symbolizes renewal.

For generations, the idea of renewal has long been connected to spring time. Just look at the holidays celebrated during this season: St. Patrick's Day, when everything is flooded with the green of new grass; Easter, the celebration of rebirth; and Mother's Day, when we celebrate the women who nurture life.

The tradition I'm writing about today isn't as official as any of the previously mentioned holidays and it doesn't have a true celebration: no feast and, sadly, no Irish whiskey (although you might deserve though when it's all over). This tradition may take a little elbow grease and a whole lot of motivation.

Of course, I'm talking about spring cleaning.

"Out with the old, in with the new" (or the idea of moving forward and letting go of the past to look ahead to the future) is often associated with the beginning of a new year, or getting rid of old habits, but it could also be taken as the mantra of spring cleaning. For me, it's two-fold: cleansing myself of those things that weigh me down or no longer have a use, and then welcoming something new and exciting that will make me feel joy. The purest meaning of spring cleaning is to thoroughly clean a place or home, but, my definition of the centuries-old term is, in fact, out with the old and in with the new. The following titles, located at Kirkland Town Library, exemplify this very idea.

*The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing* by Marie Condo: Chances are you've heard of the KonMari Method (it has its own Netflix show now!), but if not, the general idea is to declutter by category. Marie Condo encourages her readers and clients to start by organizing clothes, books, and household items before moving on to sentimental items that are more difficult to put aside. In each case, Kondo asks, "Does it spark joy?" If the answer is no, then out the door it goes, but if the answer is yes, that's a compelling reason to keep the item (whatever it is) around. The KonMari method is something that I use at the beginning of spring, mostly for t-shirts and clothing. Not going to sugarcoat it, it's difficult, but it's one of the most rewarding activities I do. If you are stuck with a pair of pants

that still have the tags on, a few shirts that no longer fit but you feel are too important to toss out, or way too many books on your shelf, I recommend giving *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* a read. Think about how much closet space you'll free up!

*The Real Simple Method to Organizing Every Room: And How To Keep It That Way:* So, you've done the KonMari Method or your own variation, a year goes by, and you look around your house and wonder, "Didn't I just organize this mess?" This book is for you! Keeping up with your home organization is tough, overwhelming, and a little scary, but *The Real Simple Method* helps you develop a plan to avoid all your efforts from the year before go to waste. It gives detailed tips and advice about how to conquer the chaos in every room of your home. Entryway a mess? Check. Bedroom suffocating with unworn clothes? Solved. Impossible to eat a meal in your dining room? Get out the fine china for a celebratory meal after reading this book! Not only does it show you how to reign in the chaos, it provides solutions to keep it at bay.

Ironically, as I write this, I am sitting on my couch staring at a stack of hundreds of books and knickknacks we've collected, which I have pulled from my bookshelves in order to repaint the library nook in my home. Once the paint is dry and the shelves are back in place, my wife and I might have to use the KonMari method and make some difficult choices about what to keep. Who am I kidding? We really need space for more books!