



# Goodbye, Things: The New Japanese Minimalism

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## Goodbye, Things: The New Japanese Minimalism Fumio Sasaki

The best-selling phenomenon from Japan that shows us a minimalist life is a happy life.

Fumio Sasaki is not an enlightened minimalism expert or organizing guru like Marie Kondo—he's just a regular guy who was stressed out and constantly comparing himself to others, until one day he decided to change his life by saying goodbye to everything he didn't absolutely need. The effects were remarkable: Sasaki gained true freedom, new focus, and a real sense of gratitude for everything around him. In *Goodbye, Things* Sasaki modestly shares his personal minimalist experience, offering specific tips on the minimizing process and revealing how the new minimalist movement can not only transform your space but truly enrich your life. The benefits of a minimalist life can be realized by anyone, and Sasaki's humble vision of true happiness will open your eyes to minimalism's potential.

## Goodbye, Things: The New Japanese Minimalism Details

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## From Reader Review Goodbye, Things: The New Japanese Minimalism for online ebook

**Amanda NEVER MANDY says**

\*\*I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads.\*\*

Nothing better than throwing out everything you own to make space for nothing. All you need is a bed that doubles as a couch, one set of dishes to cook and eat off of and one towel to dry said dishes and yourself off with. What an easy-peasy, simplified life.

**ARE YOU FREAKING KIDDING ME?!?!?! ONE TOWEL FOR EVERYTHING?!?!?!?**

That was the moment I realized a minimalist lifestyle was not for me. I know the author says to each their own and not everyone will go as lean as others and they for sure are not required to. That a person should make living with less work for them in their own way and all that but seriously...one freaking towel. That towel stands for everything I own that is a comfort object. I work hard to have what I deem necessary and for what I enjoy. I want a towel to dry my dishes with and I want a separate extremely fluffy huge ass towel to dry my bum with. I want to walk around in that towel, lay around in that towel, wrap that towel around my hair and just be cuddly, warm and happy in it however I want. I do not want said towel to dry off a freshly washed glass after coming in contact with my ass, just like I do not want said towel to wipe down the counter and then my face.

**NOPE. NOT HAPPENING.**

I get that throwing out stuff does simplify life but like most things in life, going to the extreme is not the best way to have at it. I see that saving money by not owning all of the crap frees you up to travel, to work less, pursue hobbies you love and so on, but what if owning a super comfy towel is one of the things you love most? Said towel is not a status symbol for me, it didn't cost me a lot of money and it doesn't take up a lot of space. It is the thing I seek and enjoy after a nice long hot shower. It stands for the simple things I appreciate the most in life. The basic little things that make it all worth it, the things our mind defaults to in a pinch.

Wow...that was quite a rant. Pretty sure I am arguing against nothing and I probably missed the main point of the book somewhere along the way or I received it and didn't care. I'm going to go with option two here because I feel like the length of the book was a bit much and it pulled my mind away from the main point. Which is kind of comical considering the book is supposed to be about less being more. I think my rant is just me trying to entertain myself because I usually do agree with the subject matter's line of thinking. I love throwing/giving away my excess and do try to live with only what I need and ENJOY (*emphasis on enjoy*). This read just didn't do it for me and has been relegated to the not-helping-me-at-all pile of self-help books.

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**Joseph says**

Picked this up as a \$1.99 audible book.

I have been a minimalist so sorts for quite a while. In the Marines I could pack up everything I owned into two sea bags. Married, a kid, college (books) and I kind of lost it. Now with a life I could pack into a midsize hatchback (with a bike rack) I am back.

Sasaki can physically pack up his life and move in 30 minutes. I can't. He lives in a 200 square meter apartment. I like going to Ikea and have imagined I could be happy in one of their display micro apartments. Sasaki also ties personal happiness to minimalism in a logical discussion that is very believable. I do imagine it would be like a book on vegetarianism helping save the planet and the readers health to many people though. It is something many do not believe is natural. However, if the reader is curious and interested it is a great instructional book.

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## Caro M. says

So you thought Marie Kondo was funny when she told us to get rid of the garbage in our homes and to only keep the stuff that gave us "sparks of joy"?

Well, Fumio Sasaki goes deeper - he says it's awesome that there are things that give us those "sparks of joy" and he tells us to get rid of them all!!!

Fumio is a minimalist and I dare say an extremist too - he got rid of 95% of the stuff he used to own, including hundreds of books, CDs, DVDs, expensive multimedia devices and fancy clothes and many other pretty and pricey things, together with the big apartment that stored it all. I think that's really impressive, even if I don't want to follow his steps. Fumio says many interesting things in his book - about many sides of owning things and how this owning becomes a burden at some point and even a blockage for our energy, dreams and ambitions and even our self esteem. He's a follower of *danshari* - which means decluttering not just as a home cleaning ritual but a whole lifestyle.

Together with Naoki Numahata Sasaki writes a blog, but the text is all in Japanese, alas, so here's the link to the article about mr Numahata and his many minimalist friends <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/...> , google about Sasaki yourself. And here's one about danshari <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/...> if you care to learn more about it. Because I do. :)

My only problem with the book was that it needed a stricter editor, so it would avoid unnecessary repeating. We surely learn better through repeating, but this one was supposed to be minimalist, wasn't it?

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## 7jane says

I've read a couple of books on minimalist lifestyle, and this is one of the best in my opinion. I especially like that all the photos included with the book are at the start, helps to make the book appealing. You can see from them not only single persons, but also a couple, a family and a traveling person's backpack contents (though only scarf can be counted as clothes in it, which leaves me wondering about the rest of the clothes that could be there).

This includes the author's own pictures and comments deeper in the book on how he made a journey from maximalist (lots of stuff) to minimalist one. He certainly has reached a satisfying point doing this, and offers now his thoughts and ideas on how to do it etc. First chapter defines what a minimalist is and what it means to be one, plus some reasons for its popularity. Second chapter talks about why we are (or have been) maximalists. In the third chapter we finally get ways to reduce our possessions. And in chapters four and five we read about positive changes that becoming minimalist has given to the author (and many others). Then there are very grateful, and unusually cute afterwords and thank-yous, plus finally two lists of the tips explained in the third chapter, handily attached at the end.

The author benefited much from the change. No more need to compare himself to others, no heaviness of all the things, no feeling of 'my possessions = my worthiness', no dissatisfaction with bad habits. He relates to

people better, feels grateful and happy easier, dares to try new things and experiences. This book is a Japanese point of view, but not too different. He's clearly a Steve Jobs fan \*lol\*

I like that he stresses that each one of us can define our own level of minimalism. It's merely a method of reducing possessions to the one that are necessary and truly matter to us, and not owning just to pretend or 'someday I'll do' things. There is so repeat, but so lightly it didn't manage to annoy me at all. Everything is just said so cheerfully, calmly and not-pushy. The author clearly loves minimalism, and this letting go of things has none of the 'hello trees hello sky'-ism of the Konmari method (it is mentioned in the book, but briefly).

I think that if you want only one book on minimalism and how to do it, it is this one.

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Myself, I think I will aim somewhere in-between minimalism and the maximalist ends, for reasons. I like chairs and beds with legs (all the getting up from the floor is not my thing), want to own enough clothes to fill the washing machine properly (having just 3 shirts won't do), and my books, movies and music I prefer to have as visible things - I don't own these to show off, and do seriously cherish them; if I don't, they don't stay, no worries. So, perhaps I will own more than minimalism might be like, but getting rid of maximalism is perhaps the best intention for me now. Then again, who knows what the future will be like? :)

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## **T for Tongue-tied says**

I've decided not to rate this book as it seems wrong to me to put other people's views into a 5 star system, however different they may be from mine. I don't necessarily agree with the logic behind adopting the philosophy of sparseness but I see why it can be appealing to those who've made their life out of it.

Having said that, I did not find this book completely irrelevant. There were fragments in "Goodbye, Things" that were even interesting, such as those describing how we react to various stimuli being removed from our lives or how there may be no boundaries when it comes to the amount of money that we spend on things but there are certainly limitations to the feelings of happiness associated with those items. The very beginning of the book sounded promising too and I was actually looking forward to seeing how the whole idea of minimalism would develop from here:

*"My possessions kept piling up. I lived in this apartment for ten years, and during that time, it seemed like my life had stopped moving forward. That was when I came across the concept of minimalism - of reducing your belongings to just the minimal essentials. I went from messy maximalism to life as a minimalist. I said goodbye to almost all my things and to my surprise I found I had also changed myself in the process."*

What I quickly found disappointing though was the rather loose approach to the subject - not that I am in favour of any radicalisms but I tend to get irritated when people create ideas and then bend them so they don't become too troublesome and are able to justify the pursuit of whatever we haven't found anywhere else. One would have thought that the whole concept of minimalism should go hand in hand with the idea of embracing the purifying silence that is created after the metaphorical noise of the clutter has been removed; but Sasaki starts his book from introducing Hiji to us - one of the first people who helped to spread the minimalist movement in Japan and who got rid of everything in his apartment, including TV, so he could replace it with a Sony head mounted viewer which he uses to watch his favourite shows and horror films. From now on, Sasaki gives us short interludes here and there which consist of various items that would be happily pursued by any respectable hipster and which seem to be indispensable once you've got rid of your

good old-fashioned stuff like books, DVDs, antique lamps and quirky cameras. Sasaki admits that iPhone is his most cherished possession and motivates it quite logically by its multi-functionality. Needless to say, Sasaki is also very impressed by the father of Apple - when he presents his wardrobe and its sparse content to us, he says: *"I am aiming to create my own uniform with a signature style like Steve Jobs had"*. Ok, I am getting a bit skeptical but it all seems so pretty and cosily convenient here. *"There is happiness in having less. That's why it's time to say goodbye to all our extra things"*. Less? You mean replacing stuff with the most expensive or trendy gadgets like Macbook Pro, Sony MDR-1ADAC, Sony ALPHA NEX-5N and what not? And let's not forget the Moleskine notebook. Don't get me wrong, I love Moleskine products but if we are talking about negating capitalistic approach and getting off its treacherous hooks, maybe we should reuse the good old notepad that we got from our employer during one of those trainings that take away our will to live and make us look for something fulfilling to ease our painful, cluttered existence? I probably sound a bit cynical here and possibly because I have too much clutter at home. All those books that I refuse to swap for one Kindle, they gather so much dust and I am most likely getting affected by it. Let's take a deep breath then... one in, one out.

It's good to rethink our lives every now and then. In today's busy world everything is so complicated that minimalism will inevitably tempt us with its powers of the ultimate saviour. *"It's an attempt to reduce the things that aren't essential so we can appreciate the things that really are precious to us"*, says Sasaki. And fair enough. It's actually very interesting to think about how it works - the whole information overload versus development of technology that makes it possible for us to live without as many possessions as we used to in the past; working and thinking like a contemporary nomad; the "simple life". But what slightly bothers me is that inconvenient truth that stands behind it: it's just another label, isn't it? Being a so-called minimalist. I can't help but think that there is something desperate in it; I understand the need for simplicity, I really do, but it all seems like a reverse psychology at times - I cannot have what I really want so I will take a 180-degree turn and convince myself and others that the new state of things is what I have always missed in my life. We are lost in the world of dependencies and try to find our place in it. We want to determine our own value and nothing can be more noble than finding it in what rejects excessive possession of both explicit and metaphorical clutter. Whatever the reason for adopting his everyday philosophy, I just cannot agree with Sasaki that taking pictures of a nostalgic photo album and storing the scanned images on my computer is capable of evoking the same feelings as discovering the original pictures one day by my kids in some dusty box in the attic. Call me silly, call me sentimental - if the world insists on giving everything a label, I will gladly adopt this one.

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## Kelli says

I'm not interested in becoming this extreme of a minimalist, nor did this book hold my attention, though I did finish it. This is super extreme...as in you only need one fork and nothing on the walls, as in you don't need chairs if you "host" your friends at a local restaurant and use the local cafe as your living room. I found the sweeping generalization that you cannot lead a life of gratitude whilst owning a lot of things to be a little offputting, not to mention, very subjective.

Overall, I didn't care for the writing or the method. I couldn't relate to much of this book because unlike the author, I don't worry about what others think of me nor did I amass items to impress people or attempt to be like them.

Also, I'm not sure how warm it is in Japan, but just the winter gear I packed away this weekend is easily more than every item the author owns. Also, the narrator sounded like an agitated American cop and that was just odd. 1.5 stars

## Kathryn says

Fumio Sasaki takes minimalism to an entirely new level. I could not live in such a fundamental environment. I need beauty and plant life; my home is my sanctuary, not just a place to sleep. This lifestyle works for him and others, I am sure, but just not for me. I much prefer William Morris's quote "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful."

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## Bach Tran Quang says

M?y hôm kh?ng ho?ng, ?au ??u, không trách tr?i trách ??t, ch? t? xem l?i mình, nh?n nh? b?n thân nh?ng ?i?u ?ã quên trong su?t th?i gian ??u t?t m?t t?i ?ã qua và ??c sách.

Cu?n này r?t thú v?. Th?c ra b?n thân ?ã áp d?ng trong gia ?nh t? lâu r?i, ?i?n hình cho s? thay ??i này là m?. Nh?ng gì c? nát, lâu không dùng ??n, nh?ng b? qu?n áo không m?c, ?? bài trí không c?n thi?t ??u ?ã ???c gi?i tán, ?ng h? h?t. Nhà c?a không ng?n ng?n ??, nhìn nh? tri?n lãm n?a, khách kh?a ch? ng?m m?t l?n nh?ng không gian s?ng thì tù túng và m?i thành viên ??u va v?i nó hàng ngày nên s? thay ??i này th?t ý ngh?a.

T?i gi?n không có ngh?a là v?t ?i h?t, là mù quáng ch?y theo tuyên ngôn nào ?ó. Ch?ng nào hi?u ???c th? gì c?n, không c?n, bi?t ?? trong m?c ?? . Ấu là hi?u ra v?n ??.

Buông b?, m?i là thanh th?n.

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## Justin Tate says

I'm now a minimalist.

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## Rachel (Kalanadi) says

If you find the Konmari approach to tidying and reducing possessions a little too strict or kooky, then Goodbye, Things might be a good alternative (and a decent introduction to minimalism). I'm not a minimalist, but I'm increasingly finding that shedding my unnecessary possessions is making me happier and more satisfied.

I liked that this book focuses quite a bit on the psychological and emotional benefits of reducing what you own. It's a very personal testament to how minimalism can improve one's quality of life. It's very anecdotal. I was surprised that even though I've read little about minimalism, I already knew quite a bit of what the author describes. To me, a lot of it seemed to be about self-awareness and checking your ego. Separating yourself from your possessions is a journey, and after a while, if you keep going, you are forced to see yourself very clearly... warts and all.

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## Alice says

I received an advanced copy from Goodreads, and was, to be honest, skeptical at first. Hasn't Marie Kondo already turned the minimalism trend around? Sasaki's book is his own, however. He is a humble and honest guide throughout the book. Sasaki offers insights on minimalism through his own mind and life. I really enjoyed reading the book. It felt very cleansing, like taking a shower at the end of a long day.

I took notes throughout the book, for personal reference. Here is a slice:

- \* Our minds are old, unequipped for technological overload.
  - \* You get used to things you buy. They're only new and shiny for a week or a month.
  - \* Why less possessions? You get less messages sent from them. Messages = the connotations. You know, that old composition notebook that's half written in. You don't want to waste the rest of the unwritten pages. You have to use it. Yes, you'll use it tomorrow for a grocery list. But there are so many pages left to finish writing in. Tomorrow comes, you forget to use it. And it still sits on your desk and you're still convinced you'll use it.
- 

## Trish says

Sasaki's photographs in the beginning of this book jolt one awake to what he means by minimalism. Some people are so radical that it makes the rest of us look like hoarders. But by the end of this very simply-written and superbly-argued short book, most of the arguments we have for cluttering our space and complicating our lives are defeated.

One must recognize at some point that whatever dreams are mixed up in purchases we have made, the potential of the ideas quickly fade when not acted on immediately, as in when the objects are "saved" for something we vaguely anticipate in the future. In the minimalist outlook, objects should do some kind of worthwhile duty, even if that duty is to make us happy, or please our senses.

When objects become a burden, or chastise us by their silent immobility, collecting dust, literally taking up the space we need to breathe, we can give them away, throw them out, auction them off, or otherwise get them out of our lives so that some potential can grow back into our ideas. That means even books we bought with the intention to read but which make us sad every time we look at them.

But don't take my word for it. Sasaki really does have an answer for every possible objection you may have. For instance, #37. Discarding memorabilia is not the same as discarding memories. Sasaki quotes Tatsuya Nakazaki: "Even if we were to throw away photos and records that are filled with memorable moments, the past continues to exist in our memories...All the important memories that we have inside us will naturally remain." I am not convinced this is so at every stage of life, but think there is a natural life to what we need in terms of archival items. If your children don't want it, you don't need to keep all of it. Keep the ones that matter only.

Note that Sasaki recommends scanning documents like old letters that are important to you because you can't go out and buy another if you find you were too radical in your culling. However, even the archival record becomes a burden when it becomes too large unless well-marked with dates, etc. He admits that letting go of those stored memories is a further step in true minimalist living.

The freedom one experiences when one owns fewer things is undeniable. Sasaki expresses the joy he experiences when he visits a hotel or a friend who uses big bath towels. He'd limited himself to a microfiber quick-drying hand towel for all his household needs, and enjoyed the lack of big loads of washing at home

and using big thick towels while he was out: a twofer of happiness.

We are encouraged to find our own minimalism. Everyone has their own limits and definition. The author explains that #15. Minimalism is a method and a beginning. The concept is like a prologue and the act of minimizing is a story that each practitioner needs to create individually. We definitely don't need all we have, and the things we own aren't who we are. We are still us, underneath all the stuff. Some people will find this reassuring; others may find it disconcerting.

At the end of this small book, Sasaki reminds us the clarity that comes with minimalism. Concentration is easier. Waste is minimized. Social relationships are enhanced. You don't need forty seconds in a disaster to decide what to take. You live in the now.

The translation of this book is fantastic, by Eriko Sugita. It does not read like a translation, but as an intimate sharing by someone who has been through the hard work of paring down one's possessions so that his own personality shines through. It is a kind of gift. Even if one doesn't throw a thing away (I heartily doubt that will be the case) after (or during) the reading of this book, the notions are seeds. Gratitude grows in the absence of things.

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## Paul Secor says

Some thoughts on *Goodbye, Things*:

Mr. Sasaki writes about minimalism in maximalist manner. A good editor could have cut this book down to the length of a magazine article, added a few of the book's photographs, and nothing much would have been lost. In fact, the book could have almost been condensed to the "55 tips to help you say goodbye to your things" on the last few pages of the book. That would have been true minimalism. But then, Mr. Sasaki wouldn't have had a book to sell.

Mr. Sasaki writes about people gaining an identity through the things they have. However, he's gained an identity as a minimalist by giving things up. In a way, it's the same deal - just going in another direction.

Reading *Goodbye Things*, I felt as if I was listening to a combination TV preacher and motivational speaker. Minimalism is the one true religion and you can change your life for the better by converting to minimalism. Mr. Sasaki writes about being an alcoholic (he doesn't use the term but, to me, getting drunk every night and going to work hung over the next morning is being an alcoholic) before finding minimalism. If finding a minimalism lifestyle worked for him, that's great, but I doubt that it would be a common cure for alcoholism, as he implies.

This book is an advertisement for Apple and its products. I could have done without that.

All of that said, I did find some good points in the book, and reading it did make me think about my life and some changes I could make to it.

I know that I have too many things cluttering up my life, and as I was reading, I found myself getting rid of some things I hadn't used in years and probably never would use.

I also thought about buying things, often for no good reason. Until recently, I owned two watches - one with a black face and a black band, and one with a light colored face and a brown band. (I know people who don't even own a watch, and just look at their phone if they need to know the time.) The watch with the brown band started losing time after about 25 years, so I decided to replace it. I bought an relatively inexpensive but solid watch from L.L. Bean that I figure will last me for a good many years. If I had read this



quy?n sách gi?y x?n, dù có c? thì c?ng v?n khác v?i c?m cái Kindle ?? l??t. ??ng ý là ki?n th?c thì ch? khác ??ch gì nhau. Nh?ng c?m giác là khác ??y. Mình không ??i nào scan sách gi?y ?? ??c trên Kindle c?. Máy ??c sách hoàn toàn ch? ?? dùng khi nh? nhàng, ?i du l?ch ho?c ?? ??c nh?ng quy?n không bán ? Vi?t Nam. C?ng có th? mình ch?a ?? ?? t?i gi?n. Có l? ph?i chiêm nghi?m thêm trong t??ng lai.

Nh?ng nói chung, quy?n này (và c? m?y tác ph?m có liên quan, VD nh? quy?n "Ngh? thu?t bài trí c?a ng??i Nh?t" c?a Marie Kond?) là r?t ?áng ??c và suy ngh?. Mình c?ng ?ã v?t ?i ???c kha khá ?? và rõ ràng là c?m th?y nh? nhàng. T??ng lai s? còn v?t ti?p. Nên nh?, ch?ng có cái gì là không th? v?t ?i ???c. C? yên tâm là nh? th?.

Vote: 4/5

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## Darwin8u says

*"Minimalism is built around the idea that there's nothing that you're lacking."*

? Fumio Sasaki, Goodbye, Things: The New Japanese Minimalism

I wasn't a fan of the writing. Perhaps, I went in expecting more of a Zen minimalism aesthetic. Perhaps, I am just comparing it to other design/living books that seemed to resonate better (S, M, L, XL, A Place of My Own: The Education of an Amateur Builder, Wabi-Sabi: For Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers, etc.). By the end of the book, it all just seemed overwritten/overhyped. So, 2-stars.

It also seemed like a bit too self-help, too superficial, too list-oriented. I felt I was given a bunch of bullet points for tossing out things that never traveled very deep. I also (and I've seen this expressed by others) find it odd that a book on minimalism would have a list 55 items long. Perhaps, Sasaki could have slimmed that list down to 25? Some of the items seemed a bit redundant and others seemed a bit weak. Even Sasaki's explanation for they why, seemed a bit superficial. Also, I wasn't a fan of the corporate minimalism. He name-dropped Apple and Steve Jobs (also Google, Dropbox, Facebook, Twitter, etc) as if the New Japanese Minimalism existed in an app on the iPhone. Hell, it probably does.

That all said, however, it DID encourage me to drop off a couple boxes of books to Goodwill and start ditching some dishes in our kitchen and clothes in our closet. So, I gave it an extra star (three-stars) for JUST that.

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