

Podcast Episode 3: 5 Easy Ways to Declutter when You are Stuck

You're listening to the Wannabe Minimalist Show, Episode Number 3.

Welcome to the Wannabe Minimalist Show. I'm your host, Deanna Yates and each week on the podcast we will talk about what it really takes to be a minimalist with a family. I believe minimalism is a mindset for how we see stuff, but more importantly, being mindful of the items we let into our lives, homes, and relationships. Let's do this!

Well, hello there. Welcome back to another episode of the Wannabe Minimalist Show. I'm your host, Deanna Yates. Today I'm diving into 5 quick methods for decluttering when you are feeling stuck.

But, before we hop in and talk all about how to get your home decluttered quickly and easily, I want to tell you a little bit about our sponsor, which is Acorns. I am super excited about this app! Did you know that 69% of Americans have less than \$1000 in emergency savings? Now I know this podcast is more about minimalism with a family and not financial planning, but how much better would you feel and how much peace of mind would it give you if you had enough savings to fall back on if something went wrong? Probably a lot.

That's where an app like Acorns comes in. You know you should be saving and investing, but it can be REALLY hard to start. Acorns lets you get set up in minutes and for as little as \$1 per month, your monthly purchases will be rounded up and automatically saved for you. It's a win-win. It takes no additional time and before you know it, you are saving and investing in your family's future. Look at you, mama!

Now, full disclosure, I am an affiliate for this app and I am an affiliate because financial peace of mind is incredibly important for not only myself and my family, but I want that for you too. If you have struggled in the past to save money on a regular basis, or do not invest because you've been too overwhelmed to start, then you owe it to yourself and your family to check out Acorns.

So hop on over and check it out at [Little Green Bow dot com forward slash acorns](http://LittleGreenBow.com/forward/slash/acorns), again that's [Little Green Bow dot com forward slash acorns](http://LittleGreenBow.com/forward/slash/acorns).

And now let's get back to talking about our 5 quick and easy decluttering methods for when you're feeling stuck.

So if you're anything like me, you have looked around your home on more than one occasion and thought, "huh...this doesn't feel like the relaxing retreat from the outside world that I wanted to be living in, in my adult life. And you know what...all of this stuff around my house kinda makes it hard to find the things I need when I need them, and it really is just making my life chaotic."

That's where I've found myself multiple times in my life and it's one of the experiences that led me on this journey toward minimalism.

The problem was that I had too much stuff and I'm guessing that's the problem for you too.

Too much stuff.

And so, what I really want to help you do is tackle this issue...when we have too much stuff in our home, but not enough time to do a full Konmari or packing party.

You already know you're drowning in stuff, but you don't know where to start. It just feels too overwhelming.

If that sounds familiar, today is the show for you.

We're going to talk about five simple decluttering methods that will help you and your family get moving when you feel stuck. And if you want a quick cheatsheet for these decluttering methods, I have a free download for you. You can get it by joining the Little Green Bow Community at LittleGreenBow.com forward slash subscribe. This will get you my free 30 day simplicity calendar and access to my freebies library. You'll find this cheatsheet listed under Episode 3 of the podcast along with lots of other helpful printables and worksheets. I think you'll really like what you find.

Okay, but the better news is that you can start right away. There's no need to buy fancy gadgets or read long books on the subject. In as little as 5 minutes you can start to see progress, which will motivate you to keep going and move on to the next room. Before you know it...your whole house will be feeling a whole lot lighter.

Alright, so let's look at decluttering method number one. The Five Box Method.

I love this super simple, but powerful decluttering method. And in fact, it's one of our favorite ways to quickly declutter an entire space.

You use 5 boxes, and if you don't have boxes, honestly you can just use piles or bags - it really is just 5 separate areas to separate everything you have into these 5 categories. They are:

1. Love
2. Maybe
3. Toss
4. Donate or
5. Sell

Now, the genius about this method is that you touch every item in a room and you quickly make a decision as to where it goes. It sounds a bit like Konmari, but I think it's a little more forgiving and you'll see why in a moment.

So, start in one corner of a room, pick up every item, and sort it.

Obviously if you pick something up and you LOVE it, it goes in your love pile. If you pick something up and it's broken, you'll toss it. Maybe you have something you no longer need and you can donate it. Or if you have something that's above a certain dollar amount - I usually like

to set mine at either \$25 or higher, that makes it worth my time to sell something. Then I might put it in the sell pile.

But, you also need to make sure you have an expiration date on that sell pile because otherwise it could turn into a never-ending project that you actually never get around to dealing with.

Now, where we really start to differ from Konmari here is with the Maybe Box. And this is one of the reasons I love this 5-Box method so much. A lot of people, when they are decluttering, get hung up on sentimental items or something that might be useful. They find an object they *might* need at a later date. They're not quite ready to get rid of it, but it doesn't fit in the other categories. And that is exactly what the maybe box is for. It's for those items that you are unsure about. In the long run, this maybe box will save you time and help you process through your emotions as you are decluttering. It keeps you on task for the bigger picture and it allows you to come back to this box at a later date.

What I love to do is I write an expiration date on that maybe box. Perhaps it's 3 months from now, 6 months from now, or a year from now. It really will depend on you and where you are on your minimalism journey. But, when you're looking for something or maybe let's say in a week, you think, Oh Gosh, I really just need this thing that put it in my maybe box. Well, now you know it's something that performs a function in your life or something you missed. With the maybe box, it's super easy to go get it.

However, if in 3 months, 6 months, a year from now, or whenever your expiration date is on that box, you haven't looked for anything in that box, you haven't missed it, you haven't thought about it, you can't even remember what's in there...it's so much easier for you to let go of those items on your next pass. Some people recommend just tossing the box without even looking in it, but I'm not one of those people. But, it does make it easier to say goodbye to the items when I look through the box again.

So that's what the 5-Box Method is and how to implement it. As you can see it's a quick and easy way for you to be able to move through all of the items in your house without feeling the guilt, or the just overwhelming emotion that can come with throwing things away.

All right so hopefully you like that first one as much as I do.

Let's look at decluttering method number two. This is the 10 item pick up method. And we've had a lot of fun with this one too. It's a great way to turn decluttering into a game for the whole family.

My daughter really liked this one when we tried it for the first time. Starting in one room of your house, you grab a box or a laundry basket (I really like those plastic ones with handles on them for this) and you take it with you from room to room as you make your way around your home.

The idea is to make 2 full trips around your home. The first time around, you will pick up 10 items from each room that do not belong there and put them away as you go. The second time around, you will find 10 items in each room to toss, donate, or sell.

So let's say you start in the living room and you pick up 10 things that do not belong in the living room. For example, an empty water glass, a dish from breakfast, a toy from your child's room and things like that.

After you have gathered 10 items in your basket, you go onto the next room.

Let's say room number two is the kitchen. Well, you'll put the glass and dish away from our example and pick up 10 more things from the kitchen. So you're up to 18 items to put away (8 items from the living room and 10 items from the kitchen).

It continues this way from room to room until you've made it all the way around your house and come full circle and then it's time to start on the 2nd pass. You'll still have a few items left to put away because you haven't made it to every room a second time. But, you'll have picked up and tidied every room so far.

The second pass is not only easier, but where it gets really fun. As you continue to put away the items from your first pass through, you also look for 10 things to get rid of. If you no longer need something, you can donate it. Or if something is broken you can throw away. The goal really is to just get these items out of your house.

This second pass generally tends to go a little faster because you're putting less and less away as you go and you've already tidied up a bit.

Our daughter loved it finding items out of place and looking for things to get rid of. It was almost like a treasure hunt. Younger kids will have fun counting up to 10 so I strongly recommend getting your family on board with the 10 Item Pickup Method.

OK so let's look at decluttering method number three. It's a spending freeze.

Now this is not so much about getting stuff out of your house but it's more about using up what you already have. The first time we did an intentional spending freeze, I was surprised at how creative we were able to be with what we actually already had on hand. And even if this sounds scary at first, I think you will be pleasantly surprised by the end result as well.

So how do you implement a shopping freeze? The first thing you have to do is decide on how long you are going to put a freeze on your spending. If this is your first time, I recommend starting with a shorter amount of time like a week and then increasing it as you get more comfortable to a month at a time.

The second step for a spending freeze is to cut out all non-essential spending. That means things like clothes, shoes, home decor, books, apps, gadgets, and anything else that is not necessary to survive. Obviously you're still going to have to go to the grocery store to purchase food to eat and you might have to purchase things like gas to put in your car, but in addition to cutting back on non-essential spending, you can also cutback on your grocery budget.

One of the ways we love to cut our food budget is to shop our own kitchen. This is where we try to make meals out of only the things we find in our pantry, refrigerator, and freezer.

It's a fun and easy way to get creative in order to use up food before it goes bad. It's great for your wallet and also cuts down on food waste. So even when you're having a no purchase week for non-essential things, you can go this extra step and use up the food you already have on hand.

One tool I use to make shopping our kitchen successful is to use a website called SuperCook.com to see what meals I can make with ingredients I already have on hand.

Here's how it works....go through your pantry, refrigerator, and freezer to make a list of all the ingredients you have on hand. Then head online to supercook.com and type in those

ingredients. The website will come up with recipes based on your ingredients. It's that simple. From there you can narrow down based on meal type and cuisine, but it's a great to get ideas for how to use up the food you already have before you go to the grocery store. And when items are getting low in the fridge or pantry, I like to use that time to wipe down the shelves and toss anything that's gone bad. It's a win-win.

Since you're not allowed to buy anything new during a shopping freeze, I like to use this time and our new sparks of creativity with my wardrobe. You can do this by going to your closet and shopping for a new outfit.

Actually have fun with this and get your kids in on the action. Have your kids put together an outfit for you just to see how they would put it together. Have a fashion show for your family and see if you like any of the new ways you're wearing your clothes. It may not end up being something you wear out of the house but you might be surprised. Either way, it's fun to see things in a new light and this is one of those great ways to do it.

These weeks of buying less and looking at what we already own in a new light have been a lot of fun for us. That's why one of the things we love to do every once in a while is to have a shopping freeze.

All right, that moves us onto decluttering method number four. This is really a gradual method, but you can start working on it immediately. It's called the one-in-two-out method.

This decluttering method helps you with a slow declutter and really works on creating a mindset shift.

So, if you feel like you've actually gone through the decluttering process and you're unsatisfied, but you're not sure what else you can get rid of, this is a really great method for you.

The 1-in-2-out method works just as it sounds. Every time you bring something new (or just new to you) into your home, you replace two items and donate them.

This works really well for almost anything in your home, but for women I've seen it work but in our closets.

You probably have a lot of different clothes that perform more or less the same function like coats and outerwear. Or maybe you have a different tops that are similar in color and silhouette. If that is the case, could you replace two items with just one item that you REALLY love?

You can do this just by looking in your closet and tossing similar items, but the mind shift starts to change when you're out shopping for something new. As you are looking at making a purchase, try to think of two things in your house that this one new thing could replace. Then you get to donate those two old things so you're 50% lighter when you bring the new thing home.

This method helps you be more aware of how we use our things and makes you think about what you're bringing into your home. It really does keep me more aware when I'm shopping and I automatically start to think if a new item can perform double duty before completing my purchase.

Number five of our quick decluttering methods is one you probably have not heard of before. I call it the Jail Box Method.

This one is a little tongue in cheek. You need to make sure your family is on board but it can be fun and again we're trying to keep this lighthearted and turn it into a game especially when you have children.

And another tip if your spouse or significant other is not on board I would do this with your children before trying to coerce your spouse into it.

Okay so step number five is the jail box method, but what in the world is a Jail Box.

Well, basically you set up a special box that is off limits that you call the Jail. Anytime something is out of place at the end of the day and you are the one picking it up, it goes to Jail.

Let's look at an example. If you've gone through a decluttering process or you've tidied up a space - let's say you had friends come over and you did a huge clean for your house. Of course we've all done that. Guilty here too!

Your house looks amazing now, right. But, how long does it take before your house looks like a mess again? Well, the Jail Box method is perfect for this because it's easier to spot when something's out of place in a clean house.

Side note, at the end of the day I highly recommend doing a quick 15 minute cleanup with everybody in your house. I'll discuss this in next week's podcast, but this is an easy way to tidy up every night so that the house doesn't get super messy again.

But, if you are doing a final sweep at the end of the night and find a toy that didn't get put away, you can put it in jail. In order for your child to get it back and out of jail, they have to do a chore or a decluttering task.

I recommend not only doing this just for your children, but for you and your spouse as well. This way you can lead by example here with the jail box. Now you see why the Jail Box Method works - it's really a two for one when you tidy up and two you get an extra little chore on top in order to get your stuff back.

So the real trick here is keeping tasks age-appropriate for instance fluffing the pillows, gathering up laundry, or sorting socks for a little kids and things like taking out the garbage, emptying the dishwasher, vacuuming, mopping, sweeping, or cleaning the bathroom for older kids. Also think of tasks that would not happen as often like cleaning the blinds in order to take the Jail Box idea to the next level.

There you have it! 5 simple decluttering methods to help you get started.

To recap they are:

1. The 5 box method
2. The 10 item pickup game
3. A shopping freeze
4. The 1-in-2-out method
5. the JailBox Method

I also created a cheatsheet to recap these methods so you can refer to them whenever you are feeling stuck. You can download a free copy by joining the Little Green Bow Community at LittleGreenBow.com backslash subscribe. This will get you my free 30 day simplicity

calendar and access to my freebies library. You'll find this cheatsheet listed under Episode 3 of the podcast along with lots of other helpful printables and worksheets. I think you'll really like what you find.

Decluttering is not something that happens overnight, but it does not have to be overwhelming either. Start with one of these tasks and add in others as they feel right. I can't wait to hear which method you like best. If you have another decluttering method you like, please let me know in the comments below. I love learning new tips and tricks to share with our community.

Next week on the podcast we'll be discussing how to deal with paper clutter. You won't want to miss it. See you then.

So, this episode is might be over, but we don't have to say goodbye just yet. Head over to my website, LittleGreenBow.com for tons of great resources, freebies, courses, and a link to join my free Wannabe Minimalist group on Facebook. Let's tackle this thing together.

And if you loved this episode it would be really helpful if you left a rating or review so more families can find the show.

You're awesome!

Thanks and see you next week.

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