

The Weight of Less: Why Minimalism Might Be the Most Honest Thing You Do

Author: Astrid Craig

Editor: Mindfulness

Weekly Contributor: Minimalism

Co-Editors: Jaedalynn Hall, Kelsey Ericah Ang, and Hailey De Fremery

By Astrid Craig

There's a strange kind of peace in getting rid of things.

Not the dramatic, cinematic kind where someone throws their ex's hoodie into a fire pit while screaming Olivia Rodrigo lyrics into the night. I mean the quiet kind—the kind you don't post about. Like closing a tab on your laptop that's been open for weeks. Like finally deleting a number that still makes your heart drop when it pops up. Like donating the dress you swore you'd wear again but never did, because you've outgrown both the outfit and the version of yourself who bought it.

Minimalism isn't always what we think it is. It's not about stripping your life down to four white walls and a single succulent on a windowsill. It's not about who can own the least or who can make their bedroom look the most like a Muji catalog. That's aesthetic minimalism—and sure, that has its place. But I'm talking about emotional minimalism. Mental minimalism. The kind that feels like a breath after you've been holding your chest tight for too long.

Because if we're being honest, most of us are exhausted by our own lives.

We carry too much. We say yes to everything. We keep people around out of habit, not connection. Our phones are cluttered. Our rooms are cluttered. Our minds are cluttered. And half the time, we don't even notice it—because busy has become our baseline. But being busy isn't the same as being fulfilled. And having more isn't the same as having meaning.

I didn't come to minimalism by choice. I came to it by burnout.

There was a point when my life felt too loud. Too full of things and plans and people and noise. Every time I opened my closet, I felt overwhelmed. Every time I scrolled on social media, I felt empty. Every time someone asked, "How have you been?" I had to lie—because the truth was, I didn't even know. I'd lost track of myself somewhere between my calendar reminders and the pressure to "keep up."

So I started letting go. Not all at once. Not dramatically. Just piece by piece.

I cleared out my closet, not to be trendy, but because I realized I was holding onto outfits from versions of myself that no longer existed. I muted people on Instagram who made me feel more insecure than inspired. I stopped texting people who only hit me up when they needed something. And most painfully—I let myself stop performing. I stopped trying to be the most interesting, the most liked, the most "together." I just... let it be okay to not be so much.

And what I found surprised me. Underneath all the clutter, I was still here.

Just... lighter.

Minimalism, at its core, is about honesty. It asks you what's really serving you. It asks you to name what you actually value—not just what you're used to. And that's hard. Because we've been taught to equate more with better. More followers. More clothes. More plans. More proof that you're worthy.

But what if the proof of your worth wasn't in what you have—but in what you don't need anymore?

The truth is, letting go is scary. We attach meaning to things. We assign value to relationships, even when they hurt us. We fear emptiness, so we fill every inch of our lives—even when what we're filling it with makes us feel hollow. But silence doesn't

have to be scary. Emptiness doesn't have to mean loneliness. Sometimes it just means space. Space to breathe. Space to think. Space to finally hear yourself again.

One of the most freeing things minimalism taught me is this: you don't have to earn rest. You don't have to be productive every second. You don't need to have your life figured out by 22. You don't need a 10-step morning routine, a designer wardrobe, or a highlight reel that impresses strangers. You just need to come back to what matters.

And maybe that's five people who make you feel safe. Maybe that's three hobbies that actually bring you peace. Maybe that's one room, clean and quiet, where you can cry if you need to, without apologizing for the mess.

I'm not saying minimalism is a cure-all. Life will always get messy. There will be days when you feel heavy again. Days when the world's noise creeps back in. Days when you're tempted to fill the silence just so you don't have to face what's underneath.

But on those days, you'll remember: you've done this before. You've let go of what didn't serve you. You've chosen yourself, even when it was uncomfortable. You've honored your peace over your performance.

That's what makes minimalism powerful. It's not just about what you remove—it's about what you make room for.

So maybe today, minimalism looks like saying no without guilt. Or putting your phone down for an hour. Or choosing not to explain yourself. Or cleaning your room—not for the aesthetic, but because you deserve a space that doesn't scream at you when you walk in.

Maybe it means writing a to-don't list instead of a to-do list. Don't check your ex's page. Don't agree to that plan just because you feel obligated. Don't keep things that weigh you down just because they're familiar.

Let yourself travel lighter.

Because the weight of "more" isn't just physical. It lives in your mind. Your schedule. Your expectations. And when you start releasing it, even in small ways, you feel something shift.

You feel the weight of less.

And somehow, that feels like the most honest thing you've done in a long time.
