

SPARKING
JOY

Do you have what it takes for a KonMari challenge?



Tyler Moore in his family's New York City apartment. He and his wife used Kondo's book "Spark Joy" to help them switch bedrooms with their two daughters but realized it would take longer than they first envisioned.

By Stefanie Waldek
The Washington Post

Organization queen Marie Kondo is everywhere; she has published two best-selling books, graced the streaming screen and inspired numerous home-goods lines dedicated to keeping everything in your house in place. It's easy to think the KonMari method is a simple solution to a messy life.



But KonMari isn't easy. It involves upending your entire home — by setting out all your things, then going through each pile piece by piece to determine which items “spark joy” and can be kept. Everything else should be donated or trashed, leaving you with just a few very important belongings. The process is to be completed in a specific order, not by room but by category, such as clothing, books and papers. Not only is the method time-consuming, it's very emotional; many people going through KonMari find it difficult to let go of sentimental items, whether that's a prom dress or a trinket gifted by

grandparents. On the Netflix show “Tidying Up With Marie Kondo,” Rachel Friend, a 35-year-old Los Angeles-area mind-set coach, and her husband, Kevin, a sales manager, tackled KonMari with their two young children. Filming for the episode lasted about five weeks, with Kondo showing up weekly to assign homework. “That really held us accountable,” says Friend. “There was no saying, ‘You know, I don't feel like it today.’ But that allowed us to then experience what it felt like having it all done.”

SEE TIDY | C3



Ryan Friend looks inside a vintage desk for toys in the family's playroom. Ryan's family was featured on Netflix's "Tidying Up with Marie Kondo." They purchased the desk on Craigslist then had it repainted.

LIVING WITH CHILDREN

It's time for your child to do his own problem-solving

Q: Our son is 13 years old and in the seventh grade. Last week he came home from school complaining about how a few of his friends have been bullying him. These same boys were at his birthday party just the weekend before and they seemed to get along fine. Sometimes they poke fun at him when he is hanging around girls that these other boys have either “dated” or currently like. I think he pokes them right back, but they are three or four and he's just one. Besides, we teach him to be kind, thoughtful, compassionate and inclusive, so getting in a tit-for-tat really isn't what we want him to do. I don't know if we should let it work itself out or mention it to the other boys' parents. My fear is that telling his friends' parents will cause them to pick on him even more. On the other hand, I want it to stop. Any thoughts you can share would be

most appreciated.

A: Having been a child who was picked on, made fun of and more, and relentlessly so (or so it seemed) from grades five through eight, I consider myself to be an expert in such matters. The first thing I'll point out is that children do not tend to do a good job of representing facts when they're recounting events, especially when the events in question have elicited strong emotion. Getting picked on qualifies as an emotional event; therefore, I'd bet there's more going on than is reflected in your son's report. I'm not suggesting that he's lying; I'm simply saying that emotions tend to interfere with recall.



John Rosemond

Second, the definition of bullying has been “dumbed down,” and considerably so, since I was a truly bullied kid. When I was being run down and abused in various medieval ways, there was no doubt about it: I was being bullied. Several of my peers took turns chasing me home from school, for example. Like Forrest Gump, I learned to run fast, but if the “bully of the day” caught up with me, I was then subjected to various tortures, including being pinned to the ground and tickled until I nearly passed out from delirium. (By the way, in case the reader has never been tickled while immobilized, it's funny for about a half-second, after which the experience is akin to being roasted alive.) Name-calling was in a different category altogether. That was not regarded, by me or anyone else, as rising to the

level of bullying. “Sticks and stones could break my bones, but words will never hurt me” was the stock response to being called a name. Looking back, it's apparent to me now that my schoolmates and I were competing with one another for The Best Slur of the Day. Today, name-calling — making a joke of someone's last name, for example — is considered bullying. That's part-and-parcel of the dumbing-down I referred to earlier. It's no wonder that today's kids seem to think that anything that causes them momentary discomfort is an aggression. This has had the effect of weakening the emotional resilience of a generation or more of children. The fact is, name-calling is the sort of thing boys do to one another. (Girls do it too, but more covertly.) It causes

some pain, yes, but it's not life-threatening and left to their own devices, boys will usually work these things out. You undoubtedly don't have the full picture. Your son is probably over-dramatizing what actually happened. Kids' relationships at this age are on-again, off-again, and you are absolutely correct that intervention on your part may well make matters worse. In that last regard, consider that today's parents tend toward being very defensive where their kids are concerned. For all those reasons, I'd definitely stay out of this. Bottom line: Tell your son to figure it out for himself or find new friends. He needs to begin learning how to solve his own problems. Learn more about family psychologist Rosemond at johnrosemond.com and parentguru.com.



LOOK LOCAL

Add interest to landscape with native flowering trees

When we think of native trees we tend to see what is growing in the forests nearby. We think about the large and small trees that grow naturally, but we seldom really take time to look at them. There are a few we already use in our landscapes, such as white flowering dogwood, but there are many others that also would look great. Virginia has an abundance of native flowering trees and shrubs, too numerous to list here. So here are just a few of the more common flowering trees that can add interest to most Virginia landscapes.

» **Sweet Bay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*):** This is a medium-sized tree that can grow to 40-feet tall and 15-feet wide on average. As the botanical name implies it is a Virginia native. It does not have the thick, leathery leaves that the Southern magnolia is known for. Instead, it has thin leaves that persist through much of the winter. The creamy white flowers appear in late spring and often last through most of the summer. Full sunlight to partial shade is best for this tree.

» **Fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*):** Another Virginia native, this tree can be impressive with its huge array of white flowers in May. This is a small to medium sized tree that rarely reaches a height of 20 feet and it grows about 10 to 12 feet wide. This is a good choice for planting under or near overhead utility lines. This tree will need a sunny location. Once it is established, it is drought tolerant.

» **Eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*):** This is one of the first native to flower in this area. It is easy to spot with its showy pink to purple flowers that cover the branches. It is currently visible along roadsides and forest edges. It likes full sunlight but will also tolerate some shade. It grows well just about anywhere around here, from the edges of moist stream bottomlands to dry ridge tops. The flowers are followed by attractive, heart-shaped leaves. By mid-to-late summer seed pods that look like pea pods are lining the branches. This is another good tree to plant under power lines, it seldom reaches more than 15 feet in height and spreads about the same as its height. This tree does have a problem with a vascular wilt type of disease, but the roots are never killed so a property owner can simply cut away any dead limbs or even the trunk and it will re-sprout from the ground.

» **Black haw Viburnum (*Viburnum prunifolium*):** This is not the only viburnum that is native and it is not the only one that can be attractive in a landscape. It can grow as a bush, but it also can be trained to grow as a tree. Viburnums flower around the middle of spring with white clusters of small blooms that eventually mature into purple berries that are sometimes eaten by birds. These are tough trees that have very few pest problems. They stay mostly under 10 feet tall and can spread from 4 to 8 feet wide. It has an attractive conical shape that does not require any pruning to maintain. Once established in a landscape they are mostly maintenance free. These trees are commonly seen in nature on dry, rocky soils and on rich soils on slopes.

» **Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*):** Yes, you can pick up pawpaws and put them in your pocket but I don't recommend it. The fruit reminds me of a small banana and makes a mess when it is squished. This tree prefers areas with rich, moist soils. It will grow in the sun or in shade. The purple flowers appear in April and May and are soon followed by large leaves. This tree can grow to 30 feet or more in height. It is best suited for low areas with plenty of moisture.

» **Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp):** At least three species are native to Virginia. Downy, Allegheny and Canada are found here. These are the first native trees to bloom in the spring. They are easy to spot in March with their white flowers and are often confused with the Bradford pears that have invaded the country side. Service berries do not have the neat, conical form of the Bradford pear. They can grow from 20 to 40 feet tall and can tolerate a wide range of acidic soils. Their flowers are followed by red-to-purple berries in June. another common name for this tree is Juneberry. It is commonly found along forest edges and will tolerate full sun to partial shade.

I know I didn't mention **white dogwood**, but that tree is so common I think everyone already knows about it. However, if a white dogwood is wanted in a full sun location it may be better to plant a kousa dogwood, that is an Asian import but it tolerates direct sunlight much better than our native, shade-loving white dogwoods. Enjoy your garden.

Sutphin is an extension agent with the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Danville Unit Office. Contact him at (434) 799-6558.



Stuart K. Sutphin
In The Yard

White flowering dogwood trees are native to the area and often are used in our landscapes.

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Is the potato case headed to the court of a-peels?

In breaking tuber news, a class action lawsuit alleges the restaurant chain and food company TGI Fridays has deceived a snack-hungry public by selling a product advertised as “Potato Skins” that contains no actual potato skins, but a delicious blend of oil, potato starch, flakes, corn and salt.

In other words, welcome to Potatogate.

As the interim senior correspondent assigned to spud-related civil action and consumer protection for this award-winning publication, I will try to explain this complicated case in a question-and-answer format.

Hold on to your tater tots, here we go.



Scott Hollifield

Q: Scott, with everything going on in the world, why is a court of law devoting one single minute to someone upset about a bag of cheap salty snack food? Give us some details and none of that fake news you guys are always peddling.

A: According to various media accounts and a March 29 story on the website Top Class Actions, the plaintiff purchased a bag of TGI Fridays Sour Cream & Onion Potato Skins chips from a convenience store “because she believed it was made from real potato skins and would be healthier than similar potato-based snacks.” She filed suit because the product reportedly contains no potato skins.

Q: I bought a hot dog from under the heat lamp at the Stop-N-Go near the house believing it would provide me with the

energy and nutritional support to mow the lawn after lunch, but by the time I got home I had to sprint to the bathroom where I spent the next two hours doubled over on the cold tile floor wishing I would die. Can I file a class action lawsuit against Gary, the clerk who swore to me he put those hot dogs fresh under the lamp when he started his morning shift?

A: Maybe. Gary's pockets probably aren't as deep as TGI Fridays but you could give it a shot.

Q: Nah, about all Gary's got is a Nissan Sentra and some dirt weed he bought on credit from his cousin. It wouldn't be worth my time. So, what is the plaintiff's main argument here?

A: Top Class Action pulled this from the filing: “Defendant's ‘Potato Skins’ representations

are deceptive because the snack products do not actually contain any potato skins... This labeling deceives consumers into believing that they are receiving a healthier snack, but Defendant's products do not live up to these claims.”


Q: Let me get this straight. This person pulls into a convenience store, possibly on her way to train for the Boston Marathon or en route to a photo shoot for the cover of Fitness Magazine, and she says, “Golly, I am hungry and would like a delicious, nutritious snack that is healthier than most, perhaps an orange or apple or granola bar or a \$1.99 bag of TGI Fridays Sour Cream & Onion Potato Skins. They have the word ‘skin’ in them and everyone knows skin is synonymous with healthy eating and on the menu of every

Olympic-caliber athlete. Yum.”

After consuming the TGI Fridays Sour Cream & Onion Potato Skins she is shocked to learn there are no potato skins — the part many of us eat around and discard when enjoying a baked potato — and she believes the best course of action is to file a lawsuit because if TGI Fridays is allowed to get away with this misrepresentation, what's next? French fries won't be imported from France? Hot dogs will contain no processed canine? Slim Jims will be available to anyone off the street not named Jim? Scott, what is this world coming to?

A: I don't know, man. Tell Gary to pick us up in the Sentra after he gets off work at the Sip-N-Go and we'll ride down to the river with a couple of six packs and bag of Potato Skins and try to figure it all out.

Hollifield is editor/general manager of The McDowell News in Marion, North Carolina, and a humor columnist. Contact him at rhollifield@mcldowellnews.com.



BEE KIND TO POLLINATORS

DO YOU PART BY PLANTING FLOWERING HERBS

The Associated Press

Herbs are among the most useful plants in nature. They can tantalize the taste buds, help cure what ails you, oil the body, perfume the air, and attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

“People are getting more into herbs, with herb sales definitely on the rise,” said David Trinklein, an Extension horticulturist with the University of Missouri. “They’re using fresh herbs from the garden for culinary purposes, but another important reason is to help pollinators.”

Many gardeners are trying to help declining pollinator populations by providing them with the plants they need to thrive.

Herbs appeal to a great variety of bee species, said Francis Drummond, a professor of insect ecology and insect pest management at the University of Maine.

“It is mostly the abundant nectar that brings the bees in,” he said. “Some of the more attractive herbs to bees are thyme, comfrey, borage, oregano, bee’s friend, lemon balm, rosemary, hyssop, sage, lavender and chives.”

Most flowering herbs are attractive to pollinators, but some, like cilantro and basil, tend to lose other qualities when they blossom or bolt, said Ed Spevak, curator of invertebrates at the St. Louis Zoo. “So use the leaves earlier (for your own purposes) but then allow the plant to flower to support pollinators,” he said.

Some herbs, like cilantro, fennel and dill, produce very small blossoms that attract very small bees, Spevak said. “Fennel and dill also serve as host plants for black swallowtail caterpillars,” he said.

Bees find flowers by way of their color, not their scent, said David Salman, founder and chief horticulturist for High Country Gardens. “Particularly honeybees, although some native bees will feed on them as well,” he said. “But herbs primarily have Old World origins, so their primary interest is [for] honeybees which also were imported here.”

“In general, annual herbs tend to be more important for butterflies, primarily swallowtails,” Salman said.

Pollinators as a whole are necessary for a huge amount of the world’s food production, but the European honeybee is a critical species, Trinklein said.

“They’re the king of the pollinators,” he said. “They are morphologically designed to be pollinators, while other species are more accidental pollinators. They’re also greater in number and activity level than other species of pollinators.”

Bees need to collect syrup and pollen from early spring through late fall to support a healthy hive, Trinklein said. That means gardeners should plant a variety of flowers and herbs to prolong the bloom season.

Many beekeepers maintain that the herbs used for attracting pollinators should be natives, but Trinklein disagrees.

“I don’t think a bee minds if an herb is native or non-native,” he said. “Lavender and anything in the catnip family are particularly attractive to bees.”

Gardeners seeking to support pollinators might consider planting scent gardens made up entirely of herbs. They would provide pleasing fragrances around the home as well as nutrition for the bees, he said.

“However, it is advisable to avoid [wearing] strong-smelling perfumes, hairsprays or other fragrances which might attract to the gardener confused bees seeking out nectar,” Trinklein said.

WHAT SHOULD I PLANT?

These herbs appeal to a variety of bee species:

- thyme, comfrey,
- borage, oregano, bee’s friend, lemon balm,
- rosemary, hyssop, sage,
- lavender and chives

Do parents have a right to raise children as they see it? Not really.

“So, what do you think of attachment parenting?” My inquisitor was a 30-something mom. I sensed she was testing me, trying to determine whether I was worth her time.

“Not much,” I said.

“I don’t see any objective research that would verify any short- or long-term benefits; therefore, I don’t think the effort — on the part of the mother, primarily if not exclusively — pays off.”

“Well, I disagree,” she replied. “I practice attachment parenting and I see lots of benefit.”

“To whom?”

“Uh ... to both me and my child.”

“How many kids do you have?”



John Rosemond

“He’s my first.”

“So you have no control group or other point of comparison.”

“Maybe not,” she said, bristling, “but I have a right to raise my child any way I choose.”

“Actually, no, you don’t.”

“Well, isn’t that narrow-minded of you!” At which she stormed off.

Yes, it is narrow-minded of me. If one’s thinking doesn’t “narrow” as one grows older, then one is simply not paying attention, much less truly growing.

Anyone who thinks they are entitled to raise a child any way they choose is wrong. In the raising of a child, one has an obligation to one’s neighbors, broadly defined. That obligation overrides one’s obligation to

Parenting

one’s child, in fact. Furthermore, the parent who understands and practices what I just said is going to do a much, much better job than the parent who believes his or her child is the beginning and end of their obligation. The child who learns, early on, that he is not worthy of being the center of attention, that the world does not revolve around him, is going to be a much happier camper than the child who is caused to believe otherwise.

Another way of saying the same thing: Esteem of self — once known as pride — makes only one person’s world go around. Humility — a willingness to serve others, no matter the inconvenience — is

what glues culture together. Humbleness also makes for the highest level of personal satisfaction. For those reasons, the highest of all child-rearing goals is to raise a humble child. There are not multiple, equally viable ways of accomplishing that. There is one. Therefore, there is one proper way to raise a child and the Almighty you do not have a “right” — self-conferred, of course — to raise your child any old way you choose. That is narcissism, plainly speaking. It could be argued that one has a right to be a narcissist, but if so, the right ends when one’s self-absorption impacts another person. The only functional narcissist is a hermit.

Attachment parenting is the latest postmodern parenting

aberration. Women who have practiced it and then escaped its cult-like grip attest that there is no way a child so idolized can draw any conclusion other than that his needs surpass everyone else’s. It is HUMANism pushed to a pathological extreme, the epitome of not understanding that the proper raising of a child is an act of love for one’s neighbors.

It’s quite simple, actually: By keeping one’s obligation to one’s neighbors uppermost in mind, one will do the very best job of raising a child. When said child finally realizes why he’s so happy, he will not be able to thank you enough.

Learn more about family psychologist Rosemond at johnrosemond.com and parentguru.com.