

- [00:00](#) You're listening to the Wannabe Minimalist Show, episode number eight. On today's show, we're talking about where to start when you are ready to declutter or give minimalism a try.
- [00:10](#) [music]
- [00:14](#) Welcome to the Wannabe Minimalist Show. I'm your host Deanna Yates, and each week on this 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!
- [00:36](#) [music]
- [00:41](#) Well, hello there. Welcome back to another episode of the Wannabe Minimalist Show. I'm your host Deanna Yates from littlegreenbow.com. I'm so excited to discuss today's topic as we are winding down 2019 and getting ready to start not just a new year, but a new decade. Decluttering is such a popular topic at the start of any new year, but I have a feeling it will be hotter than ever this year. But, before we dive in and talk about how to get started with decluttering and minimalism, let's take a quick minute to talk about today's sponsor.
- [01:12](#) Today is brought to you by my brand new minimalism starter kit for families. It's a free resource and the perfect companion to today's show. Not only will you get more information about getting started with minimalism, but it's full of actionable steps so you can get started right away. You can pick up your copy by going to littlegreenbow.com/starter-kit.
- [01:37](#) You deserve to live a life of your dreams. Your family deserves to get the best version of you on a daily basis. You know the one where you enjoy your every days instead of counting down the minutes until bedtime. If you're tired of the chaos, I invite you to join me on the journey to minimalism that actually works for families. No, it's not stark white walls and one plate per person or zero toys for your kids. It's a life filled with meaning, simplicity and experiences, and trust me, this side feels amazing. Take the first step with this family minimalism starter kit. This minimalism starter kit for families, includes four printable quotes, 10 mindset shifts to overcome clutter, our five favorite decluttering methods as a family - one of which we're talking about in today's show - cheat sheets for how to get rid of paper clutter and a worksheet for getting to the heart of what a decluttered home would mean for you. Go ahead. I guarantee you'll love life on the other side and did I mention it's free? What are you waiting for? Head on over to littlegreenbow.com/starter-kit for your copy. Again, that's littlegreenbow.com/starter-kit.
- [02:52](#) Okay. Let's get back and dive into how to get started with decluttering and minimalism. Have you ever one of those days that does not go as planned? You thought your day would go one way and something caused it to go another?

Well, that actually happened to me this weekend. We have a water filtration system that we actually manually fill with water. It sounds like a lot of work, but since it holds about two gallons of water, we use a pitcher and fill it once or twice a day, so it's not really a big deal, except on Friday night I filled it too full and in the middle of the night it overflowed not enough to damage the wood floor or anything, but enough to make a mess of some papers and make its way into our junk drawer. That led to a morning of dumping everything out, sorting and cleaning up.

[03:39](#)

It also led me to cleaning up our toolkit, some random screws and what felt like a billion Allen wrenches. Why we have so many, I may never know. I started off being a bit irritated at being forced to declutter, but felt amazing when it was done. It's been something I've wanted to work on since we moved in this summer and now that it's done, I wish I hadn't waited. That experience this weekend led me to today's episode. You probably have a drawer, a cabinet, or a space in your home that's causing some mental irritation. That stuff adds up. So I wanted to help you find a way to start to declutter without feeling like you had to do everything at once. Life's too busy for that, right? All right, so let's discuss how to start when you're ready to declutter or give minimalism a try. The first is that you want to decide where to start.

[04:33](#)

I recommend that you start with something smaller, easy, just like I had this weekend. It was just my junk drawer and it was really simple, so realize that you don't have to do your whole home at once. You can start with like I did with the junk drawer. You can do a bathroom. Or you can look at someplace that would have the biggest impact on your daily life, like your entryway.

[04:54](#)

The second thing you need to do is to get your supplies. So when I'm decluttering a space, I like to have a pen and paper or use the notes app on my phone. I like to have something to drink. We'll talk about that in a minute. When we talk about our ritual, you'll need trash bags, boxes for storage and hangers. If you're working in a closet. And then fourth, you want to make sure you're ready, you want to clear your schedule, put your phone on, do not disturb, and do something like go to the bathroom so that you're totally centered on what you're doing and you won't have any distractions.

[05:29](#)

Okay? So once you have decided where you're starting and you've got your supplies ready and you are ready to go, let's talk about how I really like to get started. And I like to set the mood with a ritual. So what I do is I'll pour myself a drink and if it's during the day or on the weekend in the daytime, I'll start with a, you know, nice big hot cup of coffee. Or if it's the evening and my daughter's already gone to bed, maybe I'll pour myself a glass of wine. That doesn't always lead to the most efficient decluttering. But sometimes it's nice. Then I'll put on some good tunes, something that's gonna keep me energized and excited about the task at hand. And then finally I take a deep breath and that just helps me clear my mind and get ready for what I'm about to do, gets me a little excited about it too. All right.

[06:20](#)

So once I've completed that ritual, I take that pen and paper or the app on my phone and I like to start my task with intention. So I actually think this part is really important and I don't think people do this enough. I think they just go through their days and start their tasks and just start them and they don't think about why they're doing the things they're doing. So we're going to flip that on its head and we're going to start your decluttering task with intention. So at the top of that piece of paper, or in your app, you're gonna write down one word that you want to describe the space where you're working or one emotion that you want to feel when you are finished and have that space decluttered.

[07:02](#)

So let's look at some examples. So for your junk drawer, your word might be efficient or prepared. That was definitely how I wanted our drawer to be. It's a place where we keep our scissors and tape and extra batteries and pens and anything we might need really quickly when we're in our main living space. Another example might be your bathroom, so let's say your word for your bathroom. I'd be clean or spa like or if it's your guest bathroom, it might be inviting. You want your guests to feel welcome when they are in your home and using the bathroom is something we all need to do sometimes. And then another example might be your entryway. So my word was on top of my game. I know it's not one word, but it's the emotion I want to feel in my entryway when I am ready to walk out the door and I just feel prepared and I'm not rushing around and looking for stuff I feel on top of my game and that it just feels amazing and it's just one of the best ways I can start my day instead of being stressed. I feel in control. And this is one of my favorite ways to create a reward for a project or a space and it makes it so much easier to follow through. So when you are trying to declutter your space for the first time, try it out and let me know, let me know the space you're working on and let me know, um, the word that you want to describe that space and I, I just can't wait to hear how it works for you. I think you'll be really surprised.

[08:33](#)

So then once your intention set, you could also use that paper or your app to jot down any to-dos that come up or as you find things that you need to do so that you don't get sidetracked in the middle of the project. So for example, in the entryway, you may need an additional hook to hold a backpack or you might need a tiered paper sorter.

[08:51](#)

I discussed this in episode six when we talked about how to get rid paper clutter. So if you haven't listened to that one and that's of interest to you, I definitely recommend checking it out. But it's best to write these items down and then come back to them later instead of getting sidetracked in the middle of your project because it will slow it on your progress. You're building up momentum in your project and any distractions you have really will slow down that progress and it makes it so much harder to jump back in. So stay on task, jot them down and you can always go back to them later. And that way you won't forget them. So not only will that keep you on track, but you might find a solution around your house. As you sit with that idea a little bit later, or once you've cleared up that whole space, you might realize that you want to tweak

the layout or the flow a little bit and then maybe you don't need the item that you thought you did.

[09:39](#)

So stay on task, just write them down. You can always come back to them later. All right, so we know where we're starting, we've gotten our supplies, we've gotten started by setting our ritual, we've got our intention and we have our pad of paper ready to go for any other notes we need to take. The next step is to get our five bags or boxes for sorting. If you downloaded the minimalism starter kit, you've gotten our five decluttering methods and this is our first one on that list. I discussed this in detail on episode number three where I talk about our five decluttering methods that our family uses, and so if you're looking for more ideas, I recommend you check that out. But this five bucks decluttering method is very popular and it's one of the easiest for most people to start with because it requires almost no prep work.

[10:26](#)

You can start in any space and it's quick and efficient. The five boxes are piles you will need are number one, your love it or keep it pile number two, your toss pile number three, your donation pile number four, your sell pile, and number five your maybe pile. So most of those are self explanatory, but let's dive a little deeper. Okay. All right. You love it or keep it pile. Obviously these are the things that you find the most joy in or that are useful and that you want to keep in your space. I think it is helpful to completely clean out a space. So even if you know you love something and you're going to keep it, I still recommend removing it from its current location and putting it off to the side with the other items that you're going to keep. This allows you to look at your space with fresh eyes before it's filled up again and you might be surprised that you want to arrange things a little differently or when you have everything in a pile that you like and you want to keep, there might be an outlier there.

[11:28](#)

There might be something that doesn't fit with the others and you might either want to relocate it to another place or decide that it's not what you need anymore. So I like keeping those things off on the side and then looking at them and re-examining them before putting them back into your space. Okay. That was number one. Your love it. Keep a pile. Number two is your toss pile. These are items that you no longer use but they're not in good enough condition to donate or sell. So often I find people have a lot of paper clutter in their spaces and if you need help getting through that paper clutter, check out episode number six, it's all about dealing with the paper clutter that you get in the mail and from your child's school on a daily basis. And it also talks about how to get rid of the piles of paper clutter that have accumulated around your home.

[12:11](#)

And that might be what you're dealing with right now. So the toss pile are things that you're getting rid of. That doesn't necessarily mean throwing them in the garbage. It might be recycling them, but it is getting them out of your home. Number three is your donation pile. Now any item that is in good condition but you no longer use should go in your donation pile. So each time you finish a space though, I recommend getting that donation pile out of your home, get it into your car and put the drop off on your calendar so that you actually follow

through. You give yourself the time to make it over to the donation place and you can get those items out of your home. Number four is your sell pile and the only items that make it into my sell pile are items that are worth more than about \$50 your number might be higher or it might be lower, but it is important to have a threshold at which you are willing to let something go.

[13:05](#)

The trick here is to put an expiration date on the sell box and then donate anything that doesn't sell by that date. Now one trick here for when I sell something or know how to price something for sale is I look at the current market value for that item, not what I paid for it, but the current market value and I sell my item for less than half of that price, that new retail price. It just has been an easy ballpark for us. It's been an easy way for us to get items sold quickly and not holding onto them and then it really just takes out a lot of that guesswork. So if you're having a hard time pricing your items, I would definitely recommend that route and see how it goes for you. And then number five is your maybe pile and this one is the lifesaver.

[13:50](#)

This pile is the one that makes it easy for anyone to declutter their spaces, even people who never thought they would be able to declutter. This pile is your safety net. Any item you are not sure about, goes right into the maybe box when you're finished with the space that you're decluttering, that may be box gets stored out of your home most likely in your garage or in your attic or your basement. Right? An expiration date on that box. Now for some of you that will be a month from now, but most likely it will be usually about six months or a full year from now. Really it's whatever works for you after that expiration date comes. Anything that's still in that box should be donated. Now, I know a lot of people will recommend just donating the whole box without even looking in there, but I usually generally take a peek, but I don't have a lot of strong emotional attachments anymore to my stuff, so that's much easier for me to be able to look in there and say, Oh, yep, look, didn't that after all, but this may be Vox makes it much easier to see what you really need and what you're hanging onto because of emotions.

[15:00](#)

If you don't go searching for those items, it means you just have an emotional attachment to them. And there might be a different way that you can honor the emotions that you have attached to that item. Um, maybe it's an emotional connection you have with a person or a memory that you had and maybe there's something else in your home that can remind you of that. And then you can let go of the item that's in your maybe pile. But once you have your piles ready, now it's time to get started. Okay, so now we know what those piles are. We know, um, we have them all set up. We know the space we're starting with, we've gone through our ritual, we've got our pad of paper and set our intention for the day. And now it's time for you to take everything out of your space and sort it into those five piles.

[15:46](#)

So if you're starting with a drawer, I find it easiest just to dump the drawer out. And then that way you have to finish what you started. You know, if you don't finish, you're left with a pile in the middle of your floor and that's no fun for

anyone. So if you're starting with a cabinet, like let's say you're starting with your bathroom, I tend to sort as I remove things from the cabinet and then only the things that are in my love it or use it or keep it pile, go back into the cabinet when I'm done sorting. And the same goes for my closets. So I sort on the way out. As I'm taking things out of my closet, I sort them into the piles. The only difference here really is with my maybe pile, sometimes with clothes you need to try them on to see if you really like them or not.

[16:36](#)

And so when I'm doing clothes, the maybe pile actually will be clothes that I will try on again. So then I'll either decide if I'm going to keep them or donate them. But I find that with closets, if I try to remove everything at once, it can be super overwhelming and tiring and you'll most likely need a break before you even get any of the work done. So my job and my goal is to keep you as efficient as possible. So as you're doing your closets sort on the way out, trust me, it's so much easier. Okay. So now you've gone through your one space that you're wanting to clear up and you've sorted things out. But at this point, if you're still struggling with what to do with your items, I've found a few questions to be very helpful. So take a look at your item that you're having, that you're struggling with and ask yourself some of these questions.

[17:29](#)

Start with the space. How do you use this space? And with our junk drawer, that's where we put the things that we need easy access to. So I'm not going to store things here that need longterm storage. Those can go somewhere else. Maybe for your master bedroom closet, you're going to want to store your clothes in there or things that you need. You know, in your bedroom, you don't really want to store things that have no purpose in there or with your entryway. You want to make sure that that space is being used to make it easier for you to come in at the end of the day or end to leave, um, when you start your day and leave your home. So question number one, how do I use the space? Question number two, how do I want to feel when I'm in this space? Like I said with the entryway, I want to feel in control and confident and I've got this, that's the emotion I want in that room. But if we're talking about our living room, I want to be cozy and relaxed and I want to have fun with my family in there. So those have different emotions and the things in those rooms need to reflect those different thoughts and feelings.

[18:41](#)

Question number three, do I use this? Is this something that is useful to my life? Question number four, do I love this? Is this something that brings you joy? There's that KonMari question. Um, is it something that I love? Does it make me smile? Does it light me up inside when I think about it? Question number five, would I buy this today? Now, when we own something, we have strong emotional attachments that we give to our own personal belongings. So if it's something that you look at and you were to see it in a store today, is that something you would buy? If so, absolutely keep it in your home. And if it's not, think about if it's something that you want to keep, you know, in your possession and if not, feel free to let it go.

[19:32](#)

Question number six, does this represent who I want to be? Now, oftentimes we hold onto things because we already have them. It's something that maybe something was handed down to us, but just because we own it doesn't mean we have to keep it and we don't have to make it part of who we are. So this works a lot with clothing. Um, if your clothes are not representing who the PR, the person you want the world to see, then you need to make a change. Same with your home. When people come into your home, your home is a reflection of you. Is it reflecting the person you want to be? Only you can answer that for yourself. Question number seven, does this item have bad energy, negative associations or Harbor any guilt? So maybe it's something that you got from an ex from a long time ago, probably time to let it go.

[20:22](#)

Sometimes maybe you had a friendship that ended poorly and you have something that still reminds you of that friend. Every time you see those items, negative thoughts and emotions will well up inside you and that is not what you need in your home. So feel free to let go of those items. Number eight, is this worth the time it takes to dust clean or maintain? If it's something that brings you happiness and joy, you will not mind keeping it. If it's something that you find after a while, it's collecting dust and you just look at it and it just doesn't make you happy, probably time to let it go. Number nine, and this is the last question, is it worth taking up space in my home? And that's really the most important. So of course this space is for you and your family, but it is worth noting is it worth taking up the space that you have in your home?

[21:13](#)

All right, so your space is precious and personal to you and your family. It's where you unwind at the end of the day. It's the springboard for going out into the world. So you want to make sure that your home is where you can unwind and recharge and get ready. Okay. All right, so speaking of family, I have one final thing I want to discuss today and now a lot of you have asked how to get your spouse onboard with the minimalism and decluttering. An example someone gave me recently was about her husband who has a set of golf clubs that he has not used in what she said is over a decade now. She seemed pretty upset about the set of golf clubs. All right. I have an opinion about this and it might not be very popular, but I ask that you hear me out before turning off this podcast.

[22:01](#)

If you listen to the next part and totally disagree with me, I'm cool with you turning off this episode off and never listening to me again. Deal. Here it goes. It is not our job or responsibility to change someone else. We are only responsible for ourselves. Yes, as parents, we need to help guide our children, but anyone that's a parent knows that you cannot control how your children feel or what they like. The same is true with our partners. We are not on this planet to change them. We are here to support the people we love. If you want to get your spouse and kids on board with decluttering, you need to be the example and model the behavior you wish to see. Find a place in your home that you can control, like your closet, your car, the family command center, and declutter it to your liking.

[22:54](#)

If you can get your own clutter under control and then demonstrate those benefits to your family. Once they see that they will want to jump on this minimalism train with you. So in my life, I'm further down this minimalism path than my husband, and we're both further down the path than our daughter. It's a process and a journey. So you want some examples? All right. I'll give you some from around my house. So as I look around our living room, I can't help but notice our books. So over the years we have gotten rid of almost all of our books. It's something that's much easier for me though. I'm able to get rid of the books and I'm perfectly content to check them out from the library when there's one I actually want to read. And while my husband has gotten rid of a lot of his books, he's still holding on to some emotions when it comes to having physical books on his bookshelf that he wants to read.

[23:46](#)

I've let my books go and I've also let go of the expectation that he needs to be where I am in this process too. So if the books bring him joy, he should keep them and I'm totally on board with that. You want another example? Okay. We both have collections from when we were young. Mine are a few dolls and toys that we're holding on to for my daughter as well as a large collection of Christmas ornaments, boy, large collection of Christmas ornaments. My daughter and I went through the ornaments this year and we're actually down to two boxes of Christmas decor from about five boxes that we had a few years ago. Now that she's six I'll also have her go through the few toys that I kept for her and if she doesn't want to keep them, I'll be ready to let them go. There really is no sense in having them collect dust and take up space in a garage if she does not want to play with these items, so my husband collected comic books and baseball cards.

[24:42](#)

Here's a couple boxes of these items still and that's okay. Now did you notice something? We both have a few boxes of items that we're holding onto in the garage. We need to understand that all of us have items with deep emotional connections from our past and while we work through these items, we need to show each other and ourselves grace. Maybe we don't understand why our partners are holding onto something, but we will get a lot further in our minimalism journeys when we work together to get rid of our baggage instead of blaming and working against each other. So here's where my opinion may not be super popular. I don't want to bash our partners. I want to help them and support them and work together to get through our clutter. If you're in this place where you want your partner or kids to get rid of stuff, here are the steps I recommend you follow.

[25:41](#)

If you totally disagree with me after these steps, this is where I give you permission to never listen to my podcast again. Cool. Step one, declutter all of the spaces that are completely under your control. I recommend your closet, your items in storage, your belongings around the house, your car, the family command center, and the kitchen. If you were the one in charge of cooking. Step two, live this minimalism journey and cherish the freedom that you get by having less. Your family will learn by your example. Trust me, this lifestyle is contagious. I am so much happier now. I'm less stressed, I yell less. I enjoy my

time. I'm able to commit fully when I'm playing with my daughter and they all love it and they can all feel the difference now that I am no longer constantly thinking about my space and my stuff, so trust me, they'll see the difference.

[26:43](#)

And then step three, support and honor your family in their choices. Encourage them to try living with less, but do not get angry or pushback when they choose to keep something that you're unsure about. You might actually be surprised at what they choose to let go of. So don't be offended if they want to get rid of something you gave them or that you're fond of or you might be surprised at what they choose to keep. So make sure you don't cast judgment. Then that scenario either. Now, the smaller your children are, the easier it is to steer them in the direction of minimalism you want because you are one of the adults in charge of what you purchase for them. Over time, your family will naturally start to let more and more go as they begin to reap the benefits and freedom that comes with living with less.

[27:31](#)

Okay? That's it. If you're still with me and you didn't turn off this episode, I would love to connect with you further. Please join me in my brand new Wanna be Minimalist Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/wannabeminimalist/>). Over the next few weeks, I will be sharing lots of exclusive information there and I will actually be hosting a 21 day decluttering challenge in January all for free. It's going to be awesome, but you have to be part of the Wannabe Minimalist Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/wannabeminimalist/>) to get into the challenge. Okay? I will not be sending out the info in any other way, so join now and be ready for a transformative 2020 a new decade, new, amazing life with less stuff, less stress and less burden. I can't wait and I hope to see you there. Don't forget about the minimalism starter kit (<https://littlegreenbow.com/starter-kit>) too. It's filled with actionable steps that will help put today's episode into practice for you.

[28:21](#)

So head on over to littlegreenbow.com/starter-kit or click on the link in the show notes and I will send you the minimalism starter kit straight to your inbox so you don't lose it. Again, that's littlegreenbow.com/starter-kit and finally, if you found this helpful, I would love it if you would subscribe to this podcast or leave a review so other families can find it too. Next week on the podcast we'll be discussing the psychology behind why we overvalue the items we already own. It's a fascinating topic and it will help you over the hurdles most people stumble on when they're trying to declutter. You won't want to miss it. See you then.

[29:02](#)

[music]

[29:05](#)

so this episode 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 love this episode, it would be really helpful

if you left a rating and a review so more families can find the show to your awesome. Thanks and see you next week.