

Sermon
Hovering in Possibility
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Anyone watched the Netflix reality show *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo*? Apparently, it has become one of the hot new shows – people are buzzing about it on Twitter and Facebook, there was even an article about it on the Patheos religious blog this week.

When I first started watching it, I hadn't heard anything about it. I just ran across it, and thought, since Ginger and I are going through some of our stuff and de-cluttering, maybe I'd get a couple of useful tips. I thought I'd watch a couple of episodes and be done with it.

I was expecting to see a kind of "extreme home makeover" for clutter type of thing, where they would send the homeowner away and just do it for them; or give them rules and see to it they followed them – those rules like, "if you haven't used it in the last year, get rid of it," or "ideally, you should only keep 30 books." Like any book lover could, or would, follow a rule like that!

But this show was different. I found myself enchanted, and before I knew it, I had watched the whole first season!

Turns out Marie Kondo is not only a professional home organizing consultant, she published a book about her method some ten years ago and has a huge following. There are many things I really appreciate about her approach, such as her total respect for the sentimental attachment people sometimes feel for things. But I was really struck by the way she always begins her tidying projects.

When she goes into a new home, she tells the owners, "I would like to greet your house first, to introduce myself to the house. Would you like to join me?" She suggests, "Thank your home for protecting you, and send out your intention that we are about to begin this process of tidying. Find an image of the lifestyle you would like to have. Picture your vision for your home."

Then she settles herself, kneeling on the floor, silent, with her eyes closed and her head bowed, her fingers gently tracing the ground around her. The families are silent, with their heads bowed, too; often, family members will hold hands or put an arm around each other.

I have realized that this moment is the key to how the rest of the show works. It's the moment when the people who are about to embark on the big project of re-organizing their homes, take a moment, and *hover*.

Hovering is sometimes called "soul searching." It is the practice of looking within yourself to find whatever energies, desires, and passions you have that may be aligned with your creative endeavor.

With their eyes closed, they hover for a few moments to look at the big picture. They get a feel for their home, what it has meant to them, and what they would like it to mean for them in the future. They dwell, for a time, in possibility.

This moment has a surprising impact on some of the participants. When Marie asks them how this moment has made them feel, they say things like, “this has been a very good house for us. And I see that we could enjoy it even more.” “I just realized a feeling I had, about feeling happy here, and how others will feel happy when they walk in here.” “I feel inspired. Excited. Relaxed. I just saw order.”

At this point in each episode, everyone is suspended in several peaceful moments of music and meditation, until Kondo breaks the silence with a cheerful announcement: “with those visions in your hearts, lets’ begin tidying!” Then she gives them *one* guideline for deciding what to keep: to focus on how they feel about things, and keep those things that “Spark Joy.” “Spark joy is all about how my body reacts,” she says. “Ting!”

So I have been thinking. What if, at the beginning of a something new, we took the time to pause for several peaceful moments? To sit quietly, even retreat into a blanket fort, and hover in possibility for a bit? What might we see that could inspire and excite us? What inner song of the heart might we hear? What might we find that sparks joy for us?

Now, sitting quietly may not be your thing. Some of us get anxious trying to just sit. (And if this is you, please feel free to bring your knitting or coloring book to church with you!)

There are other ways to hover, to allow your brain and your spirit to rest and dwell in new possibilities. Anything that pulls you up and away from the task at hand and allows your mind to drift for a bit can help you get that hovering perspective.

- **Take a play break.** Throughout the day, stop to listen to music, play with a toy, or doodle on a piece of paper. Stretching your brain in different ways and daydreaming can stimulate your creativity.
- **Allow yourself to mess up.** Making mistakes can open doors to new possibilities and solutions. Challenge: Wear something you wouldn’t normally be caught dead in, and pay attention to the feelings and sensations that arise. Notice that these feelings are fleeting.
- **Move your body.** Regular physical movement can help stimulate your [hippocampus](#), which some researchers believe can enhance your imaginative abilities. Challenge: Go to the park and fly a kite, play frisbee, or get swinging on the swing set.

Once we let our minds hover for a time – it doesn’t have to be a long time – we are better able to notice what our hearts are really drawn to. What it is that brings a song into our hearts, what excites us and gives us a reason for what we are about to do.

So here is my wish for each of you: that you find the time – that you *make* the time – to hover. That you take a moment to see the “big picture.” That you clear the decks, build the blanket fort, fly the kite, give yourself the gift of space and time to think, to ruminate, to consider what is necessary, what feels right – what “sparks joy.” And that you follow that joy wholeheartedly into whatever creative adventure calls you.

May it be so.