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Swedish Death Cleaning

By Mary Ungoed-Thomas

Most people accumulate clutter throughout their lifetime. Swedish Death Cleaning involves shedding the items that don't really matter to bring about a healthier and happier lifestyle. It means living more authentically and in the process making things easier for loved ones who have to deal with your possessions when you die. It can be carried out at any age.

The concept ('dostadning' in Swedish) started with Margareta Magnusson, author of The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning. She proposes that if you get rid of possessions which are extraneous, you can identify what is most important and live a more satisfying life, focusing on relationships and becoming more congruent. Going through your things can be a positive reminder of your principles and who you really are, and a lighter footprint chimes with environmental principles.

Magnusson recommends starting with the big items such as furniture before progressing to the small. The 'red dot' system means you throw away items with a red sticker, keep those with a green and put a yellow sticker on those you are not sure about. Meanwhile, making Donate, Sell or Keep piles can help when clearing out a wardrobe. You can also gift items successfully to friends.

When sorting out your affairs, make sure your loved ones know where your important paperwork is kept and share your digital and financial passwords. Adopting these measures makes for a more stress-free life, with better focus and a more harmonious balance as well as improved relationships.

Useful websites

BBC

Better

The Spruce

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