

The Minimalist Journey

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I came across minimalism unintentionally. I was looking for answers on how eighteen-year-olds can afford living out on their own right after high school because I will need to move out of the house at some point, and I thought the sooner the better. I was binge watching YouTube videos on titles, 'how to afford to move out at age 18' and apartment tours. Then, I came across, "my new minimalist apartment" by Nate O'Brian. In his apartment tour, he shows what is in his apartment by owning the objects that give him value. By owning a few kitchen appliances, having a small wardrobe, no dining room table, and other objects he mentions, he lives a minimalistic lifestyle. There are other YouTube creators that are minimalists: Joshua Beaker, Matt D'Avella, and The Minimalists, to name a few. What some people say about this type of lifestyle is that minimalism can only own an x number of possessions, throw everything away that does not spark 'joy,' minimalists can only spend a certain amount of money, and that they only care about the physical items. From my research about minimalism, people live how they want with their minimalism journey, so it is different for everyone. So, what is minimalism and what are the facts vs the myth of this lifestyle?

Most people think that Minimalism is all about clearing out your objects and living with the bare minimum. Not exactly. Minimalism is a lifestyle that is not just about your possessions. It is not just about where you live or how much money you have. It is a mindset that helps each of us remove excess so that we can focus on what really matters. Minimalism is simply getting rid of the possessions you do not need, making it an uncluttered and simple life. Being a minimalist, you have the minimum to survive comfortably and to enjoy life experiences, not possessions. As Emma Hidlebaugh (2022), author of *Minimum my Mess blog*, puts it, "The goal of minimalism is to remove excess clutter (a product of years of emotional/impulse buys) and

live with less so you can focus on what's truly important in your life - relationships, experiences, creativity and personal growth."

With minimalism, you declutter objects in your life that do not add value, but some things you do not even use have memories attached to them since you were a kid. You feel very guilty getting rid of it because part of being a minimalist is to throw out everything that does not 'Spark Joy.' If you own something that does not make you happy anymore, then it has no place in your home. The reality is, you do not have to throw out the things that bring up negativity to be a minimalist, Author Krystal Kleidon (2022) writes from *7 Common Myths about Minimalism*, explains, "There are plenty of things you should keep for purposes other than joy, it's just a guideline to help you choose what to keep and what to declutter if you're having difficulties deciding." Some examples include clothes you have not worn in a year, old unnecessary files, broken electronics, and duplicates of food utensils in your kitchen. Depending on if you use that object or how much that possession means to you will determine your choice when decluttering.

Therefore, some people think that to be a minimalist, you must own an x number of things. Sure, you can go down that path if you want to, but it is not entirely true. It is not the lack of something, but the perfect amount of something. In a minimalist life, you only have what brings true value to you. People should not tell you what you can own and what you cannot have to be a minimalist. There is no specific list of things that we cannot call ourselves minimalists. EVA ASTOUL, who authored the article *8 Minimalism Myths: The Truth About Minimalist Living* (2021) quotes "If your belongings bring you joy and are functional, you can call yourself a minimalist. For instance, you may have a collection of DVDs or books. Whether you have tens or hundreds, you can still be a minimalist if you have curated this collection." The important part

that Eva is saying is that if the object brings you happiness, keep it. If it does not bring you happiness, do not keep it.

People see minimalism as an elimination of materialism, but it is not only with physical objects. It can be applied to other parts of our life as well. Minimalism can apply to various parts of your life such as your friends and family. In the article, *8 Minimalism Myths: The Truth About Minimalist Living*, Eva Astoul (2021) explains more, “You can simplify and declutter your life in your processes by reducing the number of friends you have (removing those that don’t make you happy) and even by removing yourself from social media channels or spending more time doing what you love.” This lifestyle brings the opportunity to enjoy more exciting experiences and positive social interactions, not physical possessions. That is one of the main goals that the minimalist life targets that separates other ways of living.

In addition, money plays a key factor in living. Well, if the minimalist's goal is to own less, then they do not spend any of their money, right? No. Instead, this means that minimalists make smarter choices with what they buy with it being better quality and lasting a lifetime. Joshua Fields Millburn & Ryan Nicodemus (The Minimalists) are some of the most well-known minimalists out there and have many different topics on their webpage relating to minimalism. One YouTube video titled “15 Minimalist Home Goods” and something I got out of that video is some of the objects they named off had a bit of a higher price, but the quality of the product can last a lifetime. That is their goal when shopping. Part of the minimalist journey is to learn a new mindset by really considering your purchases before making them.

What kind of rules are there before becoming a minimalist? Technically, there are none. Some people say to become a minimalist, you must follow the rules. Emma Hidlebaugh claims, “There are no rules. There are loads of amazing resources out there for you to read, watch and

listen to. But remember that minimalism is not a science. All any of us minimalism "experts" can do is share what worked well for us." There are some rules that The Minimalists have but that is just from their individual experiences. Some people take it hardcore and seem to own almost no physical items. Some are going minimal and still need to figure out how to declutter. Some travel the world all the time and some even live in their vehicles. Minimalists with families can still own less whether their family is minimalists or not. There are even vegan minimalists out there.

When going over the myth vs. Facts of minimalism, we do not need to own a certain number of possessions, we can buy higher quality products with longer life expectancy, we keep our objects that bring joy and ditch the ones that do not. We also went over what minimalism is and that it isn't all about the possessions and the money you have. It is a lifestyle and a mindset to live your best life by getting rid of the clutter in your own life. Minimalism isn't the same for everyone. People have different priorities in their lives. They can use minimalism to help get through it. If you want to try to embark on the journey of minimalism, start by decluttering your car, or your closet. I decluttered my dresser. I sorted out all the clothes I needed and did not, and what I found out was shocking. I had five garbage bags full of clothes, ready to donate to Goodwill. There were so many clothes in my dresser that it went empty. I found out that I did not even need that dresser. Now, I have more space in my room, and less clutter, making me feel my life has just gotten simpler. So, ask yourself, "Have I used this in the last ninety days, and will I use this in the next ninety days?" That question is called the 90/90 rule, created by the minimalists. A question I ask myself is, "Does this possession bring me any value?" That helps me determine if I really need it anymore. There are many other rules out there to help you through the path of minimalism but follow what you are comfortable with. Love people, not things, because the opposite never works.

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