



# *The* minimalists

LUCY CLEEVE MEETS

THOSE MAKING THE MOST  
OF LIVING WITH LESSJOSHUA FIELDS MILLBURN  
& RYAN NICODEMUS

SUPPLIED

Joshua Fields Millburn and Ryan Nicodemus have just sold out a world tour. The duo also present a hit podcast, have produced an award-winning doco and write bestsellers. But they aren't rock stars, they're minimalists. And their message is making waves all around the world.

The Minimalists, as they call themselves, are living-with-less evangelists, and they are on a mission to bring meaning to people's lives by clearing clutter. They're both from Ohio, and quit high-paying corporate jobs in 2011 to focus on the most important things in life (clue: it's not stuff).

They say the movement isn't a fad – it's a necessary response to our consumer-driven society. Making life decisions consciously, they say, results in happiness, fulfilment and freedom.

Japanese organising guru Marie Kondo made the term “spark joy” part of our everyday vernacular after the ideas in her book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, went viral and sparked a

decluttering frenzy around the globe. But, just like the Minimalists, Marie says it's not just ship-shape wardrobes that her devotees are enjoying, it's the internal peace it brings.

Of course, many of us could do with a little more serenity. Australians are more anxious than ever before; it's estimated that more than two million of us are suffering from anxiety at any one time.

One person who has experienced the life-changing effects of paring down is Melbourne woman Lucy Taht. “Moving apartments four times in three years made me realise how much stuff I own, but didn't love or use,” Lucy says. “It helped me embrace a more minimalist lifestyle.

“Decluttering my life has 100 per cent made me happier. A weight lifted – the stress is gone. I feel more in control knowing exactly what I have in my house. I love organising my favourite things, rather than arranging stuff to make it fit. My home is now calm – it's my sanctuary.”

Lucy's daily routine has radically improved, too. “Deciding what to wear used to be overwhelming; it was hard to find what I was looking for. Now, I get dressed without the drama of going through clothes I don't even like.”

But the move towards minimalism isn't without its challenges. “The hardest thing,” she says, “is letting go of stuff you've held onto, especially sentimental or expensive things, or when you think, ‘oh, I might use that someday’. I held onto belongings that were broken, presents I didn't love, and expensive or too-small clothes I felt crap in. But when I started asking myself the right questions, like ‘do I love it?’ and ‘why am I holding onto this?’ the process became a lot easier.”

Lucy was so inspired by her newfound contentment she decided to help others on their own

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# The minimalists

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downsizing journeys. She started her own business, called Melbourne Minimalist.

Lucy still works full-time as an e-commerce consultant, but in her spare time she helps fellow Melburnians lose the excess from their lives, offering hands-on decluttering help in the home or virtual minimalist coaching. “I get such a thrill out of supporting people to get rid of stuff they never thought they could,” she says. “Being free, fresh and organised makes you feel so much lighter.”

But even for a card-carrying minimalist, celebrations such as Christmas and birthdays can be tricky. “I love giving gifts,” Lucy says. “Instead of getting caught up in it all, I give more meaningful things for people I care about. I pay attention and I always give gifts they’ve been wanting or that they need. I’m also big on experiences over things, like taking a friend out for dinner.”

Lucy’s other weakness is clothes. “I adore dressing



MICHAEL RAYNER

LUCY TAHT

“Decluttering my life has 100 per cent made me happier.” **LUCY TAHT**

up for events, but I’ve now learnt to only buy clothes that I love,” she says. “I’ve invested in a couple of timeless outfits to wear to different occasions and I’m OK with not buying something new for each event, because I feel so good in the clothes I’ve got. If you like wearing something new each time, it’s easy to hire outfits or buy then sell online.”

## SO YOU WANT TO BE A MINIMALIST?

“There is no right or wrong way to start – you just do the best you can,” Lucy says. “Everyone has different passions, but you have to be honest with yourself.”

For example, if you’re a fashion junkie who can’t remember what you own because you have so many clothes, Lucy says it might be time to become more aware of what you have and only keep what you love. “The whole aim is to remove physical and

emotional excess to feel lighter and happier – to take pride in your things and your life. It’s important to remember that it’s just stuff and it can all be gone in a moment,” she says.

“I’ve learnt over the years that only owning what I love and use has helped me feel more in control and free to do what I want. “I live in a one-bedroom apartment and I’m constantly reviewing my things, to remove what I don’t love. My boyfriend is moving in to my place soon, but I’m lucky he is coming from the UK and only bringing one suitcase.” ●

## THE MINIMALISTS \

Joshua Fields Millburn and Ryan Nicodemus will tour Australia next year, appearing at Melbourne’s Forum Theatre on March 18.

● **Tickets: [tegdainty.com](http://tegdainty.com)**

● **[melbourneminimalist.com](http://melbourneminimalist.com)**



## Break it down

Lucy’s tips for taking the first step to downsizing your life:

- 1 Don’t stress, and take your time. Remember, it’s just stuff.
- 2 Get some help from a professional or a friend.
- 3 Be ruthless. If you don’t love it, if you haven’t used it in years, let it go.
- 4 Visualise how you want to feel in your home, what you want it to look like and take before and after photos. You’ll see how far you’ve come.