

Episode 5: A PS to our love letter to Marie Kondo

SR: ramp?

tier: enough!

SR: 20 minutes of podcast

tier: we continue with our wonderful topic about Marie Kondo

SR: yes! (cut) the time where I neither had bafög (government assistance for students) nor support from the parents and was trying to make ends meet with jobs I could fit in while studying. my then partner also had no money at all. and Marie Kondo is the reason why I can now manage better with money. I now understand how money works, i just don't make purchases, i do no more panic buying because i have no money.

tier: yes

SR: So if I have no money I have to go to the one-euro shop and buy eight things for eight euros, which is a totally understandable emotion!

tier: yes toatlly!

SR: you know that too

tier: oh yes!

SR: "I need seven plastic things and one more plastic thing!"(laughs) then I still have as little money as before, minus eight euros!

tier: yes, yes! and then all that stuff is lying around and filling up the apartment and at some point you are just frustrated!

SR: yes, which is why I need sorting aids that I have to buy and so on on and on. It's a never-ending cycle! and Marie Kondo has broken the cycle for me. because I could just dispose of furniture and an incredible number of things, and now i have the number of furniture where I've can notice three years in advance: "oh, this dresser will not last long" so I can save. so those are little things, but I just have much more a feeling for "how are the things i have? what do they need? how often do you have to replace a washing machine?" and such things. that's why this criticism bothers me because there is a little bit of it "only people with money are allowed to listen o thier gut feeling when it comes to material things "and it is also such an ancient understanding of classism. So I think when I look at my family where they are globally some of the poorest, not only in German scale. these are not people who don't own anything, but everything they have is made out of cheap plastic, nothing works properly. and this is waht what simply shows that when you don't have class privilege, the more likely it is that you have the world's plastic garbage at home.

tier: that's right, yes.

SR: and you're in such a constant urge to buy new things, which is exactly why the saying is: poverty is expensive!

tier: exactly. I also think in German context if we look at people who get Harz IV (unemployment benefits or welfare): it's not enough to make ends meet! I'm myself in this situation. and then when something brakes the first feeling is always panic! how do I get on with it now, how can I replace it and then of course I buy the cheapest. and sometimes it is not possible any other way.

SR: well, but for example: if you own many things you need many chests of drawers or furniture like that and if your chest of drawers breaks you have no nerves to think about if you need things, but are you trying to replace the chest of drawers, which will be a used one for five euros that will eventually brake .. so it's just a circle! Marie Kondo won't cancel that Harz IV is way too little money!

tier: that's right, yes

SR: well, it would be cool (both laugh)

tier: mm, yes full! just this .. and I think maybe it's now time to bring up this aspect, because we're a podcast about disabilities and what that means for us as disabled people to have such a system. for me that means a lot of this "I can choose and determine about my own things" because I have an

overview about them and I know what is important to me! and I have some kind of control because I don't own a thousand things but only things that interest me! crafts for example. I have a lot craft materials but I also have sorted out a lot so now I have things i know that work for me!

SR: yes, maybe that's the aspect: to learn to know what works for you, for example about shoes, maybe that's a good example for people who do not know it at all: earlier I've always been buying cheap shoes. As you know I have a back disability, that means that it never worked out with those shoes, because the pain was so bad that I actually couldn't move, couldn't work, couldn't make money. but I thought I couldn't afford expensive shoes because i constantly had to get new shoes! I always had to buy shoes for 25 euros, so I didn't thin I could buy expensive shoes.

tier: yes

SR: and then at some point I totally suffered for about nine months and saved the money for my first pair of barefoot shoes. after having a very shitty orthopedic appointment that made everything worse. and then I suffered for three months, because at the beginning barefoot shoes are hell! (laughs) and now I have barefoot shoes and the pair is expensive, but they last exactly two and a half years, there you can almost... so now you have them meanwhile as well! you can almost set the clock after them! which means: from the moment I buy a new pair, I start saving for the next pair! and otherwise I don't buy shoes anymore because surprisingly I find shoes actually really uninteresting. I had to learn that first of all about myself, I'm just not very interested in what my feet are packed in! I find clothes exciting, I find make-up exciting, shoes don't seem to interest me, so why should I then ..

tier: exactly!

SR: have more than three pairs of shoes?

tier: yes! and then again the opposite conclusion: that for people who are very interested in shoes, but maybe then something else for them is not as interesting, such as kitchen appliances or something!

SR: exactly, yes! and that's totally interesting how it interacts with disability, because disability also controls what is relevant in your own life. and that was for me i think in the last two years really another great lesson: what actually is relevant for me, just because it makes me being less in pain?

tier: yes!

SR: one of the topics was the mattress. I now have a really good mattress and with my back disability I can forget about sleeping on a cheap mattress, then I'd rather prefer to sleep on the floor. I know that because I often do that on tour. and I would have never learned to understand that without Marie Kondo, because I was too busy with cleaning up all the time and being ashamed all the time for my apartment and .. you know? So to create such a place at all for "i have this disability, what does that mean for the environment in which I move every day, my home?"

tier: yes and that was also a thing when you moved and cleaned out things before the move and then you said that you now want to pay attention hat you only have seating in your apartment on which you can comfortably sit and which give you no pain.

SR: which is fucking ridiculous!

tier: (laughs)

SR: I had a 2 meter 40 couch because it was free (both laugh) which I couldn't sit on!

tier: yes

SR: that doesn't make any sense at all!

tier: no

SR: it's nice that my guests could sit comfortably,

tier: (laughs)

SR: and the animals could sit comfortably, but I couldn't sit anywhere! So yes, these are different examples that may sound to people who have grown up in a functional household not like something major, but for me these have been the most important steps in the sense of empowerment, it has worth how I feel in my flat! it's okay if I, yes, if i have the need to feel comfortable, and it's okay that it does something with my psyche! and as a mentally ill person with physical disabilities I'm really a lot at home (laughs) and I think maybe it's a level that really

disturbs me with this question of classism, especially because in Germany poverty is very often connected with being at home. In the US, for example, it's different, in the Dominican Republic too. But on the one hand it means people are socially forced to be much at home because they can't participate in society, but if you try with the help of a system like this to make it beautiful, then they are somehow again not "rightfully classist underprivileged". Because they dare to paint a wall orange or to throw things away (sarcasm). But material things are not money, things are things! I can't buy food using 20 cheap plastic baskets, which I'm not able to sell. I think there is quite a bit of hard truth in it like "you have made real mistakes in your life but it doesn't make sense to continue doing them and to continue giving them space."

tier: yes and cling to it and I actually don't understand this unjustified classicism critique because when one actually looks at what she is saying, or what is in the book: Marie Kondo is extremely anti-capitalist! because it's not about if you've got the best things, but rather what things are important to you? and you don't need to constantly buy something. So through this book I really learned to be more satisfied in general.

SR: yes, definitely.

tier: and if people are satisfied with what they have and their surroundings then they don't have to consume all the time!

SR: oooo!

tier: so for me it's like an added bonus in the Marie Kondo-method and that's why I just don't understand this criticism at all!

SR: and I have to think of what she writes in her book, which is that she gives an example with a customer who says that she yearns to live in luxury and therefore would like to clean up. Marie Kondo answers "yes ok, but that is still somehow an empty phrase, what is luxury for you?" and the customer says "a tidy apartment where after the long shift I can get in the tub and drink a glass of wine." I think something like that

tier: yes

SR: and then Marie Kondo says "okay then we can now plan how we can get there." It's not at all about buying extravagant and beautiful things, but the exact opposite! that also affirmed me back when I really didn't have any money because she tells us not to buy any organizational helpers. to not buy extra baskets and all kinds of trinkets and whatever, she says to get shoeboxes for free, because it's not about decorating your home, it's about tidying up! and splitting it up that way is super cool!

tier: I think that is also a big difference from other articles or books or something where it explicitly says "don't go out to buy new things for you to organize your things, but use what you already have, you can repurpose things." So that's all, it's really not about consumption!

SR: no, it's not about consuming and it's also not about... because shopping is also difficult for some people!

tier: yes, exactly!

SR: that is another aspect: it's really what you do for yourself with the book at home! and as a disabled person, as a person with mental illnesses, with depression, that's what I needed in my life!

tier: also the accessibility: first, you don't have to go to any organization or apply for help or anything, you can really do it alone with this book. you can organize and tidy up your apartment in really small steps

SR: because it's not really about the activity is about the muscle! it's really about exercising the muscles: I can throw things away, I can keep things, I can buy things and notice three weeks later "that doesn't work for me" and learn from it. that takes a lot of blame away!

tier: yes yes yes! and the interesting thing is also what I think we've both experienced through the book and through using this method for our apartments is that, the method in itself, or this way to think, this muscle you are talking about, is useful in other aspects in life as well, or in general! For instance when it comes to social contacts and the like: do I meet with this person just because I'm "supposed to" or because I want that?

SR: yes

tier: and so on ..

SR: if I feel bad every time after I met someone, why do I keep doing that? that was a totally new idea for me, "why do that? why am I keeping that in my life? why am i giving it so many resources?" and yes, maybe that's one aspect that brings it all together again: because racism teaches us: "you have to lead a life that seen from the outside corresponds as little as possible to stereotypes", sexism says: "everything that is private has no relevance, only the public." I do not want to elaborate that further now, but that is quasi the limit on which the boring criticism walks wisely. disability says: "you you should stay inside, but you shouldn't annoy anyone with that you think it's nice inside or just helpful for you, but you should suffer in it and shut up and not be visible!" and mental illness says: "if you are inside you have to feel bad because that's the disease and outside will you be healed." depression says: "go out jogging in the park, sun and all that."

tier: yes

SR: and capitalism says: "the things inside just have to work!" because fucking capitalism is based on the housewife concept, right? housework is not work, it just happens by the magic hand in a nice skirt in the background

tier: (laughs)

SR: so you won't need a method, or any strategies, no research. It's private, it can please just stay inside! (sarcasm) and all these things basically say: "You mustn't deal with it a strategic level, it shouldn't be difficult for you and it especially shouldn't be anything you're talking about! I have also never talked to people about that I've been reading this book for a long time, because I was so ashamed of it even being a topic in my life.

tier: and neither can it be an interest for you!

SR: no, especially not!

tier: I said at the beginning that's actually something we are interestd in: how we live in our apartments and how we furnish them!

SR: yes, definitely! it is not just a huge part of our lives, but a part for which we are very grateful! I am thankful that nobody but you is tinkering around in my kitchen, I am thankful that I can cook like I cook and those are kind of all aspects that fall into this category. and somehow they're all really big topics and such, but at the end of the day all those crappy critics are making it harder for people to find a solution. and hoarding and being messy, the mean thing is that not only does the person who has this suffer, but also the people who are close to them suffer from it and especially those who rely on the care work of them suffer. and what I think it's so great about Hoarder's Heart is that she explains her kids are about five and eight, and they already have tendencies of hoarding, because they've never learned differently. that she says no she wants her children to be one find another way! so actually we would have to absolutely talk about it, talk about it all without guilt, because evey other suppressive mechanisms still really get stronger! and ultimately it teaches you the freedom of choice. and then to say: "that's shit, that's classist!" actually says: "people who don't have money are not allowed to be good at making decisions for themselves".

tier: yes!

SR: and honestly that disgusts me!

tier: really! so much agency is taken away, the possibility for people to be able to learn how to take responsibility and to deal with their own things and their own environment and such. that is just a knock-out argument!

SR: yes you better not learn that because then you may realize how poor you actually are (irony)

tier: exactly!

SR: that's actually what they are saying! to please keep all your junk and to think that you lead an ok life in capitalism. instead of throwing stuff away and to say: "hey that's left over by the way of the things I really want to have "

tier: yes yes, and it can also be that people end up there and notice: "that's not nearly enough!"

SR: yes, exactly! you just get an awareness of your actual own situation! and that seems to be what left circles do not want? and that just doesn't make any to me!

tier: no!

SR: because that's the first basis for resistance! the first basis for doing anything is to notice:

"wow!"

tier: wait? (both laugh)

SR: if I throw away all of the cheap plastic containers in my life that got for free from take-away, I actually don't own a single piece of furniture on which I can sit myself (laughs) that sucks!

tier: yes, there is something wrong, yes!

SR: and that makes out of a apathic depression a concrete perception of one's own situation and I don't think that's worse! I think that's more honest!

tier: yes, and I think it's incredibly important to underline and emphasize that, because that's like what you meant with the privacy, that it's just somehow been decided on and is supposed to happen automatically like that. wouldn't we gain much more by exchanging thoughts about these things and supporting each other by giving folx these tools, that actually exists now, this method that has helped many people? and in this book, that's so genius, it actually says, "You can read this book and if you feel that do you want this method then use it, but if you have the feeling that it doesn't help you, you can simply throw the book away!"

SR: but you still learned something, you still learned to decide, and you decided against the book!

tier: yes exactly!

SR: and that's what she actually wants! she wants it to be a conscious decision how you live! and I think that's just ... it's like I say in my empowerment workshops: you can join the exercise, but you can also decide not to participate. and then it was still empowering because you said: "I won't join the exercise!" And Marie Kondo does all of that, so one can't really say that much, one doesn't have to pretend or anything, it's easy: read the book, or listen to the audiobook, I think it's free now on spotify I was told, if so we will definitely link it in the shownotes.

tier: yes!

SR: because she has already thought of it all! is she the greatest outspoken feminist of all time? no! but she doesn't have to be for me, because my plumber doesn't have to be the greatest feminist either in order for me to get help from them.

tier: (laughs) exactly

SR: why do I have this expectation for every woman who writes?

tier: who somehow dares to make something and to become famous and to make money with it and so, well that seems to be the reason enough to criticize her! and I really don't understand this left queer feminist criticism, but maybe we should look at why is it a person like, exactly a person like Marie Kondo who is criticized?

SR: Who also writes of her own obsessive thoughts, who made a business out of it already as a young person and so on. then I one day shoved this book over to you, although you already were quite sorted in your household. what difference has the book made for you?

tier: exactly, so I was quickly very enthusiastic and I read this book through and it made me very motivated because i love organizing and discarding things! and I was always very, probably what you mentioned with this blame thing, because I also had the thoughts like "now I'm throwing things from my time in school away" , which I already did years ago, and then somebody said to me at some point: "oh, you have no more things from back then?" and I'm like: "no, I don't care" and for that I was shamed a bit and told "how weird" and stuff, and this book just made me stronger in that it's okay and made me very motivated to organize and clear out further things, even things that might be important memorabilia for other people, like birthday cards, any photos. I have cleared out incredibly many photos! feel really really good with that and I have the feeling that clearing things out like that and saying goodbye to these items also helped me to find more space, mentally more space for other things. so I don't think that I would be in this place where I am now. for example, I'm currently very interested in my marginalize cultural heritage and am acquiring more things that have to do with it or with my hereditary spirituality and such things, and there would be no space at all if I keep carrying with me the things I have cleared out.

SR: yes, you recently made a collage that has been exhibited and maybe you'd like to say something about that, I still remember that you also disposed of a lot of things were before your transition?

tier: Exactly, so I cleared out a lot of photos but I have also kept many photos, and I have actually used these photos as material to make collages or to change and remodel them with color, glue or whatever. yes, somehow it is a process that has helped me a lot with identity questions because I just don't have to own tons of photos of me earlier and somehow it's nice to change them too, so I have also made other things regarding my transition, things that I redesigned instead of saying goodbye to them and that is, somehow it all, these things are a bit like detached from the idea of "that's how it's supposed to be" or "this is how you should handle things". it has definitely given me a lot more creative freedom.

SR: I have to think of that Marie Kondo says that sometimes objects come in our lives with a specific function and we have a huge problem with it if this function changes. and maybe that's a little bit the point, because photos have actually from the moment they are shot and developed, or shot and printed out, each after how old or young people are, immediately the function of an item of memorabilia. so they are immediately such a precious memory thing and that was actually their primal function and then we try to change them to become decoration, but actually they are still like memorabilia- decoration. and I totally liked that she didn't just teach me the possibilities of "yes or no", but rather in the sense of "what is that actually? is that a book or is it this is memorabilia or is it a to-do list, right? so what's that now? actually? now, not earlier?"

tier: exactly, exactly

SR: what society said or the person that gave it to you or what was that on the day you bought it for you? but: for the person you are now photos are not valuable memorabilia of a good time, but good collage material to work on different topics with.

tier: an aspect that I also noticed by using this system is, that having a lot of self-hate a thing I used to do often earlier, that I don't do anymore either, is I used it very much as a total devaluing of my past, what I used to do before, like "oh my god, that's all terrible", I've worked on it in therapy and stuff, but this that I don't have to, if something was important to me before but not anymore, I don't have to get in a conflict with this "oh that's so embarrassing that this used to be important to me" or "oh, now I find no longer like that", but I can just say "okay, that was important to me at the time, but I can finish with it and now this thing means nothing to me, so I can put it away"

SR: and that doesn't take anything away from that it used to be different!

tier: exactly! and then I don't have to, I'm not so overwhelmed by all the negative feelings and self-hate, but I'm like "okay" and then it's complete! I can look back and see that now I'm here where I am and that's okay too.

SR: and I think that's one of the things that make people find most silly with the Marie Kondo method that you are saying goodbye to things! that one is thanking the things and saying goodbye to the things one's discarding. and for me it is one of the most beautiful things about it because it is also a farewell to a part of what it used to be for me.

tier: yes from parts of yourself.

SR: exactly and why shouldn't I thank myself and give myself the chance to process? What is so embarrassing about making this ultra-private thing that is only supposed happen in our heads a little bit more public? there is so much behind it and I find it so absurd that people label and dismiss everything that's supposed to be totally private and then is shown a bit in public immediately as esoteric. and so it doesn't matter whether you are pro or contra esoteric, for me it is nothing esoteric.

tier: no, that's how I see it too.

SR: if I can post on Instagram "look i have this cool new item!" and I call friends and can say "look, I have bought this cool new item!", the buying- moment is somehow allowed to be made so ultra-public, then why am I not even allowed to say within my own four walls "hey thanks pair of shoes, but we are through with each other, I'm going to let you go now?"

tier: yes.

SR: yes, it's capitalism!

tier: that and another aspect the one that appears in her book is this when you say goodbye to things then you can see if you pass it on, or if you can't pass it on, you can maybe donate it! because maybe you have a great amount of pairs of shoes that you're no longer able to wear, but which are

still completely fine, and maybe someone needs shoes right now.

SR: and at the same time I thought it was good that she said "don't wait too long, don't make it .. deal with the things you do want to keep, not with things you don't want to keep!" hearing that was for for me so important at the time because I was totally caught in this loop of "I can only discard things that I can give to someone because otherwise I am a mean capitalist" (both laugh)

SR: for me it was totally important to dispose of a lot of things and then I stopped buying shit, which on a global level of capitalism was a lot more important aspect!

tier: exactly!

SR: to global versions of social injustice it's much more important that i don't contribute to doing some things, than to feeling morally particularly good by giving things to some creepy charity shop- I won't name any names now (clears throat). so I think it's a good thing that she leaves the paths open for both, and I think the paths can do that in totally different ways. Like the person from from Hoarder's Heart for example says for them it is totally important to recycle things absolutely perfectly as far as possible, or to donate things to 15 different places because they otherwise can't say goodbye to them. and I think that's okay that it's totally totally different

tier: yes

SR: exactly! and a point wich I find very very important in relation to disability - for me the connection is so obvious, but I'll just try to name them again - is many disabilities and restrictions, illnesses make cleaning, tidying up things, taking care of one's household very very exhausting. either mentally exhausting or physically demanding or even expensive. cleaning agents just cost lots of money. if you own less things you have to clean a lot less because you have fewer things!

tier: that's right!

SR: and this this what is it in German? maintenance? this...

tier: keeping up?

SR: maintaining a certain status quo in your apartment is much easier when things are well sorted and when there's simply less stuff!

tier: yes!

SR: and that's not just a money-saving factor and not just the psychological relief, for me it is very practically a physical factor! as an example: if you are visiting me, you often leave things on surfaces, which is a completely normal thing is for 99% of people (laughs)

tier: yes

SR: and you notice that makes me go completely nuts, or if someone puts something on the floor at my place! I could climb up the walls because it's so painful for me physically. everything below table level plus ten centimeters is a physical act for me! you could draw a line on my wall every day at head level and I wouldn't complain because it doesn't hurt me! (laughs) if you put a water bottle on the floor, I will definitely give you stinky eyes! I think that's so nice about that system that makes these personal things possible.

tier: yes

SR: because I own a lot less, I can do everything at this absurd level I have in my apartment and don't have to have anything on the floor because it just isn't necessary, I have enough space even though I live in a one-room apartment.

tier: yes

SR: exactly, that again as an intersection with chronic pain.

tier: true. do we want to come to the recommendations?

SR: yes! some we've already mentioned. as you can see I love watching Hoarder's Heart, we will put the channel in the show notes, you watch it on youtube.

tier: then we wanted to have a bit of fun, a thing that has become sort of an inside joke between us, is to make fun of people who criticize Marie Kondo, and there was recently a great twitter thread from the handle @KillaKamWasHere, they're writing: "Why do white women have beef with Marie Kondo?" and then there's thousands of answers to that which are really really funny, you'll find the link to that as well.

SR: then there's almost a classic when it comes to literature about Marie Kondo (both laugh), the

most important secondary text (irony, both laugh), it's a great blog post called "I'm fucking Marie Kondo" We just found out that there's even an audio-file of the text (both laugh)

tier: yes!

SR: because it has been shared and read so much. the audio file is about four minutes long, warmly recommended by us. it's satire, very very funny! we're linkin "I am fucking Marie Kondo" also in the show notes. you can support us, for instance on patreon, you'll find us there at patreon.com/rampereicht and on paypal there via rampereicht@gmail.com

tier: the next episode will air in two weeks.

SR: you'll find out about that via the RSS feed, on youtube or on our social media. you'll find me every as [@SchwarzRund](#)

tier: and me as [@simo_tier](#), on instagram I'm [simo_tier_](#)

SR: we are crazy

tier: disabled

SR: sick

tier: madly cleaning (both laugh)

SR: crushing a bit on Marie Kondo

tier: yes!

SR: queer

tier: trans

SR: migrated

tier: and this podcast?

SR: is it as well!