

<b>Minimalism: A Movement Gaining Momentum</b>	<b>Vali G. Heist, Author and Certified Professional Organizer®</b>
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This past summer I joined my professional organizer colleagues in King of Prussia to view film called Minimalism: A documentary about the important things. Ryan Nicodemus and Joshua Fields Millburn started their minimalism movement because they were tired of acquiring things just because that's what they were told to do; i.e. compulsory consumption. They also wanted more control over their lives and have the freedom to live on their own terms. During the film, director Matt D'vella shows disturbing scenes of shopping frenzies on Black Friday to demonstrate consumption at its worst.



A large part of the film is about how minimalism has affected home owners and how living a simpler life in a smaller space has changed their lives. Ever since the market crash in 2008, the average square footage of a single-family home under construction fell dramatically and construction of multifamily units – which include both condos and rentals – is at its highest level in 25 years. Susan Susanka and Marc Vassallo, authors of the new book *Not So Big Remodeling*, say there's been a shift in the culture and the economy has forced people to rethink McMansions and focus on what they really need. Their book shows readers how to think like an architect so they can assess their homes shortcomings and phase in projects over time.

As a professional organizer I assist families with making their home work for them – instead of against them – whether that means staying in their current home, upgrading their current home, or downsizing belongings to make more room. The size or layout of your home doesn't always matter: it's what you do with the space that counts. My old farm house is small, but it's taught me a lot about maximizing space and minimizing belongings. Sometimes it can be a blessing to have less space; the more space you have, the more you fill it up. Here are a few suggestions on how to reassess your current home:

- **Goals.** Write down your family's goals (not housing goals) for the future; e.g. travel more, financial freedom, college education, etc. Your list will provide the basis for the future decisions you make to change or not change your home.
- **List the Positives.** Walk through your home and list what you like about each room, e.g. the layout, the furniture, the sunlight that comes through the windows, the view out the bedroom window, etc.
- **List the Negatives.** List what you dislike, e.g. the layout, not enough space, too much clutter, the color of the walls, the décor, etc.
- **Stuff/Clutter.** Take a good look at all the stuff in each room. Does your stuff fit in with your family's goals? Do you love or need each thing in the room?

Looking at your home with new eyes and family goals in mind could give you a new perspective. Living simply isn't about the stuff in your home, but the way your home allows you to celebrate life on your own terms. When you go to [Minimalismfilm.com](http://Minimalismfilm.com) to watch the trailer, I hope you'll want to see more. I can't guarantee it will change your life, but it will change the way you think about your life in your home.

Clutter Quote: *"The voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."* Marcel Proust, *French novelist*