

Lighter Living: Declutter. Organize. Simplify.

Lisa J. Shultz

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Lighter Living is an inspirational self-help book full of humble advice for clearing clutter so that you can better see what truly matters.

Lisa J. Shultz's inspiring self-help book *Lighter Living* pitches the value of minimalistic living to aging baby boomers.

Examining both the benefits and challenges of clearing clutter, the text distills twenty other clutter-cleaning books to highlight their key insights alongside knowledge gained from personal decluttering efforts. Its is a strong case for living a lighter lifestyle that emphasizes positive effects on the environment, one's health, and one's spiritual life. Its challenge comes in deciding what is enriching and what should be ditched.

A familiar argument that clearing clutter and living simply is a great idea leads the work. It begins by exploring the basics of decluttering and downsizing, focusing on how not doing such work can lead to family chaos and problems once you've passed. The book praises empty space, its notions freshened by its memoir material. The book's moral focus and decisions to stress financial and legal considerations set it apart.

Organized according to methods of decluttering, the book shares useful practical advice for tackling the project of clearing out homes. Common-sense ideas, such as to "hold it in your hands" and to seek and destroy the "superfluous," address common clutter-causing agents, like unwanted gifts, papers, and mail. The cited material adds weight to this work, whose chorus of voices all speak to the importance of a minimal approach.

A confessional quality adds humanity to the text, which describes challenges such as figuring out what to do with a wedding dress years after the marriage ended in divorce, or the heartbreak of finding items that parents kept after those parents pass. This anecdotal material draws upon twilight experiences, deviating from other clutter narratives: here, the issue is not new baby gear or other suddenly useless material, but evidence of dreams unfulfilled. There's tenderness and earnestness in such accounts, and Shultz is a sympathetic guide through hard circumstances.

Less a groundbreaking self-help book than a poignant personal testimony, *Lighter Living* captures the healing effects of clearing clutter later in life. Its supporting materials act as a highlight reel of insights from others. The end result is a hopeful text that works to share insights designed to make other people's lives better, too.

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JEREMIAH ROOD (November 11, 2019)

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