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# Simple Matters: Living With Less And Ending Up With More



## Synopsis

For anyone looking to declutter, organize, and simplify, author Erin Boyle shares practical guidance and personal insights on small-space living and conscious consumption. At once pragmatic and philosophical, *Simple Matters* is a nod to the growing consensus that living simply and purposefully is more sustainable not only for the environment, but for our own happiness and well-being, too. Boyle embraces the notion that "living small" is beneficial and accessible to us all "whether we're renting a tiny apartment or purchasing a three-story house." Filled with personal essays, projects, and helpful advice on how to be inventive and resourceful in a tight space, *Simple Matters* shows that living simply is about making do with less and ending up with more: more free time, more time with loved ones, more savings, and more things of beauty.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Erin Boyle speaks to the heart and soul of the minimalist lifestyle. With her deft prose and graceful imagery she details not only how we can approach homekeeping more simply, but why "for our own happiness and peace of mind" we absolutely must. *Simple Matters* is a must-have manual for serenity in the modern world!" (Anne Sage, lifestyle blogger and author of *Sage Living* 2015-09-01)

Erin Boyle is the writer and photographer behind the popular blog *Reading My Tea Leaves*. She was formerly an editor at *Gardenista*. Past work in cultural preservation informs her desire to cherish

what is beautiful, useful, and meaningful and to reevaluate everything else. She lives in New York City with her husband and daughter.

I really thought I'd love this book, because I do enjoy reading little snippets on Erin's blog. However, it seemed a bit scattered and, dare I say, generic. There are so many simple-living books available these days, so it seems like everything has already been said and done, and this book seemed to be much of the same, and often in a generalized "brushed over" format (no big "YES!" moments and I found myself skimming over a lot of repeat info). I fully agree with most of the ideas, views and opinions that Erin writes about, in regards to simplicity, sustainability, etc., but a lot of what is written is just repetition from the blog. I also wasn't drawn into this book as I have with other books on simple living, because it is primarily focused on living in a small space with an underlying feeling of temporary living. It's pretty much a given that if you live in a small space, life will feel less cluttered with less stuff. While I agree that making any big investments or decorating decisions while living in a temporary apartment is unwise, there isn't much helpful information for those who are living in permanent homes (apartment or freestanding, with or without children). While I get the "write about what you know and all that," I don't think this book will be as appealing to the average person who is looking for advice on simplifying their lives...there are better options available.

Our youngest child went off to college last Fall making us Empty Nesters. My task for the next few months? Decluttering so my husband and I can downsize to a smaller place. Inexperienced at an entire household declutter, I Googled "decluttering", "simple living", etc. and, among other things, up popped Erin Boyle's blog, Reading My Tea Leaves. I found hints on decluttering and set up my "trash", "Goodwill", "think about" and "keep" piles, then set to work sorting 28 years of worth of detritus, accumulated while raising kids. And while I decluttered. I also got hooked on Erin's Blog: her beautiful writing style, her ideas, and her photography. Erin Boyle's book, Simple Matters includes a few of her best blog essays, and also, a series of brand new essays. The book is not merely about decluttering, but about embracing a simpler lifestyle in the broadest sense of the word. As Erin puts it, "We can't maintain a clutter-free home if we don't also change our approach to accumulation in the first place." Or how about this gem? "We're under the false impression that we're not in control of our spaces, when the opposite is true." Woven throughout the book are simple statements like the aforementioned, containing profound thoughts about our American lifestyle: does accumulating

things make us happier? do the ethics of clothes companies we buy from, matter? does your physical clutter translate to mental clutter; feeling overwhelmed? do the things we own work for the space they inhabit in our house? If you stop and think about her questions you'll see that, not only are they good for the Earth, they are transformative for the way we discern what we want in our homes and in our lives. Erin is doing all of us a favor by challenging the status quo:

More is more. Brought to you by corporate ad men, who are paid to get us to spend. In response to her own questions, Erin offers us ideas to try. Not Martha Stewart Complicated ideas to try, but ideas that are doable. She provides resources for personal care items that don't contain harmful chemicals, clothes that are ethically sourced, stores that sell quality products that don't break your bank account, gift ideas that are 'home made' and, dare I say, classy, etc. The book is dense with information, and this girl makes a whole lot of sense. As I looked at photos of Erin's little daughter playing with wooden toys, then looked at the bizarre colors and bizarre-er faces of my daughter's old, plastic Polly Pockets - sitting in the Goodwill pile - I knew at some deep level that Erin's suggestions were worth considering. This is a wonderful book; an important book - and I truly hope many people will read and consider the ideas she offers us.

The photographs are beautiful, and the descriptions are even more beautiful. Erin Boyle focuses on long term results, quality purchases, and clever solutions. Her family rents a small apartment while I live in a country house, but her suggestions span both lifestyles. It was an easy, enjoyable read and would make a lovely gift, especially for a young person setting up his or her first home.

This book was an absolute pleasure to read and inspired me to go through my home with a fine tooth comb and eliminate superfluous items. It had me questioning why I need multiple of most items - and the answer is, I don't! With two young children in my home, simplifying isn't always easy, but this book was a great help.

I really enjoyed reading this book. It was a true inspiration. I found myself decluttering my entire home, finding resources to donate old books, clothes and unnecessary things, approaching a minimalist living and being more careful about consuming. I agree with previous comments that it is not actually something new and sure one could find easily relative advice on Pinterest, but I think its very charming that Erin depicts her way of life throughout the book. Love it!

I got a lot of good ideas from this book. it helped me to be able to let go of things I don't need..

fantastic book

i think discovering erin's blog after years and years of her writing was more of an exciting read than this book. that's not to say it isn't great. i love to support her and her dream! finding her blog and reading this book has reminded to keep my life simple. thanks for the inspo!

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