

Do's and Don'ts of Downsizing

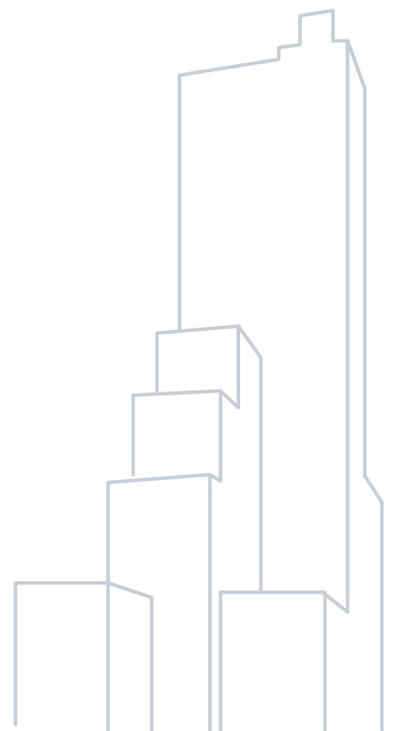


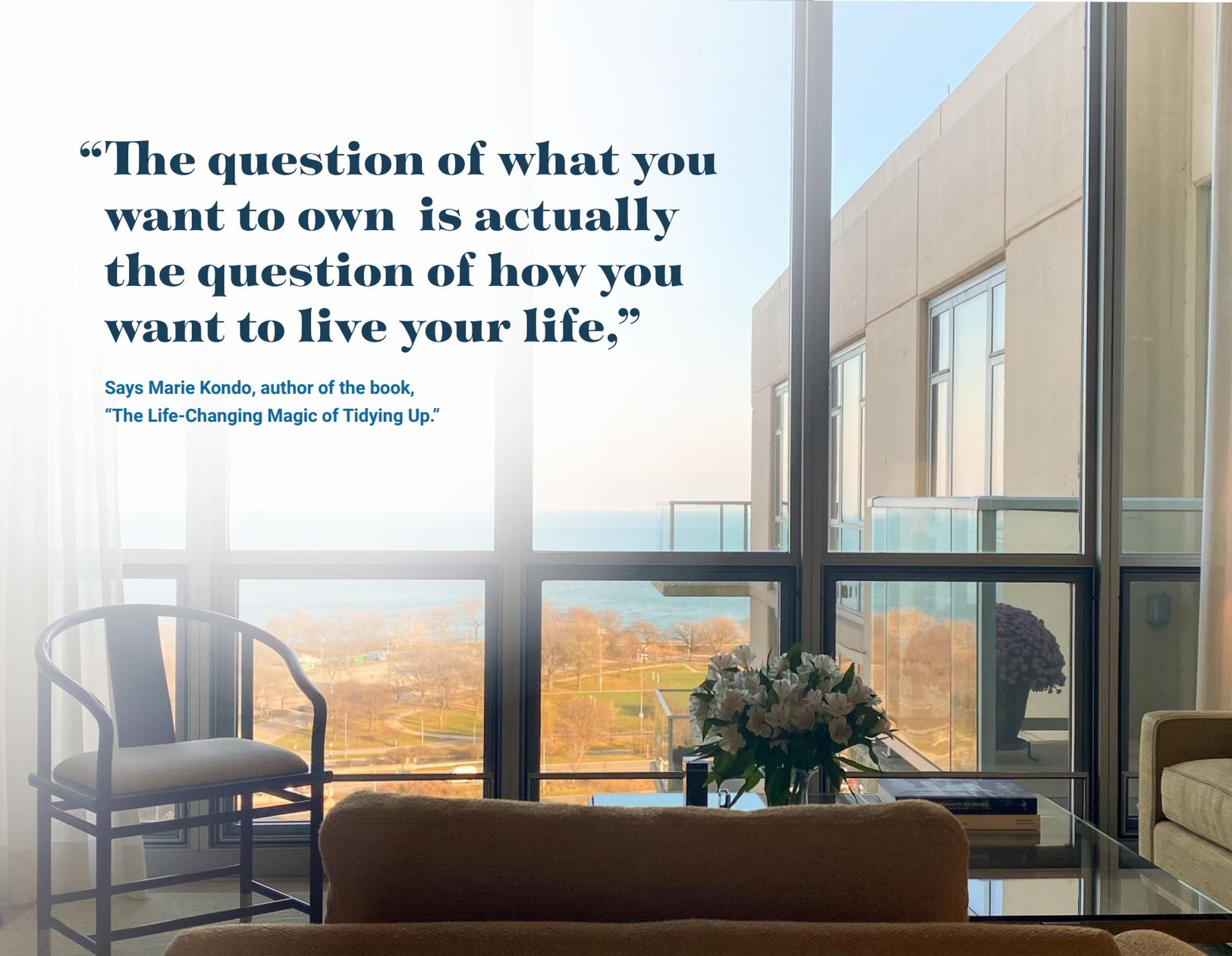


Simplify, simplify, simplify...

Whether you are planning to move to a smaller home, preparing your home for sale, or simply want to make the most of the space you have, organizing and decluttering your living space can be an uplifting experience that will likely help you enjoy your home more. It may seem like a daunting task, but once you're done, you may find yourself saying "Why didn't I do this sooner?" But how do you decide what to toss and what to keep?

For many, the term "downsizing" can have a negative connotation. That's why we like to call it "rightsizing." There are many benefits to removing clutter or things you no longer need in your life. You may experience less stress and feel more in control when you are surrounded only by the truly meaningful things in your life.





“The question of what you want to own is actually the question of how you want to live your life,”

Says Marie Kondo, author of the book,
“The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up.”

Life with Things that “Spark Joy”

Are you planning a move to a retirement community, to a more manageable home or do you just want to be more comfortable in your current home? If you said “yes” to any of these, now is the perfect time to begin rightsizing your belongings. Follow these tips from Marie Kondo’s best-selling book, “The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up,” to downsize the right way.

Do



Make It a Special Event

Tackle a project in one shot or short span of time. This way you see dramatic change. It will then touch your emotions, change your mindset and keep you motivated.



Visualize Your Destination

Why are you rightsizing your belongings now? There is a reason. Visualize where you are headed, the lifestyle that awaits you and keep that in mind. Perhaps it's a new home or just more airy, open space where you live now.



Choose What Sparks Joy

Focus on what you want to keep. Take each item in your hand and ask, "Does this spark joy? Does this speak to my heart?" If it does, keep it. If not, move on.

Do



Think in Terms of Category

Choose a category and collect everything from your home that falls into that category in one place. When you start to sort, keep only the items that are truly meaningful to you, that speak to the heart. If there are duplicate items, then choose the one you like best and toss or donate the extra one. Once you've sorted all of these items, move on to the next category.



Begin with Items of Lower Value

Deciding what to keep will go much smoother if you begin with categories that are easier to make decisions about. You'll hone your skills as you move to more difficult categories. Save the items with strong sentimental attachment, like photographs, for last.



Trust Your Intuition

Believe what your heart tells you when you ask, "Does this spark joy?" That intuition can lead to dramatic change and true connection in your life.

Don't



Make It a Daily Chore

Sorting through your belongings little by little each day can seem never-ending. You won't see progress. It will be hard to stay focused. You may change your mind.



Begin Without a Goal

Without a goal, you're likely to waver and hesitate on making decisions. If your goal is a more relaxing lifestyle in a smaller space, don't lose sight of that.



Focus on Throwing Things Away

Focusing solely on getting rid of things causes irritability and tension. This negativity only leads to unhappiness.

Don't



Declutter by Room

Why not? Because similar items are likely stored in various rooms throughout your home. You'll be repeating the process as you move room by room, wasting time.



Begin with Sentimental Items

Don't start where you may get stuck. Start with categories that are easier to make decisions, such as clothes and books, and lastly go through mementos.



Be Rational When Throwing Things Away

Don't be distracted by what you consider rational thoughts, such as "I may need this later" or "It's a waste to get rid of it." These thoughts can be never-ending, making it impossible to downsize anything.

Give, Donate or Discard

Now that you've decided what to keep, what do you do with the rest? You may want your children to take some of the "treasures" you've stored for many years. But don't be surprised if they say, "Thank you, but no thank you." They may have space limitations of their own, or you may find that they don't see value in items the same way you do. If some of these items are antiques from generations past, consider having them appraised and sold.

Many organizations take donations of all kinds – clothing, household items, etc. Some will pick up larger items, like furniture. If you donate, be sure to get a receipt and record what items you've given. When you are rightsizing, these donations can add up quickly to a significant tax deduction that you'll appreciate later on.

Now you're down to items to be discarded. If you have a lot, or bulky items that are just too big for curbside pick-up, you can call an organization that picks up such items and hauls them away for a small fee. They may even have connections to organizations that can recycle materials like scrap metal, old TVs, computer parts and more.



10 Downsizing Tips from an Interior Designer



1. Kitchen

Kitchen down-scaling can be very difficult for people who have done a lot of cooking and baking over the years. A good way to start sorting is to put on your kitchen table dishes, glasses, mugs and silverware for 4-8 people plus pans and utensils used often. Then add items you use frequently like muffin tins, cookie sheets and mixing bowls. Next add carefully chosen small appliances. If you only open a few cans a month, why give counter space to an electric can opener? Remember that even if you currently own three 9"x 13" pans there is little need to keep more than one.



2. Clothing

It's true!! If you haven't worn it or seen it in a year, say goodbye to it. With the exception of formal wear your downscaled wardrobe should include clothing, shoes, and outerwear that you like, you wear often, you feel good in, and fits you. Consider weeding out shabby worn clothes, even if you still wear them - keep one comfy, but not a whole drawer full. There are many charitable organizations that would welcome your donations. Many will come right to your door for pick-ups.



3. Bathroom

Clean out those bathroom closets and medicine cabinets. Oftentimes people accumulate large quantities of medicines and toiletries they never use. Check to see if your community has a program for safe disposal of medications and be sure to discard items that have expired.



4. Memorabilia & Collections

Attics and basements provide a safe harbor for sentimental and special items. Even if they are rarely seen, parting with memorabilia is especially difficult. Choose some things that you will enjoy and are particularly meaningful to you and pass the other items on to a trusted family member or friends.

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5. Books

Books seem to multiply on the shelves! When most people move they are surprised by how many books they have - particularly if their career involved books. Needless to say you will want to keep books that you enjoy and are useful to you, but consider eliminating the rest. Your local library will review unwanted books and accept suitable donations. Also consider calling old and antique book collectors, local schools and colleges, as well as used book stores that pay cash for books.



6. Unfinished Projects

"Maybe-going-to-do-it-again-someday..." Does this sound familiar?: a knitting box with twenty year old yarn and a half-made sweater, a dusty tackle box and fishing pole, drawing tablets and charcoal with the price tags on them. No matter what you paid for something a long time ago, unless that project makes you excited to delve back into it, consider letting it go.



7. Mystery Items

If you cannot identify what it is, or you don't remember why you have it, get rid of it.



8. Furniture

We can maximize the look and feel of smaller spaces by using furniture of appropriate size. For a smaller living area, sofas should be no longer than 90 inches. If the arm of your sofa is wider than 8 inches, chances are it is over-scaled for a smaller room. Rectangular coffee tables are better for the traffic flow than square or round tables. Queen sized beds are preferable to king sized beds. Too many chests of drawers can be problematic.

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9. Linens

Pare your linen collection down. Keep one or two full sets of towels for each person, two sets of sheets, two or three blankets or throws, frequently used table linens, and a reasonable number of kitchen towels and linens. Many people have a lovely collection of table cloths. However, if you don't keep the table that accommodates each cloth there is little need to keep the table covers for it.



10. Household and Lawn Maintenance Supplies

One of the many benefits to low-maintenance or community living is that lawn care and exterior house repairs may be included. Tool collections should be sorted to one manageable sized kit. Everyday household supplies like glass cleaner and scouring powder will continue to be useful, but throw away items like grout and bags of lawn food. And of course you will no longer need eight half-empty cans of hornet spray. It can be very rewarding to put your things in order and only keep what has true meaning. Your life, both current and past, comes into order as you move forward and enjoy the best years of your life.



“Pour your time and passion into what brings you the most joy, your mission in life. I am convinced that putting your house in order will help you find the mission that speaks to your heart.”

– Marie Kondo

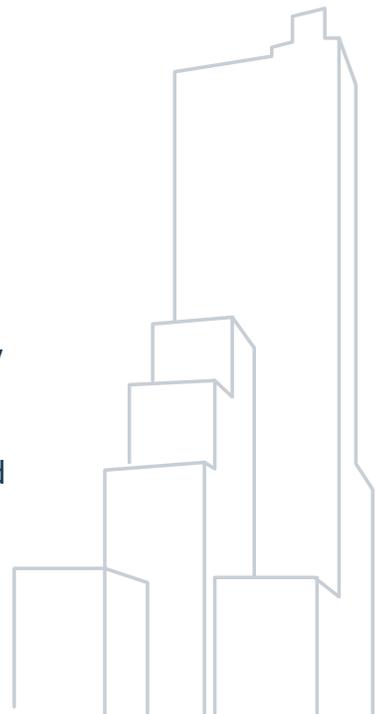


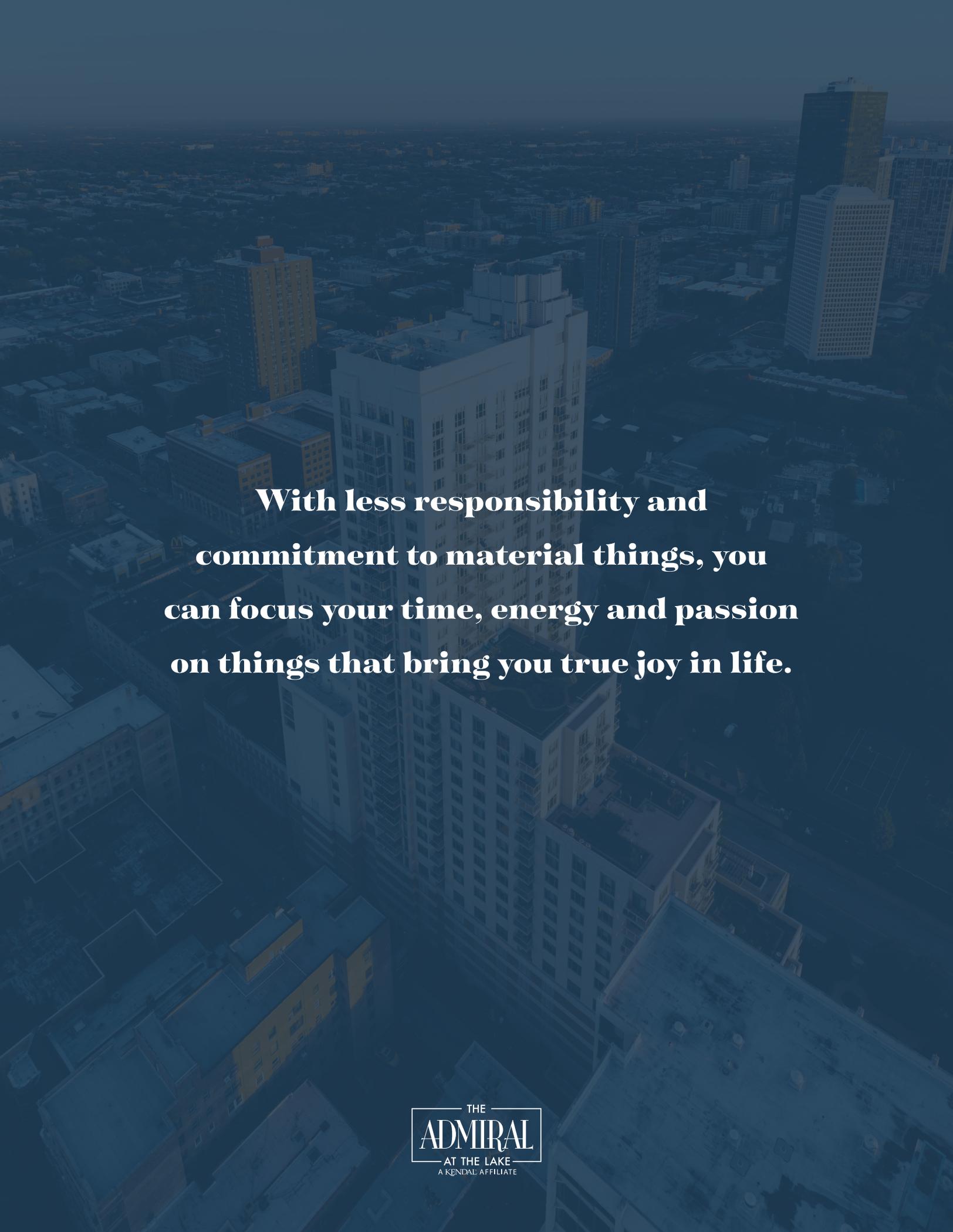
More About

The Admiral at the Lake

The Admiral at the Lake is a Lifecare community (also known as a Continuing Care Retirement Community or CCRC). Residents who move to The Admiral are independent, active and engaged in their community and have access to Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing, Rehabilitation and Memory Support if they ever need it. Our lakefront community is located in North Side and only minutes away from downtown Chicago.

To learn more about the lifestyle and living options at [The Admiral at the Lake, schedule a tour with us today.](#)



An aerial photograph of a city skyline, heavily filtered with a blue color. The image shows a dense urban environment with numerous buildings of varying heights. A prominent white building with a grid-like facade is in the center. The overall mood is serene and modern.

**With less responsibility and
commitment to material things, you
can focus your time, energy and passion
on things that bring you true joy in life.**

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