



Strategic Tale 15.3

(On how to group activities in the company)

Following Marie Kondo (or not)

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I am a single mother with two children. I have always liked to treat them equally, regardless of their gender. Sara is already a grown woman and flew the nest a few months ago, but Adrián is still with me. At the age of fifteen, he does not show much interest in household work, so I try to involve him in daily chores. When Sara's room became empty, I decided to make some adjustments at home.

"How about doing some things at home tomorrow? We have been hoarding too many things and we need to tidy up the cupboards and shelves a little. Then we can see what is needed and get rid of things we are no longer going to use. It might be fun," I said to Adrian at the end of breakfast.

Although he didn't seem to be very enthusiastic about my proposal, Adrian amazed me when he asked me if I knew about the Marie Kondo plan and her KonMari method. I told him I did, that I had read something although, to be honest, I hated to admit that my teenage son knew more about those things than I did.

"Well, you know, Mum, first the clothes, then the books, then the papers, and, finally, various objects and pieces of sentimental value."

"I didn't know you were an expert on the subject of tidiness. Who would have thought seeing the state your room is in?"

"Mum, if you start teasing me, we'd better forget it."

"You're right, dear, sorry. Still, with your knowledge and my experience, we can really get this house in order. Are you up for it?"

No sooner said than done, on Saturday we started to tidy up the first clothes cupboard, following the method of the wise Marie Kondo. When we opened the door, he said to me:

"Mum, where do we start?" How do we do it?



"Adrian, in this matter of tidiness, there is no better or worse way of doing it, as each one must choose the one that best suits their needs. I would organise it by type of clothing, that is, underwear, trousers, t-shirts, shirts, coats... what do you think?"

He looked at me with a slight smile that I interpreted as a nod. I helped him take all his clothes out of the cupboard and left him alone for a long time. When I returned, he had hung up all the coats, shirts, and trousers on hangers. He had also stored all his underwear and T-shirts in drawers.

"And what about sportswear?" he asked me as soon as he saw me.

"Well, you can choose between hanging it on hangers or storing it in drawers, as it doesn't wrinkle, whichever you prefer," I replied.

When he had finished, the cupboard looked completely different.

"The truth is that it wasn't too difficult. Now at least I can see everything when I open the cupboard without having to rummage through piles of clothes," Adrián told me. He looked very satisfied with the result; he had a big smile on his face. In a second inspection, I even saw that he had organised each item of clothing by colour. He had taken it seriously!

After a break for lunch and a little time playing on his mobile phone (working so hard makes you hungry, both physically and technologically), we got to the books. Looking at his shelves full of books piled up haphazardly and in no apparent order, Adrián asked me again:

"And now, what do we do with all these books, Mum?" I could order them by year of publication or even in alphabetical order by title or author."

"Any way is good. Think of the way that will best help you to find a book when you need it."

"So, maybe it's better to group them by subject. For example, comics, science fiction, English literature, mathematics, physics... That would make it easier to find what I want, wouldn't it?"

Again, I helped him take down all the books and left him alone for a couple of hours, immersed in his new love of tidiness. During that time, I peeked through the door several times to see how he enjoyed leafing through his books and then stacking them in one or another pile of those he had formed in his own order. I admit that I felt quite proud and somewhat excited.

When I came back, I was astonished to see that not only had he reorganised the books by subject, but had also placed them from the oldest to the newest within each category. Again, I was surprised by the things that occurred to him and how he put them into action.

"I'm done, Mom. Thank you for teaching me how to tidy things up. Now I understand Marie Kondo better. The day has flown by but I think it was worth it. Shall we continue with your things this afternoon?"





"You'd better leave that to me, honey. If I need your help, I'll let you know," I replied as I enjoyed his shy yet spontaneous adolescent hug.

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