

# The Combustion Rule: Eliminating Clutter and Embracing Minimalism

Insights from Joshua Fields and Ryan Nicodemus

[Minimalists.com](https://Minimalists.com)



Minimalism has captured the imagination of people seeking to live more intentionally and free from excess. Joshua Fields and Ryan Nicodemus, known as The Minimalists, have inspired countless individuals to rethink their relationship with possessions. One of their practical strategies for decluttering is the "combustion rule," a clever approach to identifying what truly matters and letting go of what doesn't.

## Understanding the Combustion Rule

The combustion rule is rooted in the idea that if an item were to combust—meaning suddenly disappear or be destroyed—would you feel compelled to replace it? If the answer is no, then it's likely something you don't really need. This simple question helps break emotional attachments and clarifies the value each object holds in your life. By applying the combustion rule, you can quickly assess whether something is essential or simply taking up space.

## Applying the Rule to Eliminate Clutter

To use the combustion rule, start by going through your belongings one item at a time. Ask yourself, "If this burned up in a fire, would I go out and buy it again?" If you wouldn't, it's a strong signal that the item is superfluous. This method cuts through rationalizations and sentimental justifications, making the decluttering process more straightforward. It encourages you to keep only what serves a purpose or brings genuine joy.

## Adopting Minimalism Through Intentional Choices

The combustion rule is more than a decluttering tool—it's a mindset shift. By questioning your need for each possession, you become more intentional in your choices. This practice can lead to a home that feels lighter, more organized, and aligned with your values. Minimalism, according to Fields and Nicodemus, isn't about deprivation; it's about creating space for what matters most, whether that's relationships, experiences, or personal growth.

## Benefits of Minimalism

Adopting the combustion rule and embracing minimalism can result in less stress, greater financial freedom, and improved focus. With fewer distractions and less maintenance, you gain more time and energy to devote to meaningful pursuits. Minimalism fosters a sense of clarity and contentment, allowing you to appreciate the essentials and let go of the rest.

In summary, Joshua Fields and Ryan Nicodemus's combustion rule offers a practical and transformative way to eliminate clutter and adopt minimalism. By regularly asking yourself whether you'd replace each item if it disappeared, you can cultivate a lifestyle that emphasizes value, purpose, and simplicity.

Another favorite author I follow on the topic of Minimalism is Joshua Becker. He has the website [BecomingMimimalist.com](http://BecomingMimimalist.com). In last week's post, he said we go through 3 phases in life:

1. Wanting Things

2. Accumulating Things
3. Throwing Away Things.

He said we would all be ahead of the game if we just skipped the first two.

We began our trek to get rid of clutter about 7 years ago. Getting started seemed impossible, but I found we are simply creatures of habit. Do a few right things, and you will continue to do more right things.

A good way to start minimalism is to do it in small steps. Always clean up the kitchen before going to bed. Once a week clean out one drawer. And always have a basket open for Good Will items and put at least one thing in there each day.

These 3 easy steps can help you live clutter-free.

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