

# Observation

## Minimalism – A Lesson Learned

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My wife and I celebrated New Year Eve 2020 alone for the first time since we got married. There were no parties, no overabundance of haute cuisine nor any presence of euphoric cheers to welcome 2021. It was just a sigh of relief to realize that 2020 was leaving us like a long-suffering elderly relative.

In the year 2020, we learned to live with the inconveniences brought upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most importantly, we learned to appreciate minimalism for the first time and many of us started liking it.

Suddenly we started living our lives consciously, purchase wisely, and live responsibly. We started feeling the impact of minimalism on the environment with pleasant surprises. For many of us, intellectual possessions became more important than material possessions. “Minimalism means living with things we really need. It means removing anything that distracts us from living with intentionality and freedom,” I read somewhere.

The unemployment in the U.S. picked at 14.7% in 2020. People were forced to live with less and realize that living with less wasn't a bad thing, after all. Before the pandemic hit us, we were victims of “keeping up with the Joneses.” While my goal here is in no way to blame anyone for their one-upmanship mentality, we lived among people who indulged in excesses. We were a part of



the rat race wanting to have it all. We were intoxicated and were overconsuming to add to America's debt. It's undeniable that our achieving of the “American Dream” was an expensive one.

Then came COVID confinement. We started experimenting with clothes we already had instead of buying new ones. Knowing that the financial future was unsecured suggested us to consider minimalism as a lifestyle. Consuming in the previous amounts merely made no more sense to us. Lockdown weeks and months showed to us that comfortable living required only a few essentials, only a few things that satisfied vision and taste, and nothing extra and unnecessary. Such indulgence as continuous shopping became unavailable, and the focus of minds had to turn to other sources of contentment.

Minimalism made us distinguish between things that distracted us from what's important to us. In the midst of the COVID 19 crisis, we were somewhat forced to revisit our true priorities which were health and family. This aspect of minimalism reconnected us with our family like never before contributing to our happiness and to those around us.

Minimalism should not be mistaken for asceticism which is the practice of extreme denial and unnecessary rigor. It is the mindset of eliminating clutter that starts following the genuine voice of the heart, rather than many voices that insist on the necessity to possess more.