

“One of the best life hacking books I’ve come across.”
—Mark Frauenfelder, author of *Made by Hand*

Dinah Sanders

DISCARDIA

More Life, Less Stuff

Make room for awesomeness



Discardia

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Discardia Dinah Sanders

Let go of everything that doesn't make your life awesome! With three key principles and numerous practical tips, Discardia--a new holiday--helps you solve specific issues, carve away the nonsense of physical objects, habits, or emotional baggage, and uncover what brings you joy. Dinah Sanders, productivity and happiness coach, draws on many years of experience to provide a flexible, iterative method for cutting out distractions and focusing on more fulfilling activities. Join others around the world who use Discardia's inspirational--but not sappy--approach, and put your energy where it counts: toward living the less stressful life of your dreams!

Discardia Details

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Author : Dinah Sanders

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From Reader Review Discardia for online ebook

Jim says

In 2002, Dinah Sanders created a new holiday she called Discardia. It rolls around four times a year, arriving with each equinox and solstice and running through their following new moons. "Unlike many holidays," she writes, "[Discardia] doesn't involve obligations or expense or overblown expectations of specialness.... Discardia is celebrated by letting go of what doesn't add value to your life--whether physical object, habit, or emotional baggage—and replacing it with what makes your life truer to your essential self. The core concept is this: If we continually discard what doesn't help us, we'll be left with more of what does--more space, energy, and time to make our lives even better."

It's a wonderful concept that I wholeheartedly support, which is why I was so disappointed when I read Sanders's book. Repeatedly, I was struck by the haphazard and arbitrary structure of Discardia and her misguided ambition as a writer. Sections often have no obvious unifying topic, and she attempts to cover such a broad range of material that her discussion is often quite superficial. The book is also loaded with distracting punctuation and grammatical errors.

Despite these shortcomings, Discardia remains inspiring. I think most readers of the book will find themselves imagining a life less physically and emotionally cluttered, one that increasingly leaves room for more important and satisfying experiences ("More Life, Less Stuff!"), and I think most of these readers will make an effort to discard some of that clutter. I collected two bags of books to give away while I was reading it, and I intend to continue working my way through the rest of my house. I hope to regularly ask the question that Sanders herself asks during the course of her day--"What doesn't belong here?"--and then to act on it.

Anastasia says

I don't actually recommend reading this book in its entirety, but it is definitely worth a skim or even some very focused reading of certain chapters. The title gave me the impression that the book is about getting rid of your excess junk, but the author strays far beyond that and offers advice about how to organize all aspects of your life. Some chapters held no salience for me, but I really appreciated the many different suggestions Sanders offered about how to cull your crap. And more than that, I valued the suggestions she offered for dealing with the psychology of why we hold on to things. I started reading this on vacation and on my second day home, I was already pulling out tons of crap I have been meaning to get rid of for ages, and my family is on board, too.

Stephanie says

First read October 2011.

Reread January 2015.

Not just another "throw out your crap" book.

The main principles - I am either generally quoting from the book or at least paraphrasing - are:

1. Decide and Do

Decide what belongs in your life and what does not.

2. Quality Over Quantity

It's not about denial; it's about being selective. Your time and attention are finite.

3. Perpetual Upgrade

Fine-tune your life! Little actions add up to big changes. In every possible moment, lean toward experiencing the good stuff.

* * * * *

The book includes SYMPTOMS (It's Hard to Start, It's All Too Much, Oh No I'm Not Perfect, etc.) and SOLUTIONS about procrastination, managing email, job stress, money, home life, clutter, and more.

I found it useful and think others might, too.

John says

The book brings the philosophy of David Allen, Merlin Mann to a general audience. Readers not familiar with inbox zero, getting things done and other methods of de-cluttering our lives will find this book a great introduction to the process of living without stuff and tasks weighing us down. It was light breezy and very easy to read. One of the better general "simplicity" books I've read.

Dinah says

Well *I* like it, but then I wrote it. :)

Doskoi_panda says

I'll start this by saying I don't generally read self help books/life instruction manuals, etc. There isn't usually much by ways of entertainment or relaxation to be found in them, and I tend to read for pleasure rather than under the guise of grand self improvement. But a manual for cutting out the junk/baggage in my life seemed interesting, as I've been steadily working on that for the last few years (Books don't count against me in my ideal minimalistic world. I should point out that they are actually what I own the most of, but I enjoy them...) So I took on Discardia to read, to see if there were handy tips/hints (there are. And all is addressed with a sense of humour, which helps to alleviate the whole notion of reading a self help type book.)

The book is presented as a series of symptoms with the appropriate treatment/cure or problem/solution, and had plenty of examples of ways to implement new habits, and break old ones. For a self help type book, it was a pretty fun read, and had some very useful advice in clearing out emotional baggage and promoting healthier ideas on handling a variety of stress inducements.

My only complaint is that the book felt long. It isn't that it was overly wordy or dragged it's feet; it just felt long. (I feel like the Emperor in Amadeus "too many notes.") This could be attributed to how I read the book (in 2 sittings) because it goes over similar ideas/ solutions repeatedly (repetition being key to retaining information and creating a new healthy habit.) Overall, though, this is an excellent book for anyone looking for ideas on how to lighten their life's load of baggage, both accumulated physical items, and mental baggage that goes with it.

Overall rating: 4 stars

Review copy supplied through LibraryThing's Member Giveaway Program.

Yvonne Stegall says

I must honestly say that this is the best book I have received through First Reads so far. Even if you have read every de-clutter book out there and even if you think your home and life are clutter free, you can benefit from this book. Sure, you may read a bunch of stuff that you already knew, but you will also find random tidbits of info that you hadn't discovered elsewhere yet.

I was a pack rat, my mom is a pack rat and my grandma was a pack rat. I graduated from that "lifestyle," or "illness," many years ago, but through Discardia I learned that there was much more I could let go of. My favorite part of this book, this lifestyle change, was the push to change to the digital age in order to lessen the things laying around my home. I only owned (past tense now, due to Discardia) about 25 music CDs, but now I have none. Those that I thought I may want to hear again I ripped onto my laptop. Those that I hadn't listened to in months just disappeared.

I think I have even finally been convinced to graduate to a Kindle, instead of having this clutter of books (which are a pain to move when switching homes).

I started out giving this wonderful book only 4 stars because I am an editor at heart. I find the mistakes in writing, spelling and grammar, in everything I read. But, I too make mistakes, and realized I shouldn't hold that against such a wonderful self-help book. If you are looking for something life changing, if your New Year's resolution was to change your life for the better or revolved around getting rid of clutter, then this book is for you. But it isn't just about clutter. Discardia can put you on the path to losing weight, finding your dream job or finding the love of your life.

Read it, you'll love it and you'll forever be changed! (received the book for free through Goodreads First Reads)

Nicole says

It took me forever to get through this book...because I'd read a little bit, and then want to go DO something, not just sit longer! I already use many of the concepts presented here, but it was great to see that there are others out there who think like I do. An excellent book for working your way through the mess of our houses, work, and lives one step at a time. My favorite quote was right at the beginning. "Don't worry about finishing, just START!" I won this book in a Goodreads giveaway...now to figure out who to share it with without offending! :)

Jeremy Preacher says

Discardia is basically the intersection of two books I am extremely fond of - Simplify Your Life by Elaine St. James and Getting things Done by David Allen, written in extremely accessible, intelligent prose, and aimed at modern middle-class people with white-collar jobs. (Not that there's not a lot in it that would work for, say, stay-at-home moms, but it's worth acknowledging that there are some class and technical-skill assumptions here.)

Sanders appears to hang out on the same parts of the internet that I do, and I find that charming as hell. (She quotes both my boss and two of my customers at different points.) And the advice, from decluttering to goal-setting, is sensible, achievable, and well-presented. The "holiday" framework (Discardia is a quarterly event, as presented in the book) works fine as a rhetorical device, and is clearly offered as a take-it-or-leave-it idea.

I'd definitely recommend it to folks who like personal-organization books, and people who need some decluttering or general life-goal-setting encouragement.

Lucia says

Written by a smarty-pants friend of mine, this book is helpful, motivating, chummy, and wise. (I was proud to be one of the proofreaders/beta readers, before I got too sick to read for awhile there...)

Most Americans I know of could stand to read this book and put its concepts to work for themselves. I found it smarter, more helpful, and less bullshit-complicated than books like 'Getting Things Done.'

Everybody needs this kind of help, not just hoarders and the organization-handicapped. I'm pretty damn organized and efficient, but I found lots of helpful tips and motivators here. We need to let go of some of our crap periodically to keep our baggage light.

Helpfully, the author knows when you need a kick in the ass and when you need a gentle pep talk, and she provides them for you. She understands how you can get mired in procrastination and indecision.

If you can't hire to author to whip your frazzled ass into shape, her book is the next best thing.

Anetq says

Maximise the stuff you love, what makes you happy and helps you move towards what you really really want! Minimize the stuff that doesn't. It's that simple! Yet so many of us could make ourselves so much happier, if we followed the advise (and practical ideas for getting started, keeping it up, and continuing to develop).

Great read! I especially liked the distinction between projects and changing habits - and their different criteria for success. Also the simple point, that "what we want" changes over time, and our homes, plans and life needs to change accordingly. Otherwise we get stuck being custodians in our own personal museum of me. (or the me I thought I wanted to be. Or should be.

Read it now - and start doing something useful with your time -> making yourself happier!

Lisa says

This book is a hodge podge of tips for downsizing and reducing material possessions and advice on myriad aspects of living. The topics change direction abruptly, like the ball in a pinball machine ricocheting off bumpers. The concept behind the organization of this information totally eluded me. Although she uses the "Discardian" calendar to head various sections of the book, the content of those sections seems totally random. Still, I did jot down several quotes and tidbits for future reference. While I started out enjoying the author's breezy style of writing, the advice began to feel overbearing. The author kind of comes off as a smug know-it-all.

Jenny says

This was a neat read. Discardia is a holiday invented by the author which "helps you solve specific issues, carve away the nonsense of physical objects, habits, or emotional baggage, and uncover what brings you joy." Another look at simple living. Not just about physical hoarding/cluttering, but also how we can lighten our emotional/mental/time management load. She divides the year into quarters, focusing on a different aspect for each season. Some felt more relevant than others, but she had some handy takeaways:

--She suggests getting rid of books and bagging them up to donate, commenting "Putting the books in the bag does not remove them from the universe." (p 26)

--She differentiates between habits, projects, and dreams/desires: "Building a habit is a gradual process to which you commit effort and measure progress. it does not have a deadline or an end point. Making that effort and improving over time defines success. Doing a project is taking a set of steps to achieve a result... Being currently successful with a project depends on whether it is active or inactive... identifying the end conditions that you seek and the first actions that you need to take are keys to succeeding with the project.... Having a dream or desire is envisioning the way your world could be... Knowing whether you still want this dream or desire defines success." (p 29-30)

--Four choices in any decision: "1. Do it and enjoy. 2. Do it and don't enjoy. 3. Don't do it and enjoy. 4. Don't do it and don't enjoy." (p 31)

--Chapter 9 gives some great time management prioritization exercises for the workplace. (p 55-63)

--Chapter 11 offers some new ways to approach email. (p 74-85)

--Quote from essayist Joseph Epstein: "Reading is experience. A biography of any literary person ought to deal at length with what he read and when, for in some sense, we are what we read." (p 90)

--"Preparing isn't only a useful trick when leaving town. You can take the opportunity to "precuperate" at any time to make the following week easier." (p 159)

--"Continually skimming over things in a rush, without taking time to consider, can push you into a state

where stopping creates anxiety." (p 163)

Kristen says

I love this book!

My husband teases me about all the self-help books I read. I'm not sure I'm going to need another after this one. Really.

I'd recommend reading it bits at a time over the course of a year - keeping up with the discardia holidays that come four times a year.

There are, however, immediate benefits. I put *Discardia: More Life, Less Stuff* in the bathroom last night and this evening my husband told me he'd gotten through two bags of his stuff, and thrown a lot away. These are bags that have been in place in the basement since 2004.

Discardia isn't a book you need to read all at once. I'd recommend a bit at a time, and begin forming a mindset that will allow you to plow through your overload, giving much away. I've begun the process, and every bag that goes I feel better. (Although I saw the new Sherlock Holmes with Naomi Rapace playing a gypsy. *That's me!* I thought. *I'm going to start wearing that long gypsy-ish skirt and sweater that I haven't touched for years... oh. I gave them to ARC two days ago.* Even so... the organized closet of clothes I actually wear outweighs the fleeting fantasy of becoming a gypsy.)

Sanders offers organizational tips for the parts of your life worth keeping - and it goes far beyond your stuff into your vision of yourself and your relationships with others. She has three principles: 1) Decide and Do; 2) Quality over Quantity; and 3) Perpetual Upgrade.

Simple! Just those three. Good. (How Ignatian, in fact; the Jesuits also advise "decide and do" - after discernment.) Sanders also has great quotes: "It is easier to act your way into a new way of thinking than to think your way into a new way of acting." - and cut-to-the-heart insights - like the title of one chapter, "The Museum of Me" Yep.

Absolutely recommended.

Hilary says

I just couldn't get through this book. I think I expected it to be a short and somewhat prescriptive read, like, "On day 1 of Discardia we do this!" but it's not like that at all. It's quite long, and each chapter is a thoughtful reflection of some decluttering principle (including things like decluttering your friends, etc.). It's something that I generally enjoy, but I felt like the book lacked focus or theme, and instead was just a very long series of essays that were loosely tied together. Which I found bizarre since Discardia is supposed to be a new "holiday" and thus seems like a great theme for a book.

My reaction could entirely be that I have temporarily burned out on decluttering books, or that I've read so many recently that the eloquent ideas expressed in this book just felt repetitive. Perhaps the best audience for

this book is someone who has not been initiated into minimalism/deculttering ideas. Hence the 3 stars.
