

Everett's eBook, [The Art of Being Minimalist](#), inspired me to create this complementary Minimalist Quick Start Guide. It is provided as a bonus to those who purchase The Art of Being Minimalist. But, [as with many things I do](#), you are free to pass this along to friends even if you didn't pay cash money for his eBook.

Important note: artists like Everett can only make art with support from you. So if you can't afford to buy his eBook please tell 3 people (that's it, 3; more if you'd like!) about his Web site: FarBeyondTheStars.com.

Before I get into the nitty gritty, here's my story:

My name is Karol (Carl) Gajda (Guy-duh). I was born in Poland and grew up in Michigan (USA). My goals in life used to be to make a lot of money and buy, buy, buy. By age 24, I owned a 2,500 square foot home and a BMW 530i. (WTF was I thinking?)

I was a greedy, money-loving sack of depression.

Then I discovered minimalism.

Now I fit everything I want in my 32 liter backpack and I'm traveling/living around the world. (At the time of this writing that's India.) I'm not really sure I could be happier, but I'm open to the possibility, so I'll just state that I'm happy. :)

My minimalist journey started slowly at first. I gave away some CDs and books. I had placed a lot of emotional value on my possessions, even small things like CDs and books, so giving them away was uncomfortable. At first.

Then it felt like a little weight lifted off my shoulders. I could think a little more clearly. And knowing that somebody else was getting use out of my stuff was a nice bonus.

I kept this process up for about a year or so.

But it was going too slowly.

So I made a decision.

"Get rid of everything I don't need and leave the country for 100 days."

That's a slight lie. Initially I thought "30 days." But that didn't sound like enough so I bumped it to "50 days." That still wasn't good so I upped it to "2 months." By this time I had already decided on going to Australia, a place I'd wanted to visit since age 13. Then I thought, "why not add in New Zealand for a month?"

I like the number 100.

"I'm leaving the country for 100 days."

Immediately upon making that decision I bought a ticket to Australia/New Zealand. 70 days/30 days, respectively.

That was April of 2009 and my plane didn't depart until 01 September 2009. Like I mentioned previously, I was a buyer, a consumer, so I had a lot to get rid of. This gave me time.

I also had to find a good home for my cat Jessie, who I saved from certain death after finding her sickly little body eating garbage on the street a day after a hurricane rolled through Florida. (22 vet visits and ~\$2,000 later she was thriving! She hasn't been back to the vet in 4 years!)

I knew these things would take time, but once the plane ticket was purchased and the goal date was set, there was no turning back.

I was preparing myself for what I call Ridiculously Extraordinary Freedom.

Freedom to do what you want, when you want, where you want, and with whoever you want.

Minimalism is an enormous slice of the freedom pie.

This is how I did it:

The Plan

- 1) Find Jessie a good home.
- 2) Get rid of everything except what will fit in carry-on luggage.
- 3) Sell my car 1-4 weeks before leaving for Australia.
- 4) Rent out my house (which wouldn't sell due to the real estate market in Florida) and hire a property management company to take care of it.

Finding Jessie a good home was easy (an old girlfriend, cat-lover, and vegan took her in). Taking her to her new home in Austin, TX (my favorite city in the world as of this writing) [proved to be very difficult](#).

Renting out my house was also easy. I hired a property management company that would find a tenant, collect rent, fix problems, and pay me every month via direct deposit.

So let's focus specifically on getting rid of everything that you don't need. That's what minimalism boils down to, after all.

I took the following approach:

I put most of my books and other small media in boxes and kept those boxes in my car at all times. Whenever I'd hang out with people I'd lug the boxes out of my trunk and ask everybody to please take everything/anything!

I mailed a bunch of stuff to my Parents. Stuff I thought they would use (including books I thought they would enjoy). That may seem like cheating, but it's not. :)

I donated 2 big garbage bags of clothes (along with tons of stuff I couldn't get rid of) and I sold everything else on Craigslist.

That included my BMW. Oddly enough, I bought that car on eBay, and sold it on Craigslist. It's a wonderful world we live in. :)

Because so many intelligent people I talk to are unnecessarily afraid of eBay and Craigslist let's cover how I get rid of my clutter using Craigslist:

7 Tips: How To Declutter Your Life Using Craiglist

Getting rid of the extraneous things in your life is such a good feeling it really is hard to put into words. If you've done it, you know how amazing it feels. If you haven't purged the clutter in your life, the time to give it a try is right now. (Hey, that's why you're reading this eBook after all, right?)

Good reasons for getting rid of clutter are vast and varied.

Maybe you're moving and don't want to rent a moving van. Maybe you want to join me in living nomadic and just need to get rid of everything. Maybe you need a little bit of cash. Or maybe you just need to clear a lot of junk out of your life and start with a clean slate. Any reason is a good reason.

The question is, how do you go about getting rid of the clutter while minimizing the time involved and maximizing the cash you'll receive?

Craigslist is your answer. It's available worldwide. It's free. It's fast.

To make purging your unwanted belongings easier I've put together these 7 tips learned while clearing out my house.

I sold everything including my car on Craigslist. I sold bedroom furniture, 2 beds, my favorite guitar (Gibson SG), bookshelves, a TV, Nintendo Wii, a Nintendo DS, fake house plants, and the list goes on. All of the stuff I sold put about \$15,000 in my pocket and I never felt more free.

With all of that out of the way, let's get to it:

1) Get An Account.

Go to <http://www.craigslist.org> and sign up for an account. It's free, and it makes listing and relisting items for sale quicker. Saving your time is saving your money.

2) The Pictures.

Take pictures of all your things. More pictures is better, but be mindful of the return on investment. If you're selling a \$10 lamp is it worth your time to take multiple pictures? No. If you're selling a \$500 bedroom set, on the other hand, provide as many details as you can. Especially if there are any flaws in the furniture. Be upfront about defects so you don't waste anybody's time.

Upload your pictures to Flickr, Photobucket, or your favorite image hosting site. Name your images by product and number them. For example, BedroomSet01.jpg, BedroomSet02.jpg, etc. This way you'll be more organized, and listing your items on Craigslist it will be quicker and easier.

Note: I use Photobucket and for each picture they give you the HTML code needed to easily insert into your Craigslist ad.

3) How To Write A Craigslist Headline.

Headlines are important, so be clear about what you're selling.

Bad headline: 5 piece bedroom set.

Good headline: Black 5 Piece Bedroom Set Non-smoking home 70% off list!

It almost seems like common sense, but you'd be surprised how many people have horrible headlines.

4) Killer Pricing Strategies.

Craigslist buyers are looking for a deal. That's not to say you have to be unreasonably cheap, but be realistic. If you have a \$2000 bedroom set don't expect to get \$1500, or even \$1000 for it.

Industry standard, time-tested, pricing strategies work here. For example, \$499 or \$497 instead of \$500. I had a bedroom set listed for \$500 and didn't get any e-mails. I changed the price to \$499 and got 2 e-mails within an hour.

Bonus pricing tip: If you have no idea what to price your item you have 2 fast and easy options. First, check eBay's completed listings for the same item to check the average selling price. Or, if your item is a big piece of furniture or something else that is probably not on eBay, price it at about 33% of retail if it's still in great condition. The worse the condition the lower you'll have to go.

5) Best Times To List.

Deleting and immediately relisting your post is not allowed. Craigslist makes you wait an arbitrary number of minutes, hours, or days. I haven't figured out that algorithm, because I've listed an item and been able to relist it within 30 minutes, and with another item I had to wait 2 days.

Best bet listing strategy: List at 6-7 PM on Thursday. This is when people are preparing to do their bargain shopping for the weekend and your item will be listed towards the top of your category's page.

If your item hasn't sold by Friday, delete the listing Friday evening then relist it Saturday morning if you can. If you can't (due to Reposting restrictions), relist the item Sunday morning. If you have a Craigslist account relisting is really quick. Login to your account, find your deleted post, click Repost, and follow the steps.

6) Time Saving Strategies.

You'll receive a lot of time-wasting "is this item still available?" e-mails. Cut them off at the pass by clearly stating in your listing: "Please do not e-mail to ask if this item is available. If this listing is up the item is available. I will delete the listing as soon as the item has sold."

To make it easier on yourself you might want to list your phone number in the listing so you don't have to bother responding to multiple e-mails on the same items. That's really a

personal preference and dependent on how comfortable you are listing your phone number in public.

7) Safety.

Don't accept any form of payment other than cash. You may get e-mails about using Western Union, bank transfers, or other scam-prone options. Don't even respond to those e-mails. For small items, meet in a public place like a gas station, preferably during the day. For larger items you will have to obviously give your address, but be sure to take down the person's full name, e-mail, and phone number. Truthfully, that might not help a lot if something bad were to happen. But at the same time, it is good information to have on hand.

Bonus Tip: Start Early.

Start listing your items 1-2 months BEFORE you really have to sell them if you want to the highest possible price. You can start your prices high and every week drop them a little lower. I sold my beds and bedroom furniture for more than I expected because of this strategy. If you're in the process of moving, the added benefit of starting early is you won't be stressed out trying to get rid of your things at the last minute.

Once you've de-cluttered your life and put a little bit of cash in your pocket, be mindful about getting back in the habit of filling your life with more unnecessary stuff.

How do you do that? Re-read *The Art Of Being Minimalist* and take action. I truly believe minimalism is the future for anybody who wants a Ridiculously Extraordinary Life.

To get you started, here are 3 specific ideas from *The Art Of Being Minimalist* (TAOBM from now on) I think you should start with:

1) 30 Day Wait List (Page 15 of TAOBM)

You can do this without even officially committing to minimalism! Anything you want to buy that costs more than \$20, put it on a 30 day wait list.

Bonus tip: in that time, figure out how you can use that "thing" without paying for it or owning it. (Get creative.)

2) 1 Month Rule (Page 14 of TAOBM)

Get rid of everything you don't use in the next month. Obviously if you own a house, and it's winter, you might still need your lawnmower even though you won't use it within 30 days, but you get the point.

3) Invest In Something You Truly Care About (Page 51 of TAOBM)

Instead of throwing your money away on cable TV, DVDs, or whatever else, spend some money on what you truly enjoy doing or something you will be remembered for, a legacy project.

Example: I love playing guitar. I have been playing since I was 13. I've also always wanted to learn how to build a guitar. Remember how I mentioned earlier that I'm in India? I just learned how to build an acoustic guitar by hand. :) The cost for the 3 week course

(including the finished guitar, of course) was 55,000 Rupees, approximately \$1,200 USD. That's about what most people waste on cable TV every year. Bonus: I eat fresh coconut and run along the beach every day. ;)

I hope you got as much out of TAOBM as I did. And I hope you use my Craigslist tips to not only declutter your life and start on the path to minimalism.

To Freedom! ;)

Karol Gajda

<http://www.RidiculouslyExtraordinary.com>

P.S. Check out Everett's blog here: <http://www.FarBeyondTheStars.com>