



### **What's the best way to organize your bookshelves?**

Although there is no end of experts who will tell us how our bookshelves ought to be organized, the best way is any way that makes you happy. So here you go, Marie Kondo, organizer extraordinaire who never saw a book she didn't want to toss. Those books spark joy.

I put out a little informal survey to my Facebook Friends and our Books for Lunch bunch and discovered organizational means I never thought of. I have always divided books very loosely (anything potentially can wind up anywhere) between books I teach or might teach so that I don't have to hunt them down; books in a sort of permanent collection; a little bit of genre division but mostly in terms of poetry in one spot (they tend to be smaller and get lost); and everything else here and there.

So here – identified by first name only – are how your friends and neighbors like to keep their books. You might see an idea you like. I'm saving the dumbest idea for last.

Deb, a professor and I don't think this is unusual for professors, has absolutely no system. Judy likes using both subject and height of the books. Ethel points out what is true for many, that she reads electronically now and that's where most of her books are. The exception? Books for the grandkids are where they can see and reach them easily.

Susan has a book basket by her chair with current books, an occasional table with books she means to get to, coffee books, histories, and travel books in another space, plus her children's book collections – in other words, there isn't just "a spot" but many spots for books.

Randi Sue organizes her books by color and has no trouble finding them again. Sol keeps books in the order that he originally places them on the shelves, so you might say chronological by purchase. Janice puts her favorites first and all the rest wherever. Barb, Karen, and Andrea like books arranged by size and color. And Monica strictly by topic, "so that I might be able to find them again."

Judy 2 is a traditionalist, ordering her books by alphabetizing authors' last names. (This requires remembering the authors.) Diane starts with her unread ones in one spot, then her favorites, then all the rest by category.

Karissa uses release dates (I kind of like that), and Terri uses height. Kate puts book series in order and then by height. Liz organizes hers by series, author, subject, and genre. Lori keeps hers by topic and size, while Barb is a genre person.

Giving Ruth Ann the almost-last word, she keeps her favorites easily visible to her because she can enjoy the memories they give her at a glance, thus her level of interest dictates order.

As promised, here's the dumbest idea to me (but if you love it, go for it). There is a current trend for some decorators to encourage people to shelve their books spine side to the back, so what's visible are all the closed pages only. Take a look on Pinterest. It looks exactly like what you are imagining. Why do this to your unoffending books? Why not just get reams of paper and stand them up? You can cut them for size variation and save a ton of money. The rationale is to create "a nice visually neutral space." We all know there's nothing neutral about books. They are the very opposite of neutral. It can be a challenge locating the right one even seeing the spines with title, author, and color visible, let alone having someone convince you to create some weird mystery in your own home regarding something as fundamental as books. Life is stressful enough and in a short time, this could prove embarrassing as people begin to speculate if you are harboring an extensive porn collection. Not judging. Just saying.

Books are personal, though, and there's no wrong way to organize them if it sparks your joy. Stop in and really take a good look at how we organize ours.

See you at the Library!

**Upcoming Events:** See our Calendar on the Library's website for details. Follow us on FB and Twitter so you don't miss a thing.