

When Less is More – Tales from Tim’s Recycling Bin

I didn’t get any presents for my birthday in January and I couldn’t be happier. That’s because, like many people, I have too much stuff. Which is why I decided that for my birthday I would spend time making memories with my family – rather than opening presents.

I picked the presence rather than presents birthday while reading the book “Secondhand” by Adam Minter. In it he follows the trail of all our extra stuff we end up donating. We have emotional attachments to the things we own, and we want to believe that the things we give away find a meaningful home. While that’s mostly true for some items, there are others that can find no home other than the garbage.

Minter suggests we buy less stuff, and make sure the stuff we buy is good quality that will last longer.

As I explored this topic, I found some other points to share.

- Having less stuff means – less clutter, less cleaning, less laundry and ultimately less stress
- Instead of throwing out broken things, I will try to repair them. Hennepin County makes this easier to do with their free Fix-It Clinics like the one they held in Brooklyn Park in February. Did you see the article that reported farmers are buying older tractors because they are easier to repair?
- Having less stuff means spending less money – meaning more money to save or spend on experiences
- I’ll have less stuff to move when I downsize, and my kids will have less stuff to deal with when I’m gone

Finally keep in mind that the greatest environmental impact of most consumer goods comes from the material extraction needed for products and packaging and the manufacturing process. Buying less and reusing and repairing what we do buy has a much greater impact than recycling our waste. Until next time, buy less my friends.

