

Simplify Your Life: A Crash Course in Simplification

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Sample of Content:

From simple steps to a complete crash course, here is everything you need to get on the bandwagon to simplifying your life.

Content:

Have you ever felt controlled by life's external circumstances and responsibilities? Do you ever feel there is so much stuff in your house that you never get organized? Do paperwork, finances, budgeting and bills loom? Does time seem like a hard to find commodity? Are your days so filled with commitments that they blend one into another?

If so, you're not alone. Millions of Americans are suffering from today's demanding lifestyles. And more and more people are joining a new trend: the trend of simplifying one's life. Over commitment and overburden lead to stress, frustration and a sense of being "out of control."

The following tips can help you narrow-in on the clutter chaos and create a more calming life.

The closet. Start by visiting your grocery store and bringing home a few big boxes. These are your garage sale or donation boxes. Start with your closet. Most of us have more than we can possibly wear or clothes that haven't been worn because we don't feel comfortable or confident in them. All of those can go. Donate them, or have a rummage sale and use the proceeds to buy a few pieces you will wear.

Do you need more than one? How many books do you have right now that you have been meaning to read? How many books can you read at one time? If you have stacks of unread books you are only adding clutter to your life. You may also be wasting money if, by the time you are ready to read those books, your interests change and there is a new book you would rather read. Simplifying is all about one thing at a time.

Tackling the stuff. George Carlin once said, "Think of it. That's all your house is. It's a place to keep your stuff. If you didn't have so much stuff, you wouldn't need a house. That's all your house is. A pile of stuff with a cover on it. It's a place to keep your stuff while you go out and get more stuff!" As you look at all the stuff in your home, remember this formula "stuff equals stress. The more stuff you have the more you have to maintain, clean and repair. The basic key to simplifying your life is to simplify your stuff.

Think of everything you do in terms of priorities. What are your priorities in life? Do you long to have more time with your children? Is there an unfulfilled dream you would like to pursue? Identify your top few priorities and then observe how your actions affect them.

For example, if your top priority is spending time with your children, does buying a new outfit achieve that? If you have a comparable outfit, could that money be better spent?

Cutting down. Simplifying isn't about being frugal. It's about deciding what is important to you and what makes you feel better about yourself and your life. It's about doing more of the things that make you feel good "by cutting out the things that don't offer as much gratification.

Let's examine the following situation. Let's say you grab a cup of coffee every day on your way to work. It becomes a ritual. Do you get excited as you pull up to that drive-through? Probably not. You might glance at your watch and think, I wish they would hurry up. I need my coffee and I still have to get through rush hour. What if you brewed coffee at home, but, to start off your week on Monday mornings, you treated yourself to meeting a friend for a coffee? Which would give you more gratification? Which would simplify and enhance your life?

Same with dinner. If you bring home fast food on a regular basis, why not make it just a couple of times each month "but make it more special by taking the kids for an extra hour in the playland?

Trap of the free item. I was amazed when I looked around my office at how many things I had collected just because they were free. Newspapers, brochures, catalogs are enough to wallpaper my office twice.

As I looked through the items, a few were valuable, but most just took up space and took extra time to organize and weed through. (Not to mention that it certainly was not environmentally friendly for me to take items that I wouldn't use.) Now, when I see something free, I think twice and don't take it unless it's something I'll use.

If you are looking for a complete life makeover with organization, time management, finance, relationships and the like, please refer to my book *The Change Your Life Challenge* (www.changeyourlifechallenge.com). There is also a free weekly newsletter available at this web address.

A Crash Course In Simplification

- o Use it or lose it is the golden rule of simplifying one's life.

- o If you can't figure out what a gizmo or gadget does, then all it's doing is taking up space.

- o Take ten minutes every night to un-clutter. Have a race with your kids to put everything away. If you do this nightly as part of your bedtime routine you avoid the danger of letting your house get out of control.

- o Tackle one project at a time. Whether the project is cleaning, organizing, reading a book or working on a craft project, finish each project completely before purchasing or starting another.

- o Limit junk drawers to one in your entire home.

- o Teach the art of simplicity to your kids.

- o If you don't have a place to put something, don't buy it. Avoid making space for more clutter.

- o Don't keep catalogs. They are not only clutter-building, they are a temptation to spend money.

- o Donate your books to the local library when you are finished with them. (Ask for a receipt as the donation may be tax-deductible.)

- o Don't become obsessed with saving everything for a later use. How many plastic and paper bags does one person need?

o When you are organizing and come across something you kind of like, but don't really use, try to think of someone who not only likes the item, but also will use it. Make that person's day by giving it to them.

o Every couple of months, tackle the sock drawer. If there isn't a match now, there probably won't be one later. Toss solo socks or make sock puppets with your kids for some inexpensive family entertainment.

o Don't waste time looking for warranties, manuals or important receipts. Create a special drawer where only these things are kept. Using a drawer eliminates the chance of the papers never making it to a file or being misfiled.

Bill systems. Try the following for a quick way to manage your incoming mail and bills. Purchase three magnetic envelope size holders. Place these on the side of your refrigerator. Use the top one for bills you need to pay with your first paycheck each month. Use the second for the bills that come out of your second paycheck. The third is for all outgoing mail and a roll of stamps. When you pick up your mail each day, sort it right by the bill-holders. Throw out envelopes, special offers and all the clutter that comes with bills these days. When it comes time to pay your bills, remove the top holder and find a quiet place to do your paperwork. Then return that holder below the other one and make it for your next paycheck.

The Change Your Life Challenge

<http://www.changeyourlifechallenge.com>

Take control of your home, finances, relationships, clutter, time-management and more with this 70 Day Program. Sign up for the free Challenge Weekly Newsletter and the motivational daily Good Morning.

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