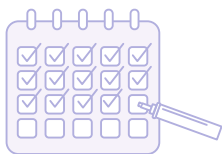




It is astonishing as well as sad, how many trivial affairs even the wisest thinks he must attend to in a day; how singular an affair he thinks he must omit. When the mathematician would solve a difficult problem, he first frees the equation of all encumbrances, and reduces it to its simplest terms. So simplify the problem of life, distinguish the necessary and the real. Probe the earth to see where your main roots run.

- HENRY DAVID THOREAU





COMMIT

30-DAY CHALLENGE: Spend one day each week decluttering and minimizing one category of things in your home.

When it comes to minimizing, we love Marie Kondo's tips for simplifying, organizing, and removing excess. As part of this 30-Day Challenge we recommend reading her book if you haven't already, "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up." In the book, Kondo addresses each category of things in your home, down to the specifics of how to fold (or more specifically not fold) your socks. Here are some tips to get you started:

1 Start with one category of things and make a pile in the middle of the room. Kondo encourages starting with a category instead of a whole room or closet, and then identifying subcategories within it. So for clothing, you would start with your socks—from every season and activity—and make a big pile.

2 Pick up one item at time and ask yourself: Does this bring me joy? If the answer is a definite yes, hold onto it. If not, place it in a box to donate.

3 Treat it as multiple sets of sprints, rather than one long marathon. This exercise can be challenging at times, but it helps to do it in small bursts instead of taking on your whole house at once.

Commitment Issues? Kondo may not approve of this advice, but if you are really uncertain about an item, stick it in a box, seal it, and put it away ideally somewhere inconvenient but not impossible to access. Six months later, if you haven't found yourself seeking out that item, you know you can remove it from your life.



REFLECT



Journal Question: **How does the Pareto Principle play out in your life?**



What's one thing you do that makes you exceptionally happy? Thinking about it in reverse, are there certain activities that take up excessive amounts of time and do not feel effective or bring you meaning?



Group Discussion Question: You arrive home and see smoke billowing from your house and a fireman outside. Your roommates, family, pets, and neighbors are all safe. The fireman says they are able to go back in for essentials, but that you can only save three items.

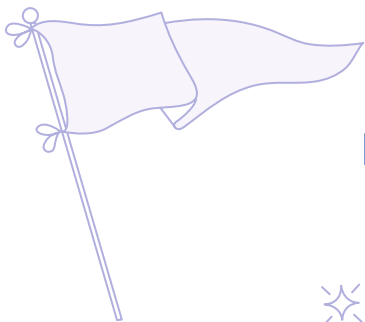
What three items do you choose and why?



This kit is inspired by our readings from Vilfredo Pareto, Greg Mckeown, Marie Kondo, and Tina Roth Eisenberg. For further reading and curated resources from them and on this topic, visit holstee.com/simplicity.

**Let's take a
moment for
simplicity.**

**HOLSTEE
GUIDE**



BEGIN



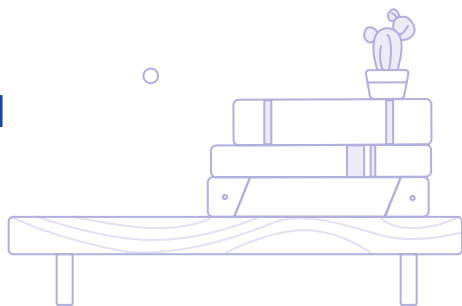
Simplicity is an important value in many different areas of life — from theology and psychology to health and art. Religious texts prescribe living with less as a path to spiritual transcendence. Designers appreciate simplicity for its aesthetic elegance and functional ease. And contemporary psychology tells us that savoring the simple joys of life contributes to our overall wellness. In many ways, the human psyche seems to find simplicity innately appealing. But why?

Simply put (😊), simplicity helps us optimize. In a world of overstimulation and frenzied consumption it encourages us to live with more intention. Simplicity frees us from clutter so we can concentrate on what is essential for a good life.

Let's take a deeper look, shall we?



LEARN



The **Pareto Principle** (also known as the 80/20 rule) was identified by Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto in 1906.

It suggests that 20% of actions tend to yield 80% of the outcomes.

The numbers aren't hard facts, but the idea is that a small segment of things is usually responsible for most of the output. Some examples:



20% of a business's products tend to produce 80% of a business's revenue.



20% of the phrases in a language tend to allow for 80% of everyday fluency.



20% of our relationships often produce 80% of our experiences of love and support.



20% of our clothes tend to make up 80% of what we wear on a daily basis.

In reverse, this also means that the majority of our actions (about 80%) have only small incremental impact, while those few most impactful actions (20%) hold the key to the majority of results.

The Pareto Principle is a powerful tool for simplifying our daily decision making. It allows us to consider our options in terms of which activities produce the greatest meaning in our lives. By mindfully identifying the vital few actions that deliver our best returns, we get more with less.



The way of the Essentialist means living by design, not by default.

- GREG MCKEOWN

There's only so much time in a day and energy in a body. Greg Mckeown author of "Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less" reminds us:

If we try to do everything, we'll often come up empty handed and less clear about what we really want.

It doesn't help that modern culture tells us what to value, what "success" is and how to become "happy." Society has us furiously working toward a life that is outwardly rich, but inwardly poor.

We can improve our chances of living our most meaningful life by prioritizing what matters and ignoring the rest. As Stephen Covey says: **"The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."** Simplicity helps us do this; it neutralizes scatterbrain and keeps us focused on what's really important.

ACTIVITY

THINGS I DIDN'T BUY

For the next month, every time you feel like buying something that isn't 100% essential, write the item down on this list instead.

This exercise is inspired by one of our favorite creative thinkers, Tina Roth Eisenberg (aka Swiss Miss). It offers a helpful way to bring awareness to mindless consumption and spending. There's joy that comes with this over time — in being able to take a look back at your list and see all the things you thought you needed but didn't, or maybe just knowing that your immediate surroundings are a little less cluttered with non-essentials.