



HOLSTEE

Simplicity Guide

..... 2021

EXPLORING THE ART & SCIENCE OF SIMPLICITY

Simplicity

Every morning we get a chance to start from scratch. To really taste the sunrise and hear our unfiltered and natural thoughts.

The world is open, alive and free — and so are we when we embrace simplicity.

Simplicity *noun*

sim·plic-i·ty | \sim-'pli-sə-tē

The state of being simple, uncomplicated, or uncompounded.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary © 2021

In this guide, we explore how Simplicity can be applied to all aspects of our lives — like how we spend time, make commitments, and prioritize possessions.

On the following pages, we share poetry, philosophy, and a range of activities providing insight and ideas for how to live a simpler life.

Dive into the modern teachings and scientific findings of Leo Babauta, Marie Kondo, and Cal Newport — just to name a few. Learn how to alleviate time scarcity, minimize clutter, and positively focus your digital activities.

Use this guide as a tool to shine a spotlight on what brings the most meaning and happiness to your life.

Clearing

Do not try to save
the whole world
or do anything grandiose.
Instead, create
a clearing
in the dense forest
of your life
and wait there
patiently,
until the song
that is your life
falls into your own cupped hands
and you recognize and greet it.
Only then will you know
how to give yourself
to this world
so worth of rescue.

Warm-Up

What's one thing you do that makes you exceptionally happy?

Which activities take up excessive amounts of time and do not feel meaningful?

“ *All we can do is one thing at a time. All we have is this moment, this day. And it is enough. It is beautiful, incredible, if we just really see it and appreciate it.*

LEO BABAUTA

Getting Started

Simplifying your life can feel like an overwhelming task when looking at the big picture. Let's simplify simplifying by breaking it down!

Here are three areas we're going to focus on:



COMMITMENTS

Be ok with saying 'no'
(via [Derek Sivers](#))



POSSESSIONS

Declutter first, then organize
(via [Joshua Becker](#))



ATTENTION

Be selective with this limited resource
(via [Cal Newport](#))

The following pages tackle each of these three sections in-depth, through discussion, questions, and activities.

“ *Minimalism is more about the practice and less about the aesthetic* ”

CHRISTINE PLATT

Simplify Commitments

According to Leo Babauta, philosopher and Founder of *Zen Habits*, we need to find ways to simplify our daily commitments in order to truly connect to our personal and spiritual goals. Babauta suggests making a list of daily obligations so that we can easily determine what is essential.

Try this by listing recurring commitments in four life categories.

Put a ★ next to any that bring you joy. Underline any that directly contribute to your goals. Highlight the ones that take the most time.

WORK:

01

“ A simple life has a different meaning and a different value for every person. For me, it means eliminating all but the essential, eschewing chaos for peace, and spending your time doing what’s important to you.

LEO BABAUTA

02

FAMILY:

Handwriting practice lines for the 'FAMILY:' section.

FRIENDS:

03

Handwriting practice lines for the 'FRIENDS:' section.

04

HEALTH:

Handwriting practice lines for the 'HEALTH:' section.

Which of these daily commitments do you want to let go of?

“ *I am beginning to learn that it is the sweet, simple things in life which are the real ones after all.*

LAURA INGALLS WILDER

Time Scarcity

At the end of each day, how often do you feel accomplished and at ease?

Did you check everything off your list, get enough sleep, fulfill all familial and social obligations, read, exercise, eat well, keep your home in order, and not feel stressed about time?

For many of us, the answer is rarely yes, if ever.

This pressure is what Leo Babauta calls the **Time Scarcity Demon**. He writes:

“ The problem isn't that we have too little time – we all get the same amount of time each day and each week. It's the exact right amount of time, because it's all there is. It's possible that we have too many things to do. But actually the real problem is that we want to do too much in the time we have.

Babauta believes we can do a number of things to change our circumstances: We can **prioritize** (we'll get to that in a little bit), **ask for help**, or **delegate tasks**. But really mastering the Time Scarcity Demon comes from shifting our mindset, and he looks to Buddhism to help us do so.

Babauta identifies this need to do more and to have more as a form of **greed (lobha)**, and encourages us to answer this greed — and the challenges of the Time Scarcity Demon — with its antidote: **generosity (dāna)**.

LOBHA • GREED

One of the Three Unwholesome Roots (akusala-mūla), greed is our insatiable desire for more.

It's our impulse, attachment, and obsession with obtaining something always beyond our reach, whether that's a goal, status, material object, or wealth.

Greed leads us to feel as though our fulfillment depends on achieving or gaining something.

DĀNA • GENEROSITY

We cultivate a practice of generosity to free us from the feeling of scarcity.

This state of mind is a release of the attachment we have to material things and outcomes. This form of generosity is less about giving material things (though that's an important aspect of dāna), and more about being generous with our time, thoughts, wisdom, and energy.

With this mindset, we give our direct focus to the moment instead of obsessing about what is next, detaching from the pressure to do and have more.

Establishing a dāna mindset requires a major shift in our perspective of time and to those around us.

How might you bring this generous state of mind into your daily life?

“The more you know, the less you need.”

YVON CHOUINARD

“ *It's not the daily
increase but
daily decrease.
Hack away at the
unessential.*

BRUCE LEE

Weekly Challenge

Spend one day each week decluttering your home.

When it comes to minimizing, we love Marie Kondo's tips for simplifying, organizing, and removing excess. We recommend reading her book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, if you haven't already. In it, 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:

- 01 **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.

- 02 **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.

- 03 **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?

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, it may be time to let it go.

List the categories you want to tackle each week and place a ✓ in the circle when you've completed it!

Week One

☐

☐

☐

☐

Week Two

☐

☐

☐

☐

Week Three

☐

☐

☐

☐

Week Four

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☐

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☐

Way to go!

BONUS CHALLENGE

During this month, every time you feel like buying something that isn't 100% essential, list or draw the item below instead.

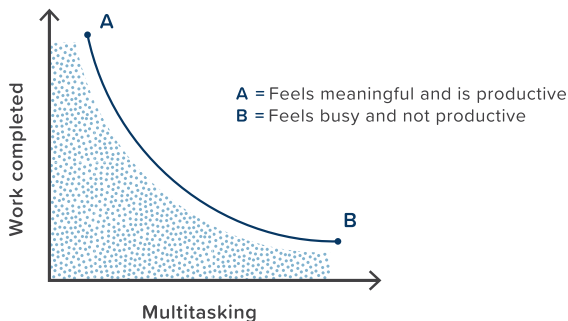
Did Not Buy List:

Inspired by one of our favorite creative thinkers, [Tina Roth Eisenberg](#) (aka Swiss Miss), this exercise 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 in knowing that your immediate surroundings are a little less cluttered with non-essentials.

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

GREG MCKEOWN

The Multitasking Myth



“ Yes, we are capable of doing two things at the same time. It is possible, for example, to watch TV while cooking dinner or to answer an email while talking on the phone.

What is impossible, however, is concentrating on two tasks at once. Multitasking forces your brain to switch back and forth very quickly from one task to another.

This wouldn't be a big deal if the human brain could transition seamlessly from one job to the next, but it can't. Multitasking forces you to pay a mental price each time you interrupt one task and jump to another. In psychology terms, this mental price is called the switching cost.

Switching cost is the disruption in performance that we experience when we switch our attention from one task to another.

JAMES CLEAR

Digital Minimalism

Cal Newport is a computer science professor at Georgetown University who encourages people to turn off their computers. Newport has written six books about the impact of technology on our society, including the New York Times bestseller, *Digital Minimalism*.

“We cannot passively allow the wild tangle of tools, entertainments, and distractions provided by the internet age to dictate how we spend our time or how we feel.

CAL NEWPORT

Newport's book inspired us to ask the question: How can we use technology so it helps us meet our aspirations instead of distract us from the road ahead? He defines Digital Minimalism as a practice of focusing all of our online activities so they support what we value, “and then happily miss out on everything else.”

Take a moment to write down five of your values.

01

04

02

05

03

Now, list the websites and apps you use on a regular basis.

For each one, ask, “Is this the best way to use technology to support my values?” Put a ✓ next ones that are a yes, and ~~cross-out~~ any that are a clear no. For any maybes, consider ways to optimize your use or identify a better option.

“ *It is not enough to
be busy; so are the
ants. The question is:
What are we busy
about?*

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Reflect & Discuss

Use these questions for self-reflection or to spark meaningful conversations.

ICEBREAKERS

*What makes
you smile?*

*What area of your life
needs the most simplifying?*

*What do you feel are the pros
and cons of a minimalist life?*

DEEPER QUESTIONS

What in your life is most essential to your happiness?

Who in your life can help simplify seemingly complex moments?

If there is an afterlife or reincarnation, what one memory from this life would you bring with you?

What are you holding onto that you need to let go of?

“ *Simplicity, patience,
compassion. These three are
your greatest treasures.
Simple in actions and
thoughts, you return to the
source of being. Patient with
both friends and enemies, you
accord with the way things
are. Compassionate toward
yourself, you reconcile all
beings in the world.*

LAO TZU

Copyright © Holstee Inc. 2021 — This kit is inspired by our readings from Martha Postlewaite, Leo Babauta, Bruce Lee, Marie Kondo, Tina Roth Eisenberg, Greg McKeown, Cal Newport, Henry David Thoreau, and Lao Tzu.

For further reading and curated resources visit: holstee.com/simplicity.