



Simplicity



Keep it simple.



HOLSTEE

WELCOME TO

Simplicity

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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 © 2022

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 that provide 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 worthy of rescue.

Martha Postlewaite

Warm-Up

*“ 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



**What's one thing you do that makes you feel fulfilled and happy?
How often do you do it?**

- **What's one thing you do that does not feel meaningful or give you joy? How often do you do it?**

Click on bars like these to open a new journal entry in Reflection.app with the prompt ready! **Bonus:** As part of your Holstee Membership, you get Premium access to Reflection.app — click now to give it a try!



ANSWER THIS PROMPT IN REFLECTION.APP

Getting Started

The thought of simplifying your whole life all at once can feel overwhelming. 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 and intentional with this limited resource.

(via **Cal Newport**)

The following pages tackle each of these three areas 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 the blog *Zen Habits*, in order to truly connect to our personal and spiritual goals, we need to find ways to simplify our daily commitments. Babauta suggests making a list of daily obligations so that we can easily determine what is essential.



Start by listing your daily commitments in these four life categories: Work, Family, Friends, and Health

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

- **Which of these commitments do you want to let go of?**

“ *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



ANSWER THIS PROMPT IN REFLECTION.APP

Essentialism

In *Essentialism*, author **Greg McKeown** offers a **systematic discipline** for discerning what is absolutely essential and removing everything else. Below are some of the distinctions noted by McKeown of Non-Essentialists and Essentialists:

	NON-ESSENTIALIST	ESSENTIALIST
THINKS	<p>All things to all people</p> <p>“I have to.”</p> <p>“It’s all important.”</p> <p>“How can I fit it all in?”</p>	<p>Less but better</p> <p>“I choose to.”</p> <p>“Only a few things really matter.”</p> <p>“What are the trade-offs?”</p>
DOES	<p>The undisciplined pursuit of more</p> <p>Reacts to what’s most pressing</p> <p>Says “yes” to people without really thinking</p> <p>Tries to force execution at the last moment</p>	<p>The disciplined pursuit of less</p> <p>Pauses to discern what really matters</p> <p>Says “no” to everything except the essential</p> <p>Removes obstacles to make execution easy</p>
GETS	<p>Lives a life that does not satisfy</p> <p>Takes on too much, and work suffers</p> <p>Feels out of control</p> <p>Is unsure of whether the right things got done</p> <p>Feels overwhelmed and exhausted</p>	<p>Lives a life that really matters</p> <p>Chooses carefully in order to do great work</p> <p>Feels in control</p> <p>Gets the right things done</p> <p>Experiences joy in the journey</p>

Time Scarcity

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

Are you able to 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 most of us, the answer is rarely — if ever — “yes.”

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 you can do a number of things to change your circumstances: You 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 your mindset, and he looks to Buddhism for help.

Babauta identifies this need to do more and to have more as a form of **greed (lobha)**, and encourages you 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 your impulse, attachment, and obsession with obtaining something always beyond your reach, whether it's a goal, status, material object, or wealth.

Greed leads you to feel as though your 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 you have to material things and outcomes. This form of generosity is less about giving away material things (though that's an important aspect of dāna), and more about being generous with your time, thoughts, wisdom, and energy.

With this mindset, you give your 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 your perspective of time and to those around you.



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



ANSWER THIS PROMPT IN REFLECTION.APP

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 (and how not to 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 could start with your socks — from every season and activity — and make a big pile.
- 02 **Pick up one item at a 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 decluttering as a series of sprints**, rather than one long marathon. It can be challenging at times, so 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 for each week of this month and place a ✓ next to each category when you've completed it!

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

LAURA INGALLS WILDER



BONUS CHALLENGE

During this month, every time you feel like buying something that isn't 100% essential, write down or draw the item in a “Did Not Buy” list instead.

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.

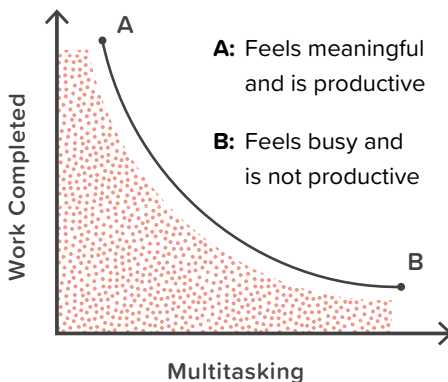
The Multitasking Myth

“ *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 technology. Newport has written six books about the impact of technology on our society, including the *New York Times* bestseller *Digital Minimalism*. He says:

“ *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.* ”

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



Take a moment to write down five of your values.

- **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.



COMPLETE THIS ACTIVITY AS A
SPECIAL GUIDE IN REFLECTION.APP

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. 2022 — This kit is inspired by our readings from Martha Postlewaite, Leo Babauta, Christine Platt, Greg McKeown, Socrates, Marie Kondo, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Tina Roth Eisenberg, James Clear, Cal Newport, and Lao Tzu.

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