

INTRODUCTION TO SIMPLE LIVING

LEARN TO LIVE A SIMPLER MORE INTENTIONAL LIFE



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INTRODUCTION : WHAT IS SIMPLE LIVING?

Simple living means to *remove all the excess* from your life, in whatever form it takes, leaving you with a simplified version of life that focuses on what is important and essential for you personally. The term simple living is used interchangeably many times with minimalism, essentialism and intentional living.

Extreme minimalists are known for counting their physical possessions and keeping them under a certain number, while others live with only those items they actually use, but no numeric limit. All have their basis in removing the excess from life, with the differences being mainly to what degree.

No matter what level of simple living you embrace, common benefits include:

- More time with family. With fewer commitments and activities eating away at my time, you have more time to spend with those you love.
- More money to help others. Cutting down on excessive spending and using those excess funds to enrich other's lives brings great experiences and joy.
- More space. Living simpler creates empty space around the house. More space can increase your creative side and result in greater calm and happiness without so many items surrounding you.
- More order and cleanliness. With fewer belongings, your home will be much easier to maintain, and also much more organized with a place designated for each item.
- More gratitude. Having less allows us to become more grateful for all the small things that you may have thought about before, but not thought about long enough to be grateful for.

Welcome to Introduction to Simple Living. I hope you will gain great benefits from exploring the information available within this ebook, as well as the additional reading and resources.

CHAPTER 1: DEFINING EXCESS

Excess is defined by you as an individual. What items, commitments, clothing, foods or even relationships do you have in your life that are not being used, or are unhealthy for you or that you simply don't enjoy anymore? This is your excess and it will look different for each person depending on where they live, their income level, family status and culture. One thing that excess has in common for every person is that it will always take away from their overall satisfaction, enjoyment and personal fulfillment in life.

COMMON FORMS OF EXCESS

- Homes filled with too much clutter, duplicates of items and things rarely or never used.
- Too many outside commitments and activities which leave those involved feeling overly tired and so busy they aren't finding enjoyment in the activities.
- Working too many hours at a job that isn't fulfilling, or not maintaining the balance between work and leisure time.
- Eating foods that are processed and unhealthy, not exercising regularly and constantly having to manage excess weight gain.
- Feeling overwhelmed by life in general. Awaking each morning with a sense of urgency and stress at the upcoming busy day.
- Unhealthy relationships such as those that are one-sided, based on negativity or those that drain you of emotional health and stamina.

If you recognize any of these as possible areas of excess in your own life, you are not alone. Most people have at least some excess in their life, the key is recognition and the desire to simplify your life, bringing it into balance.

Now that we have defined excess and some of it's most common forms in our lives, what would a simple life look like when that excess is removed?

ADDITIONAL READING MATERIAL:

[Remove the Essentials to Find Clutter](#)

[Remove Excess](#)

[Decluttering Your Days](#)

CHAPTER 2: WHAT A SIMPLE LIFE LOOKS LIKE

Simple living is a way of life that focuses on simplicity, intentionality and living life with regard to simplifying your activities, eating habits, home, emotions and thinking. Living simply looks different for each individual, depending on your own personal values and views on life and what is important to you. However, there are basic similarities among those who have chosen to integrate simple living into their everyday lives. I am continually trying to find new ways of simplifying my life and the lives of my family members to 'make each moment count'. Below are examples of some of the common priorities found in those who choose to simplify their lives.

- A home which contains only those belongings that are beautiful, used and enjoyed on a regular basis by those who live there.
- Limited outside commitments and activities with a focus on just those that bring extreme fulfillment and joy.
- Maintaining a balance between work and leisure time. Ideally, work would be considered enjoyable and fulfilling.
- A healthy lifestyle including moderate exercise and a focus on eating whole foods instead of processed meals.
- Starting each day with a feeling of contentedness and ease. Absence of stress, urgency and busyness.
- Personal relationships based on mutual respect, understanding and love. Adequate time spent with each other sharing positive experiences and building trust and love.

The Simple Living movement is becoming recognized more and more as a fulfilling, peaceful lifestyle that brings meaning and purpose into people's lives. Without the focus on a hurried, consumer driven lifestyle, full of activities and scheduled from dawn 'til dusk, people are able to become more attuned to the needs of themselves, their families and those around them, as well as receiving benefits in their finances, health, relationships and really in every area of life.

In this module, we've learned about the most common forms of excess in people's lives today, as well as what living an ideal simpler, more intentional life would look like.

CHAPTER 3: WHY SIMPLE LIVING IS BENEFICIAL

There are many benefits of living a simpler lifestyle less focused on materialism, keeping busy every spare moment and figuring out ways to earn more and more money. Let's consider the following statistics about western culture-

- According to [World Bank](#) research, if you work full-time at a minimum wage job, making \$40,000 per year, you are in the top 8% of the world's wealthiest. That amount is also adjusted for price differences in cost of living between countries, known as PPP (Purchasing Price Parity).
- In 2014, Americans spent \$50.9 billion on Black Friday shopping for 'deals', which usually are focused on the non-essentials in life. While that amount was reported by [Bloomberg](#) to be 11% less than in 2013, [IBM](#) reported that online sales from consumers who stayed home increased by almost 10%. With all this shopping, no wonder [42% of Americans](#) have credit card debt ranging from \$7,000-\$10,000 per household.
- [Gallup](#) reports that 4 out of 10 adults get less than 7 hours of sleep each night, and the CDC is calling our lack of sleep an [epidemic](#). What is so important that we are losing sleep and sacrificing our health in the process? Maybe it is due to our [time-is-money](#) mentality, or the desire to make sure our [children are 'well-rounded'](#) through a plethora of extra-curricular activities. A teen habits survey showed that 31% of them are not getting enough sleep either, not a good trend as they move into adulthood.

LET'S RECAP-

- 92% of Americans are in the top 8% of richest people in the whole world, yet many of us are consumed with making more and more money.
- 42% of Americans have a minimum of \$7,000 in credit card debt, yet we keep spending on non-essentials.
- 40% of adults in the U.S. get less than 7 hours of sleep per night, yet we insist on being involved in extra activities and commitments to make us feel busy and important.

The list of stats could go on and on demonstrating improper financial choices, physical fatigue due to over-committed individuals, poor sleep and stress from trying to increase earnings to keep up with the Joneses, but let's stop here.

The good news is that we have the option of simplifying life and getting rid of these negative, unhealthy lifestyle habits that are promoted by our cultures.

CHAPTER 4: 30 BENEFITS OF LIVING A SIMPLER LIFE

Let's take a look at 30 benefits of living a simple, intentional life. If you have more time available, I've linked to supporting articles I've written about the topics elsewhere on SimplyClearly.

1. Living simply allows you to find more [time](#) in your life.
2. Living simply gives space, both physically and mentally.
3. Personal reflection comes more often when you live simply.
4. Spending more time with [family](#) is available when life is simpler.
5. Slowing down and really listening to others happens when you live simple.
6. Simple living helps you focus on experiences, not possessions.
7. Living simply cultivates better money habits.
8. Simple living promotes [decluttering](#) for a cleaner, roomier home.
9. Simple living promotes the care of your body and exercising.
10. [Meditation](#) comes more naturally as you live a simpler lifestyle.
11. When you live a simple life, you are able to enjoy nature more often.
12. Living simply helps us separate our needs from our wants, clearly.
13. Simple living gives us permission to say 'no' to too many [obligations](#).
14. Your friends become a higher priority when you focus on the simple in life.
15. Cooking simply and eating simple, natural food comes naturally.
16. Getting dressed is easy with a [simple wardrobe](#).
17. Simple family activities like walks, camping and game nights are fulfilling.
18. Spotting the hidden meaning of [advertisements](#) is much simpler.
19. Appreciating the simple things like a flower blooming comes easier.
20. Recognizing blessings is easier when life is simpler.
21. [Shopping](#) is no longer your main entertainment when you live simply.
22. TV no longer takes up the bulk of your evenings and weekends.
23. Reading becomes one of your favorite past-times, a simple pleasure.
24. Living simply increases your appreciation of creativity.
25. A simple life helps you enjoy playing with your [children](#), or grandchildren.
26. Taking care of relationships instead of things becomes a priority.

27. You appreciate the moment you are in, realizing life is simply short.
28. Living simply helps you clear all the unimportant things from your life.
29. Helping others becomes much more important as you live a simple lifestyle.
30. A simple life makes room for you to be intentional in all areas.

CHAPTER 5: SIMPLE LIVING IS FOR EVERYONE

It is not very often that something can be universally applied to the whole human family. The ideal of simple living is one of those rare things that is beneficial, and available to almost everyone to varying degrees. It will look different for each person, family and possibly even culture, but the goals and ideals behind living simply will be the same.

Consider the possibilities if *everyone in the world* lived the following simple living principles-

- Prepare only enough food to satisfy hunger without throwing any extra away.
- Purchase only those items used regularly and made/grown in ethical ways.
- Get enough sleep and exercise for a healthy body.
- Recycle, and make an effort to purchase recyclables.
- Reuse, borrow and share.
- Value life energy and time more than things and money.
- Value relationships with people more than things and money.
- Value experiences more than things and money.

If people around the world intentionally made the shift to a simpler lifestyle, we could make a huge difference collectively by-

- Using the 1.3 billion tons of globally [wasted food](#) each year to feed the 805 million people who [struggle with hunger](#) around the world.
- Voting with our money and buying only those items that are made and grown using [fair trade](#) practices and by employers who treat their workers ethically.
- Getting enough rest to reduce car crashes by 100,000 per year (in the U.S. alone) due to [drowsy driving](#), and exercising regularly would increase life spans anywhere from [3-7 years](#) per person.
- Reusing and sharing our belongings, tools, vehicles, clothing and more with friends, family and neighbors would keep our production and consumption levels lower worldwide, as well as decrease the [3.5 million tons of trash](#) we generate on a global level, *everyday*.
- Using our life energy to create and sustain relationships with each other, instead of being connected to [electronic media](#) for 11 hours each day.
- [Valuing time](#) over money.

CONCLUSION

Simple living isn't just for people who are environmentalists or for those who have enough resources that they can 'choose' to live without.

It is for everyone in one form or another, and brings with it clarity and contentment in life, increased quality of relationships and the realization that physical possessions are meant to be purchased and consumed responsibly, used and loved, not just accumulated for status.

Internalizing this mindset and cultivating a simple lifestyle offers personal freedom, less is more.

If you enjoyed this book, please visit SimplyClearly.com for more help with decluttering and living an intentional, simpler life.