

Ten Ways to Simplify Your Life

By Jennifer Ottolino

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In this very fast paced world, it seems impossible to simplify our lives. But think about this, how much time and energy do you waste on the unnecessary? How much time do you waste because you can't find things? How much energy do you waste telling yourself all the things you should do? We often make life much more complicated than it needs to be and somehow we have convinced ourselves that our lives must be filled to max. We over schedule our lives, and then wonder why we feel dissatisfied. In turn, we end up spending the majority of our time on the things that don't matter to us. Here are some strategies to help you weed out the unnecessary and simplify, simplify, simplify.

1. Extend your boundaries- It is okay to say no. If you are not comfortable committing to a task, or something doesn't feel right to you, then don't do it. We often get in trouble because we ignore our gut feelings, and most of the time it leads us down the wrong path.
2. Drop your to-dos- Drop the to-dos that have been on your list for a couple of months. Get rid of those tasks that you keep telling yourself that you will get done but you always find something more interesting/important to do. If you have not done them by now, they are not important and draining your energy.
3. Remove clutter- How much time do you waste looking for things? Do you have stuff that you need to get rid of? The more cluttered your space is, the more stressed you are going to feel. When you remove clutter, get rid of stuff that you no longer need, and give objects a home your life will run more smoothly. In addition, you will create a space for new things to enter your life.
4. Develop your values- Determine what your values are and live to those values. We often feel conflicted because how we are living is out of sync with our values. For example, if your number one value is family and your job requires you to work 65 hours a week is it any wonder that you feel unsettled and unhappy? When you're clear about what is important to you, it will be easier to let go of things that don't fit.
5. Examine your Beliefs- What are your core beliefs? Some of your beliefs maybe limiting your ability to let go of tasks and projects that don't add value. If you believe that you create value by being busy, it is much harder to let go of tasks. If you believe that the only way to make money is to work hard, then you will always work hard. Remember, we look for circumstances in our lives to reinforce what we believe.
6. Create priorities- Determine the 1-2 things you want to accomplish within the next year for your

career/business, home life, relationships, and self. Work only to those priorities. If your goal is to develop a new income generating product line, that is where you should spend significant time focusing your attention. It is very easy to get distracted from our priorities, because there is so much information out there that peaks our interest. How often do you get diverted to other projects and never finish what you were originally working? What happens? The year goes by and you did not accomplish any of your objectives. When new ideas do excite us, get an idea notebook and write all of your new ideas down for future projects. One note, if you find yourself working on everything but your stated priorities, it may be time to reexamine what you think you want.

7. Give yourself permission to relax- We live in a culture that has taught us that relaxing is the equivalent to being lazy so we have created lives that are bursting at the seams and don't give us time to think. There is another way, give yourself permission to relax. Revel in doing nothing. Give yourself time to just think and do nothing. You will be amazed at all the new and interesting discoveries that come to you.

8. If your struggling let it go- If something is a real struggle, or you can't come up with a solution drop it for awhile. Giving yourself a mental break will allow your brain to rest and therefore create new ideas. Have you ever woken up in the middle of the night and had an aha? This happens for two reasons, 1) because you are relaxed, and 2) because you were not trying to direct your brain's thoughts. Giving yourself a mental break from a challenge is a great way to consciously create that aha.

9. Take care of yourself- Isn't it funny that we take better care of our cars than our bodies? Take care of your body and mind. Eat things that bring you a sense of energy and lightness. Eat to fuel your body. Exercise your body to reduce stress and clear your mind. Exercise your brain with new activities. This will go a long way in helping you feel more calm and relaxed.

10. Have fun- Why is it so hard for us to have fun? Make time each week to do something that brings you joy. Do something completely silly. Have fun with yourself. Laugh. Forget all the other stuff for awhile and just have fun. You will feel a whole lot better.

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