

Simple Pleasures...

A Guide for Living as Easy as You Please



Issue 1 April 2010

"Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated." ~ Confucius

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Improve your mood

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- (Doug Robinson)

Free Your Space

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As we become wealthier, people seem to be adding more and more things to our homes. Then, we use our homes and treasures to justify that we have won the game of life. We accumulate a lot of clutter in our living space and our inner space, and we are so eager to fill our homes, yet so disinterested in cleaning them out. As a result, we require larger spaces, more storage space, and more clutter for the mind. Ironically, the clutter actually holds us back from inner peace and understanding.

The art of having less but enjoying our lives more involves a few simple changes in perspective. First, we must understand where our true values lie and focus on them. Then, we must take time to enjoy the simple things and slow down and see what's right in front of us.

The Zen of Space - We need to understand that space is to be enjoyed, not filled. There is beauty in space, but we fail to recognize it because we can't see through the stuff we own. When we open up physical space in our environment, a tremendous feeling of peace can dwell within us. This is the principle behind Japanese style

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Simple Surroundings

By Elizabeth Scott, M.S., About.com

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Let your home be your sanctuary! Here are a few suggestions that can help you move through the process and end up with a cleaner home:

Spring Cleaning Checklist: Have a checklist for Spring cleaning, it can be used any time. It provides an organized framework for tackling what could seem like a big job, in smaller steps.

Donate: As you're cleaning things up, it really pays off to toss or donate as many things as you can, and organize what remains. This will make it much easier to keep things clean in the future.

Set a Schedule: Set a schedule for tackling these areas of your home in a timeframe that you can handle. Whether you spend 15 minutes a day, a few hours on the weekend, or some other time configuration, take into account whether you get bored easily with cleaning or if you enjoy working in a focused, prolonged manner.

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Enlist the Help of Your Family:

If your home is quite messy, chances are the mess isn't all yours. This means you probably have people whose help you can enlist to tackle this job! If you have kids, even small children, you can get them to help you.

Make It Fun: If you're cleaning, throw on some lively music to make it as fun as possible. See how much you can get done with each song, and you may find yourself working faster and having more fun as you do.

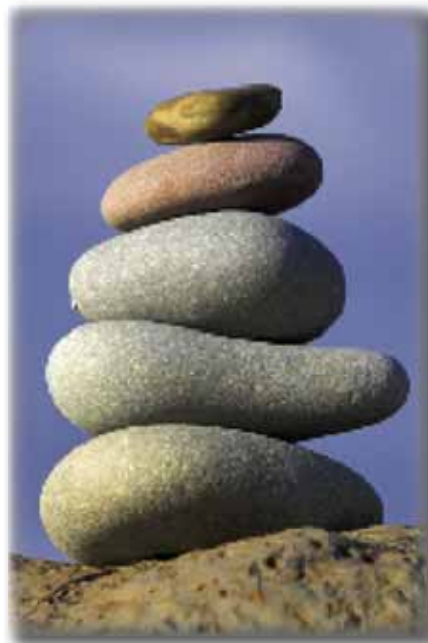
Reward Yourself: Once you get an area completed (and I recommend that you finish one area before moving on to the next), give yourself a reward! Take a soothing bath, go out and play, or relax in the area you just made beautiful. Whatever you do, pat yourself on the back for a job well-done.

Hire Help: Take an honest look at the job to be done and your situation's limitations, if the task of organizing, cleaning and decorating seems like too much for you to do on your own, consider hiring someone to help you with some or all of the job. A professional cleaning service, a gardener, professional organizer, or a decorator might be just what you need. If you have the means, you might

want to explore this option; the initial money you invest may be worth the time, money and stress you will save by having a more orderly home.

Gardening Tips: Don't forget the outside of your home! Having a beautiful yard gives you a wonderful welcome when you first come home, provides a beautiful view from your windows, and keeps you in touch with nature.

Getting things in order will make you feel great. Keeping them in order is also very important.



Too many people spend money they haven't earned, to buy things they don't want, to impress people they don't like.
- Will Rogers

Stop Procrastinating Now

What can you do to accomplish more of what you want to do? Here are some immediate suggestions:

- Choose the easiest place to start. You don't always have to start at the beginning. If that first step seems too hard, start with another part of the project instead.
- Fix your workspace. If your set-up is not convenient, it will definitely hold you back.
- Work from your to-do list. Tackle the more difficult tasks during your prime time.
- Be realistic about what you can do. The more realistic you become, the less likely you'll be to procrastinate.
- Use the minutes available to you. Remember that even five minutes is enough time to get something done. One or two phone calls or more can be returned in that time.
- Reward yourself. After you meet small deadlines, promise yourself a small treat. When the entire project is completed, think on a little grander scale.
- Create more time. If it seems like there really is no time, carve out a half hour or so from your existing schedule. Try getting up a half hour earlier each day. If you want to do it, you'll find the time.
- Get started. The hardest part is getting started. Once you're in motion, it will be easier to keep going. You may find that it isn't as bad as you expected, and once you're involved, you've overcome the highest hurdle.

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Free Your Space

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homes. Beauty in small spaces is the appreciation of minimalism, where less truly is more.

Conserved Energy - Fewer belongings means we have fewer possessions to worry about.

Free Your Space - When we are reminded of something we own but never use, we can impose self-inflicted guilt for leaving it unused. This guilt eats away at our inner, mental space. Our outer world is a reflection of our inner world. By cleaning out and simplifying our outer space, our inner space will open up like a flower.

Appreciation - The less we have, the more attention we can give those things we own and truly need on a regular basis. Appreciation is the seed for abundance; abundance of the mind and the soul. It's pretty amazing how little we actually need. When we clear our homes and our lives down to the essentials, we are able to better enjoy that which we do have.



Nothing external to us can give us permanent and true happiness. We actually have all we need to be truly happy within us.

Save Water- Save Life

Water is the most abundant molecule on Earth's surface. It is the most essential element to our survival, next to air. Water truly is everywhere, still most take it for granted. Here are a few water saving tips to live by.

Contrary to popular belief, it's almost never necessary to use the normal setting on a dishwasher or to rinse plates beforehand. The light-wash setting cleans just as well while reducing water use up to 55 percent.

People are smarter than automatic sprinklers: Watering with a hose is at least twice as efficient as using a sprinkler, and watering the lawn in the early morning or evening can save the typical home owner 87 gallons a week. If you irrigate in the middle of the day, evaporation prevents 14 percent of the water from reaching the plants' roots. Take time in the morning or evening to water your lawn and commune with nature, it will also help quiet your busy mind.

Buying a daily bottle of water parches the planet. Each one-liter plastic bottle takes seven liters of water to produce.

Buy recycled paper products. Products made from 100% recycled paper require much less water in their manufacturing than do those made from virgin paper.

Brushing your teeth seems like a quick job, but before you know it, 4 gallons of water may have gone down the drain. Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth, it will save 2,880 gallons of water a year. You can also install a low-flow shower head. They cut water use in half. A five minute shower using this type of shower head, would save enough water in a year to fill a 15 foot pool. Plus, you save all the energy that would have gone into heating the shower water.

Faucets account for 15 percent of indoor water use and typically flow at twice the rate they should. Installing aerators in kitchen and bathroom sinks fixes this problem for only a dollar or two per sink.



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Now and then it's good to pause in our pursuit of happiness and just be happy.
- Guillaume Apollinaire

Improve Your Mood

Being happier doesn't have to be a long-term ambition. You can start right now. In the next 30 minutes, tackle as many of the following suggestions as possible. Not only will these tasks themselves increase your happiness, but the mere fact that you've achieved some concrete goals will boost your mood.

- Raise your activity level to pump up your energy. If you're on the phone, stand up and pace. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Put more energy into your voice. Take a brisk 10 minute walk. Even better...
- Take a walk outside. Research suggests that light stimulates brain chemicals that improve mood.
- Reach out. Send an e-mail to a friend you haven't seen in a while, or reach out to someone new. Having close bonds with other people is one of the most important keys to happiness. When you act in a friendly way, not only will others feel more friendly toward you, but you'll also strengthen your feelings of friendliness for other people.
- Rid yourself of a nagging task. Deal with that insurance problem, purchase something you need, or make that long-postponed appointment with the dentist. Crossing an irksome chore off your to-do list will give you a feeling of satisfaction.
- Create a more serene environment. Outer order contributes to inner peace, so spend some time organizing bills and tackling the piles in the kitchen. A large stack of little tasks can feel overwhelming, but often just a few minutes of work can make a sizable dent.
- Do a good deed. Introduce two people by e-mail, take a minute to pass along useful information, or deliver some gratifying praise.
- Act happy. Fake it 'til you feel it. Research shows that even an artificially induced smile boosts your mood. And if you're smiling, other people will perceive you as being friendlier and more approachable.
- Learn something new. Think of a subject that you wish you knew more about and spend 15 minutes on the Internet reading about it, or go to a bookstore and buy a book about it. Pick a topic that really interests you, not something you think you "should" or "need to" learn about.

Some people worry that wanting to be happier is a selfish goal, but in fact, research shows that happier people are more sociable, likable, healthy, and productive; and they're more inclined to help other people. By working to boost your own happiness, you're making other people happier, too.

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant, they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.



In your life do you know what is necessary and what is unnecessary? Do you need all the things you think you need? Do you need to do all the things you think you need to do?

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