

“Less Is More”

10 Tips To Create A Simpler Life

By Monica Ricci

You were born a simple being. You came into this world with nothing, but as you grew, you began to attract more "stuff" and chaos into your life. However, there is hope for you! You can get back to a simpler life as an adult but you must actively choose simplicity and make changes to achieve it. Here are ten ways to create simplicity in your life:

1. Identify what is causing chaos in your life.

Is it too many activities, too many "voluntary obligations," too many priorities, too much debt, toxic relationships, too much clutter in your home or workplace...all these things can be raising your chaos level. The first step is to *identify* what is adding chaos, which is NOT adding a significant amount of joy, happiness or value to your life.

2. Scale down your possessions.

Every single thing you own, from your three toothbrushes to the four winter coats to the shoeboxes you're saving "just in case" takes something from you. It costs you time and energy out of your life because it all has to be maintained, stored, cleaned, moved or sorted through at some point. Plus, it takes up physical and mental space. Everything you own also owns a little piece of you, so now is the time to start parting with all those things that don't bring you joy or value. You will be giving yourself the gift of more energy and space and if you donate your used possessions to charitable organizations, you'll be helping those who truly are in need.

3. Shop wisely.

Remember that everything you bring into your home takes energy and space. Evaluate carefully while you're at the store what you're buying and why. Visualize yourself bringing it home, finding a place to keep it, maintaining it, and then selling it off at a garage sale in a few years for a fraction of what you paid for it. If you still want it, and can think of a real use for it, it's probably a valid purchase.

4. Turn off the television.

The average American watches in excess of 20 hours of television per week. With this in mind, turn off the T.V. one night a week to have quiet time to yourself or with your family. Don't worry...the news will continue to happen even if you're not watching it!

5. Cut your hair.

Sound silly? How much time, effort and aggravation is it to deal with your hair every day? If your hair is high maintenance, consider a new style that will take less time and effort. Any stylist worth his/her salt will be able to give you a hair design which will fit your face and hair type and will still be easy to live with.

6. Evaluate your time commitments.

Look at how much time and energy you're spending on activities, organizations, clubs, social groups, etc. Really evaluate how much value or joy they give you in relation to what you invest. If you find that some have outlived their benefit or aren't making you happy anymore, just stop spending your time there. You'll then have more time for the ones you do enjoy.

7. Take a stand at the holidays.

I know people who dread the holidays because of the tremendous stress involved. If it's the gift-giving tradition that causes you stress, one way to help is to have a policy that you will abide by. The best part is, you get to decide what that policy will be. It may be no gifts for anyone, yourself included, Pollyanna name trading, buying gifts for needy children instead of each other, a spending limit per person, or whatever you come up with which will work for you. Whatever you decide, let your friends and family know well in advance of the holidays and tell them that you'll be sticking to it. They may not believe it at first, but you will reap the rewards when you find yourself enjoying the holiday season again.

8. Stop getting junk mail and phone calls.

Write the Direct Marketing Association and have your name removed from junk mail and phone lists. It only takes a few minutes but makes a marked difference in the amount of unsolicited junk you get. You can find the forms to contact the DMA at <http://www.catalystorganizing.com> or call them directly at 212.768.7277.

9. Stop spending time with toxic people.

This is a tough one, but well worth it. Refuse to spend your precious time and energy on those constantly negative people in your life. Life is short. Spend it with those who love, support, encourage and inspire you!

10. Ask for help.

Despite your efforts to simplify, things are bound to get crazy sometimes. When that happens, just ask for help. It's so easy, and the people in your life do want to help. It makes them feel needed and valued.

Simplifying your life is not about self-deprivation or living in poverty. To the contrary, it is about consciously choosing to be satisfied with less. It's about eliminating those things that are taking up your time, space and energy and giving you little in return. When you simplify, you free up a great deal of energy to enjoy your life more. Try these tips and see if you don't experience it for yourself!

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