



## Simplify, simplify.

Our life is frittered away by detail...*Simplify, simplify.*

Henry David Thoreau

Your daily life is an accumulation of routines or procedures that are all interrelated. If one system isn't working well it can affect the others. For example if you don't have a routine for paying bills or opening mail you may find yourself with piles of unopened mail cluttering your counter. Important information could be lost amongst the junk mail. In addition you may find late charges on your next credit card statement and they may raise your interest rate. That could put you in a bad mood and make it more difficult to open your mail. What a vicious circle!

Life runs more smoothly when you have *simple systems* in place. Notice I said simple. Complex approaches seldom work in the real world. *That which is simple gets used.* Once you've simplified there isn't as much to organize! Try these four tips to help you create a simpler life.

**1) Assess the goods.** "Love it or leave it" are words to live by. (*OK, useful can stay.*) Reevaluate the things you own. Experts say we only use 20% of our possessions on a regular basis. Isn't there something you could eliminate? Put it into the hands of someone who will use and appreciate it. The hidden advantage is that there is less to clean around!

**2) Become more efficient.** Stop and think about the way you do things. For example, what is the best way for you to do laundry? Should you do a load every morning to jump start your day? Or would it be easier to throw a load in at night and dry it in the morning?

Take a few minutes to think about how you could streamline your movements. Wouldn't it be more efficient if you planned all of your errands on one day? Simple things like making a list, can save you from making a second trip to the store. Business expert, Brian Tracy says that 1 minute of planning can save you nine more!


**3) Add buffers to your schedule.** Don't pack activities together too tightly. Allow extra time for traffic, weather, children searching for their hat or making a last minute trip to the bathroom. If being late is a chronic problem for you, guesstimate the time it will take and then add a few minutes. Arriving on time can reduce stress and gets your day off to a good start.

**4) "Simplify, simplify".** Find ways to make it easy on yourself:

- You don't have to answer the phone every time it rings. If you are giving the kids a bath, let voice mail or the machine get it.
- If you don't like to iron, buy permanent press.
- If you hate to vacuum, buy a Roomba [www.irobot.com](http://www.irobot.com).
- Answer email all at one sitting, instead of interrupting your work to answer messages as they come in.
- If you hate fighting the crowds, shop online or via catalogs.
- When you run errands avoid peak shopping hours.
- Consider delivery services. You can get just about anything delivered these days...groceries,

movies, office supplies, photos processed and delivered, dry cleaning picked up and returned. The list goes on and on. Investigate these possibilities so you are prepared when time is tight.

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