

MINIMALISM

for a More Focused Life



Brought to you by:

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Minimalism for a More Focused Life

Food, shelter and clothing – these are the basic necessities of life. I get that! So, where does the need for the latest iPhone – or the most up-to-date automobile – that gives you directions, or tells you the location of the nearest restaurant, bank or post office, or makes a phone call for you – factor into things?

The answer is beyond simple. The need for *more* (of anything and everything) fuels people to buy and do a wide range of *seemingly* logical things. And fact is it's a very basic part of human nature to want MORE of anything.

Some folks understand that the continuing quest for **more** only brings more “stuff” (that I could definitely write a book on!) rather than more happiness or whatever they may be searching for. Other people haven't grasped that understanding yet. For those who do, that's where minimalism comes into the picture, big time! It's a way to attain maximum happiness and freedom by being content with a heck of a lot less...of everything. What a concept!

The idea that less is more is not just an old-fashioned idea, concept or statement. It's a way of life for people who want to get back to the basics and focus on what is absolutely most important in life.

What is Minimalism?

Okay, let's get down to the basics. Society bombards us with “media-based proof” that we need to own more, appear more successful, and do more of everything extravagantly, and often far beyond our means, to “be happy and fulfilled”.

However, when we take a really close look at the bare minimum of what we actually need, we see that it's a far cry less than what we've been led to believe. We have been bamboozled by media hype to buy, buy, buy, far beyond anything we actually need...or will ever use...in ten lifetimes, far less one!

Let's be really clear here...Minimalism is so much more than simply ridding ourselves of some extra baggage, and doing more with less. It's a way of life, a foundational, grass roots way of *being*, in our home, our community, and on the planet! It's about adopting a philosophy that promotes the richest of life experiences and memories possible, rather than living for the next hot, mind-blowing, sexy (short-lived) gadget, or trying to keep up with the neighbor's fast-paced, next best thing-oriented, immediately forgettable lifestyle.

Minimalism is all about making happiness a top priority. And that can only be achieved by getting rid of the excesses in every aspect of our lives...including the things, the behaviors, and the thoughts, that own us (until we take charge and take back ownership), so we can then re-focus on whatever truly enriches our lives.

What Minimalism is Not

When you hear the word “minimalism”, what comes to mind? Do you think of living in a log cabin without electricity and living off the land? If so, you’re most definitely not alone. However this is a complete misconception...

Minimalism is not necessarily about giving up everything you own, sitting crossed-legged meditating on a Himalayan mountaintop or in a field of daisies, and foraging for, and eating berries off the bush. In fact, many minimalists have beautiful homes, fully equipped cars, rewarding careers, and families that they adore and love to spend quality time with.

Minimalism isn't about living an irresponsible lifestyle. People who have a minimalistic outlook just choose to keep things super simple by cutting out the excessive, unfulfilling responsibilities. This allows their focus to be placed intentionally on the things that matter the most. And that encompasses their attitudes, actions, and materials.

Minimalism is not about being a martyr or being complacent. It's not about giving up things for ego-driven attention, or just saying or pretending you're happy when you're a far cry from anything remotely close to happy. And it's definitely not about depriving yourself of the important things in your life, whatever those may be for you.

Does Your Stuff Own You?

Do you own your house (and everything in it), or does your house (and your “stuff”) own you? Stop everything you’re doing right now...and seriously think about this for a moment. Are you like I was until a year ago when I had an epiphany that you can’t take it with you?

Do you find yourself constantly trying to find a space to store more “stuff”...in the garage, the attic, in the guest bedroom (displacing your guests for stuff is a sad state of affairs!), and even the basement, if you have one? If so, believe me you’re not alone.

The truth is that when you own too much stuff, the stuff begins to take over your entire life. You no longer own it...It owns you! While it’s great to get a few “hot” items from time to time, it’s important to be able to distinguish between your wants and actual needs. And that begins with taking some time to identify and prioritize what’s truly most important in your life.

The less you own, the less you have to take care of and the less upkeep you are responsible for doing. For example, if you want to nourish your body with fresh whole fruits and vegetables, why waste your resources on buying a juicer? Instead buy fresh fruits and vegetables. For that matter, you could simply grow them yourself. Let me tell you...I had every piece of kitchen equipment and dining service “stuff” imaginable...and most never saw the light of day! My new philosophy...KISS: keep it simple smart! ☺

Here’s another example for you (and one I know all about as well!). Rather than buying an elliptical, or the latest greatest piece of exercise equipment, do what the healthiest, longest

living cultures in the world do...go for a walk! Even during the winter months. That refreshing cold air can do wonders for elevating your stifled psyche and for invigorating your tired body after being cooped up indoors for long periods of time. So before you waste money on that bulky piece of exercise equipment, and all of the maintenance it will require, ask yourself if you really need it to get healthy.

I just wish I had done this before I spent a ton of money on a full home gym of expensive equipment that barely got used! (You can join a gym instead of owning the equipment.) Walking is way more refreshing, mood elevating, and calming after a long day in the (home) office. Plus it's easy, fun, and requires only a decent pair of sneakers or walking shoes. And walking requires no other equipment!

Here's a question for you. And believe me, this was also me in the past! Thankfully no more! Do you find yourself buying new seasonal items before eliminating, or at least reducing, the previous season's clutter? Sometimes it just seems easier to stuff those unsuitable, actually unwanted, Christmas gifts you received, in a closet, rather than give them away to a worthy cause, or try to figure out what else to do with them, before heading out to the store to buy more supplies, i.e. "stuff!"

It happens to all of us. We tend to let the rituals of the current season take over and control how and what we do. We get caught up in doing what we feel we're "supposed to be" doing instead of what would simplify our lives in the long run. Actually, even in the short run! The result is that we feel overwhelmed and out of control. There are just too many things to organize, clean, and maintain, which results in too little time for rest, relaxation, and time with our family. It's a thankless, never-ending to-do list.

Is Minimalism Right for You?

Maybe, like myself a year ago, you have reached a crossroads in your life...and you're searching for answers to questions you never knew you had before. Or maybe you're simply looking for a way to make your life more meaningful and fulfilling. The key here is to realize that you have many options. Taking a minimalistic approach is just one of them. Is minimalism the right option for you? Here are a few primary questions commonly asked by people who choose to simplify their lives in order to ultimately have more, do more, and be more, without sacrificing the things that are most important to their happiness and wellbeing. Can you relate to any or all of these questions?

- Is there more to life than this?
- How can I spend more quality time with my family?
- Will I ever complete everything on my to-do list?
- How can I conquer my debt?
- What's my purpose in life?
- Why is my job so stressful?

- How can I find more freedom?
- What can I do to be of more service to others?
- How can I teach my children/grandchildren about character and values?

If you've asked yourself one or more of these questions, there's a good chance that the minimalistic approach will help you solve some, or all, of your problems and enable you to focus on finding purpose, happiness, fulfillment, freedom, and so much more.

Benefits of the Minimalistic Approach

Minimalism is one of the few approaches that can literally be incorporated at any stage of life and in any situation or existing lifestyle. Because of its versatility and adaptability, many people find it to be beneficial, and ultimately extremely rewarding. Minimalism can open up a whole new world of possibilities for you and it grows with you as your life changes for the better.

The benefits to simplifying your life are many, and as different as night and day, depending on your age and stage in life, your psyche, environment, family, community, you name it! In other words, the benefits will be very different for each and every person who decides to step into minimalistic living. For example, the benefits for a 60+ single woman will be totally different from those for a twenty-something, single woman, or from those of a forty-something, married man with children.

Having said that however, there are many common benefits minimalists experience as they go through each stage of life. Let's take a look at a few of the benefits derived from living a more simplistic, minimalistic lifestyle.

Gain More by Simplifying and Reducing

Imagine having a simple cell phone. That means having less data hungry features and using fewer gigabytes, which in turn, equates to more money in your pocket. And what does having more money in your pocket mean to you? It can mean many things, including fewer financial worries, working overtime a lot less often, and having the cash on hand to do the things that truly bring you joy.

Technology and its advances are great and definitely have their place. However, you can get along, and even thrive, without the latest and greatest model, with all of the extra bells and whistles most of us rarely ever fully utilize, as well as the perceived convenience. Really? Let me ask you: what's so convenient about having to "be on" 24/7? ☹

That convenience is costing you big time. It's costing you time with your family. It may very well be costing you your health, due to the constant stress of all the extra work. And your inner peace, balance and happiness are definitely suffering from NO down time during which to replenish your soul!

Just think about this for a minute! How much do you have to work to pay that cell phone bill every month? Chances are, if your cell phone bill is like mine, you're likely forking out at least \$100.00 to \$300.00 every month, especially if you have a family plan.

By minimizing that bill to simplify your life, you then make room for more enriching experiences. And, this is only one example of how being a minimalist can change your life. It's easy to do when you focus on your goals. What do you want – more "stuff" or more time, money, and joy?

Just an FYI here...for some of us who have chosen the minimalistic lifestyle, it may mean releasing everything else (and all of the related expenses), while maintaining and using our technology as a foundation for freedom to live and work anywhere in the world. And that's a personal choice...and a choice I have made for my own life!

Develop Meaningful Connections

Minimalistic practices allow you to strengthen the connections to the people in your life. Think about your use of technology as an example. Do you really need the latest game console and programs? This has been a huge challenge for me when I visit friends and they spend most of their waking hours on their damn cell phones playing some ridiculous games versus being fully present in our time together. You could get just as much or more satisfaction and happiness by playing a simple board game with your family and friends...and really connecting with them.

Now here's a scary question for you! What would happen if you only used your cell phone for emergencies? You could then pick up the home phone to contact with other friends and neighbors rather than using the cell or sending an email. When you hear someone's voice, it's easier to understand them and the meaning behind their words. Reducing and simplifying your technology use gives you the opportunity to connect in a more personal, and more meaningful, way with the people in your life.

Finding Peace

You might think that living with less would be incredibly stressful and way more complicated. All those things that you buy and use daily seem to make your life run faster and easier, right? While modern conveniences do provide some of that, there is one major thing to keep in mind – with more things comes more responsibility. However, if you keep your life simple and uncluttered, freedom will eventually follow.

So, let's get really clear here...the more you have, the more you have to take care of. Here's one great example that I've had to deal with recently. I had to follow up on my cell phone plan when the contract expired...and I didn't do it in a timely manner. Result: extra charges...that won't happen again!

Maybe you need to winterize and store your boat each year. Or you need to take another class to stay competitive at work. Or to maintain your professional credentials – whew...that one I know all too well! And what about that knocking in your car engine that needs to be diagnosed before you're left on the side of the road, again. The potential list of responsibilities, whether necessary or not, related to all of your "stuff", just keeps growing while it eats away and destroys your peace and joy with each thing (i.e. responsibility) that is added.

All these responsibilities keep you away from simply "being" and enjoying your life to the fullest. For that matter, when was the last time you actually had an opportunity to just be? How about just sitting quietly and being completely still? And here's a great question for you to contemplate! Do you always feel the need to take a vacation just so you can escape the stress of daily living? How would it feel to take a vacation simply to explore and enjoy yourself rather than taking one to get away from problems and accumulated stress?

Embracing a much simpler approach to life opens up for you the opportunity to slow down, have less, and be more. The less you have to take care of, the more freedom and peace you have!

More Time for What Matters

The more stuff you accumulate, the more you have to take care of. And in turn, the more stress and strife you have to deal with. A simpler life means little maintenance and more time for yourself, your passions, your hobbies, and your family. In other words, more time for what really matters!

More Money for More Value

The more you buy into using "the latest and greatest gadget or thing" to fill or fix that empty spot in your life (and your soul), the more money you will need, and the more money you will spend. It's time to stop throwing money into a sinking ship...i.e. all those things that don't any value to your life. When you reduce and limit your unconscious, often frivolous, spending, you will have that extra money needed to invest in the things that you truly value and that bring you happiness at the deepest place in your heart.

Being in the Moment

Minimalism teaches you how to be fully present and living in the moment. What exactly does "being fully in the moment" mean? Well simply put, being fully in the moment means that you are always completely mindful of what's happening to you, within you, and around you. Your focus is laser-centered on the here and now.

For example, say you're on a vacation with your family, and you are coming from that place of laser-focus. Your head is not filled with thoughts about what you need to take care of when you return home. All of your responsibilities have already been taken care of, and there are no more things to buy, or to do. So, that means that you have the peace of mind and undivided focus to be fully and completely present with your family.

Happy at Last

When you're coming from a minimalist mindset, most of your focus is on the things that add value to your life, the lives of your loved ones, and that make you, and them, happy. How many people do you know that are happy with what they have? More often than not, the reverse is true...You probably know more people who are afraid to do something new, or who are afraid to part with a few of their precious dollars. That debilitating fear paralyzes them and keeps them from taking the action that could add enormous value and happiness to their lives. That's definitely not what minimalism is about.

Minimalism is about truly being content with what you have in the moment that you have it.

By taking on a minimalist mindset, you train your brain to be content with where you are, and with what you have, right now!

Finding Your Purpose

Once you've opened yourself up to the idea of minimalism, you'll need to work diligently to train your, often, rebellious brain to take on the daily practices necessary to continue to have the self-discipline to follow through with it. Let's face it...nothing worth having comes without doing a little bit (or maybe a lot) of work. However, the rewards can be far beyond great.

And here's the gold nugget that results from embracing a minimalistic lifestyle! Once you take on the whole practice of minimalism and make it a habit, you will suddenly discover more time to find, and work on, ***your life's true purpose***. With good habits put into place, along with more time and even more money, the possibilities to tap into your life purpose are endless. Which is, after all, the only reason we're really here anyway!

How to Become a Minimalist

While everyone is different, as are their needs and priorities, when you embrace a minimalist lifestyle, you may want to consider incorporating the following strategies. As you progress and master each item that applies to you, keep adding another to make your life even better and more meaningful.

Eliminate Clutter

Without a doubt we can all reduce and clear away clutter, and should make a point of doing this several times a year. However, it's really important to make a commitment to stop allowing clutter to accumulate in the first place. What I've come to understand, as I've been going through the process of reducing and eliminating "stuff" in my life, is that it's a whole lot easier to keep excess items out of your life than it is to clean up the mess after they take over. And this is true of everything: from ideas to unneeded stuff, and from your virtual space to your physical space.

So where do you start? I strongly suggest clearing out the clutter in your home first. If you still have family members at home, begin by gathering everyone together and make an executive decision as to whether you're going to have a garage sale or donate the unneeded items. Next have everyone take responsibility for their own stuff. And set up some basic guidelines. For example, if you have not used it in more than six months, then out it goes. And if anything falls under the category of, "someday we might need this," it's GONE!

Here's one that was a BIG one for me! Copious amounts of wrapping paper and gift bags purchased at every "after holiday" sale that ever took place! We're talking box loads of this stuff! And where did it all go? Destroyed by major water damage during a heavy rainstorm! It would have cost a lot less money just purchasing a gift bag as needed. And a LOT less clutter! Stop holding onto "stuff." The more stuff you hold onto, the more clutter you'll have and the more cleaning you'll have to do.

Next, separate everything into specific categories: holiday items, school supplies, household goods, clothing, technical equipment, appliances, seasonal supplies, etc. Once you're all down to the bare minimum of necessities left in your life, with no extras, it's time to move on to the next step.

Get it all organized. Develop a user-friendly system of organization that works for everyone in the family. Make sure that everyone's on board. The key here is to remember that this is a new way of life for your family, not just a one-time project. Be a high integrity role model by consistently and regularly following the processes and systems you have devised in the name of ending clutter. Walk your talk...Mean what you say and say what you mean.

Whether your organizational system consists of color-coded plastic tubs or labeled cardboard boxes, getting organized is critical in achieving both immediate, and long term,

results. Once your system is in place, keep that darned clutter to a minimum by implementing the following tips for keeping yourself and your family on track.

- Be a role model and be consistent, i.e. practice what you preach.
- Set firm rules about buying things, i.e. when you buy something, get rid of something.
- Commit to being proactive, i.e. got some clutter happening? Immediately...sell it, donate it, or dump it!
- Use clutter to teach children about family values and character. (This is the subject of another book! ☺)

Goodbye Multi-Tasking...Hello Focus

While most of us have been conditioned to think that multi-tasking is a way to get more things done, it's actually the complete opposite. When you multi-task, you overload your poor, already over-worked brain. You force your mind to think about too many things at the same time. The result: chronic *STRESS!* And this eventually wears down your body, and can lead to any number of health issues. As well as major energy depletion (tired all the time!), dissatisfaction in every aspect of your life, a lack of motivation, and so much more!

Another disadvantage of multi-tasking is that none of the things you do is truly representative of your best possible work. While it may seem that you're accomplishing twice as much, you're actually only doing half the job at best. One of the goals of becoming a minimalist is to do one thing at a time. And do it well, while enjoying the process of doing it.

Think about this...how many times have you tried to make a call or check an email while doing something else? I've definitely been guilty of this. And in the process I've dropped my phone, which is very annoying to the person on the other end of the line. They feel frustrated and disrespected when not given the attention they deserve. We've all been there at some point, on both ends of that phone line! Or maybe you're late for a meeting because you were responding to a text. In other words, multi-tasking can cause us to make mistakes, and that can open the door to potentially bigger problems. Slow down, do one thing at a time. Focus on doing one task at a time and give it all you've got.

The Art of Saying No

One of the hardest, yet most rewarding, things we can learn to do is to say no. If you're like most people, including me, saying no can be very challenging in the beginning. Don't worry. It gets easier with practice.

The key is just to start by taking baby steps. For example, how many times have you said no, only to follow up with a lengthy explanation in order to soften your decision? Don't do

that. Instead, start by simply saying no without an explanation. Yes, this may be a bit scary at first. But you'll find that the more you practice this, the easier it gets, and the quicker it becomes a habit. And, guess what? When you say no to things you don't have time for, don't want, or don't need, you're actually freeing up time for the things that are most important to you. So when those opportunities do come along, you won't feel any regret because you didn't say no to something else.

Avoid Wasting Time

Let's face it we all do things that waste time. And for the most part, it's a way to avoid thinking about, or doing, things we don't agree with or don't really want to do. And here's a major potential time waster: daydreaming! Do you spend a lot of time daydreaming? No question about it: daydreaming fuels our creativity. But on the flipside, if it becomes a habit, then it's an unhealthy and excessive behavior that must be minimized, or even eliminated, in order to make room for productivity, efficiency, satisfaction, and extra available time to be used when you need it.

And here's another big one! Have you ever noticed how you get on social media, "just for a minute" and then wind up staying there for an hour? Or maybe two! Now you're way behind on that major project. What a drag! Right? So, if you absolutely must get on a social media site, here's a simple trick. Set a time limit (use a timer) and stick to it. The important point here is to limit your time on anything that has the potential to become addictive or where you're challenged to keep track of your time.

We all need time out throughout our day to recharge our battery. So when you do need a break, take 5 minutes to do some light stretching, deep breathing, meditation, a walk, or just close your eyes while listening to some relaxing music. We all get to make choices about how and where to spend our time. A great question to ask yourself: "Will this activity add value to my life?" Then choose wisely.

Examine Your Relationships

Don't be afraid to walk away from relationships that don't enhance your life. I grant you, it may not be possible to completely let go of a relationship, if this person is a family member or a co-worker. But you do have some options. Simply minimize the time you spend with these people and make sure you set very clear, firm and healthy boundaries with them.

Without question, setting clear boundaries takes a lot of practice. However, once you've established these boundaries, in time everyone knows that you say what you mean and mean what you say. No questions asked! So, if you can't eliminate negative relationships, you can at least put healthy boundaries in place and set limits. Again, by doing this, you'll free up more of your time for the things that are important to you, and that bring you the most joy. You and you alone are responsible for how you allow people to treat you and interact with you.

Take Time to Give Back

One of the many benefits derived from leading a minimalistic lifestyle is that it opens up lots of opportunities to help and give to others. According to many people I have interviewed who have adopted this new simplified way of being in the world, it has provided a greater sense of freedom and contribution. This way of life has opened them up to the sharing of more meaningful experiences, material things, time, money, happiness, and a host of other wonderful things.

Many times the primary goal may be to focus on your immediate family and close circle of friends. However, when you limit your giving to such a small group, you also limit the depth and breadth of your life experiences and opportunities. The extent to which you will grow as a person is in direct proportion to the extent of your sharing and giving in the world.

In other words, your money and time are only as valuable as how you choose to use them. If you really want to make a difference, find your purpose, or grow and become more, then it's important to broaden your concept of giving. Always be looking for opportunities to share your specific knowledge, unique experiences, hard earned wisdom, valuable time, etc.

Resist Impulse Buying

Questions immediately put our brain into processing and solution mode, and out of the impulse buying mode! So, before you buy anything, and I mean anything, get into the habit of asking yourself this one vital, yet simple, question – "Does this thing add value to my life?" Remember we're trying to clear the clutter, not add to it! You don't need more "stuff" to store in your cupboard, armoire or closet. Just because it's on sale, doesn't make buying it a good choice. Instead, walk out of the store without that extra piece of clothing, or those sexy new shoes. If you can last the week without rushing back to buy it, you obviously didn't need it to begin with.

The easiest approach is to start with small purchases. For example, a snack item that is on sale or personal hygiene products. And how many times have we stocked our freezer so full of food that we can't find what we really want to eat when we want to eat it? Then by the time we do find it, freezer burn has destroyed it! Buy only what you'll eat in a reasonable amount of time. Allow your food supply to dwindle down a bit. Use what you have first and then buy more as needed.

Save for Now

We've all heard of saving for retirement. What about saving for right now? As I was deciding to adopt the minimalistic approach to the rest of my life, I was stunned by all of the "stuff" I had accumulated! Cupboards, closets, pantry, laundry room, refrigerator, freezer and a garage full of stuff bought on sale, or "just in case" I might need it, or as the "perfect gift" for someone (soon forgotten or lost in the accumulated clutter!), or beautiful

but unwanted gifts from others. And in the end it was either thrown out, or given away, most of it never used! Thousands and thousands of dollars spent on things that never saw the light of day after arriving in my life and my home. Money that could have been invested in meaningful, rewarding, exciting, enriching adventures and experiences, instead of just a lot of extra unused stuff!

So my advise to you is to take all of that extra money that you would have wasted on unnecessary merchandise and put it into a savings account. You'll have more money for your future, and more importantly, more money for today. Take that trip with your family that you've been talking about forever, and enjoy making new memories together. It doesn't have to be an extensive trip. It can be a simple camping adventure, a day at the beach, a picnic and concert in the park, or any event that enriches your lives with more meaning and delicious memories.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this report, there was a list of questions to help you decide whether or not simplifying your life and adopting a minimalistic lifestyle is right for you. Now, you're armed with a better understanding of what minimalism is, as well as how you can incorporate a "back to basics" philosophy into your life, and what you can gain from keeping things simple.

However, there is one more question for you to answer – "Can I really meet my goals and be happy without simplifying my life?" If you answered, "yes" to this question, congratulations and more power to you! If your answer to the question is "no", you have a unique opportunity to make meaningful changes that will enable you to have, do, and be more than you ever anticipated or dreamed possible. Congratulations!

Connect with Us

If you have a question about any of the information or actions outlined in this report, we'd love to hear from you at the [Journey Of 1000 Days on Facebook](#) and also at our website where all of the video interviews will be housed (www.JourneyOf1000Days.Love). We'd love to have you join us in this budding community of people who have a passion for spreading Love, Joy, Compassion and Peace...

Journey Of 1000 Days

Announcing the ***Journey of 1000 Days***
1000 interviews in 1000 days, videotaped globally on location!

If you've been to hell, and lived to tell, after losing someone, something or everything that you thought was important to you, then you have at some point asked yourself the question: What matters now? Regardless of race, creed, color, religion or philosophy, this is a question we have all asked or will ask during our lifetime... www.JourneyOf1000Days.Love is a global peace mission. And it begins with a pre-journey throughout the US of at least 250 video interviews, followed by 1000 interviews in 1000 days around the world. All of these interviews will be housed at our Journey website, and shared throughout social media. The purpose is to bring humanity together in Peace, Love and Compassion, with the realization that we are all the same at the deepest part of our being...we are all ONE. And you can't hate, kill or drop a bomb on someone you know and love. To join us on this miraculous journey just click the link for the Journey at the top of this page (Journey Of 1000 Days). And make sure to add your own answer to the question:

What Matters Now?

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