MINIMALIST LIVING

- THE ART OF LESS -

9 ESSENTIAL THINGS TO SIMPLIFY TODAY
“Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away”

- Antoine de Saint-Exupery
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Welcome

First of all, major props.

You've just taken the first amazing step towards a more meaningful, elegant and minimalist life.

If you've ever felt stressed out and overwhelmed, then this book is for you. If you want to simplify and declutter your life, then this guide will help you.

And if you want to replace chaotic distraction with crystal clarity and zen-like focus, then the principles I'm about to reveal will act as a compass to guide you.

To put some context around the awesomeness we're about to explore, I'd like to firstly clarify what minimalism (as I see it) is not.

- Minimalism does not mean you have to throw out all your shit
- Minimalism does not mean you can't own cool stuff
- Minimalism does not mean you can't spend any money
- Minimalism does not mean you have to live a bland life

But minimalism is about stripping away all the excess, killing the noise and removing the distractions so you can focus on what truly matters.

"It is not a daily increase, but a daily decrease. Hack away at the inessentials"

- Bruce Lee

See, in today's society, modern culture is all about more.

Buy more. Own more. Get more.

Excess is where it's at, according to the marketing and advertising that bombards our brains on the daily. But let's consider the opposite for a moment; the art of less.
Let's consider living a life of quality over quantity. See, by paring your life right back down to what only you need (in order to be truly happy and content and), you lift a massive weight from your shoulders.

True freedom lies in reduction, not in accumulation.

The meaningless things you continuously collect become extensions of you. They absolutely weigh you down. And at the risk of sounding overdramatic, I genuinely believe that each insignificant possession you own is like a tiny demon on your back, restricting you and sapping your energy.

But each time you remove a meaningless object from your life, you banish that little bastard from your back forever. Minimalism is your most effective weapon in your fight for a freer and more agile existence.

And look, this isn't about me. It's about you. But I will share something personal with you real quick; and that's the amazing difference that minimalism and simplicity have made in my life.

For the record, I'm no hardcore minimalist. But by adapting a few of the simple principles I'm about to share with you, I've radically reshaped my life for the better.

I've brought an amazing sense of lightness and tranquility into my world, and you can do the same. Straight up.

By taking a few small actions in each of the 9 areas we're about to explore, I've completely transformed how I live, how I think and how I feel. A few of the amazing results I've seen have been:

- I have more space & more time for what I want to do
- I'm significantly less stressed
- I spend less money than before
- I earn more money than before
- I keep more money than before
- I own less than before
- I'm in the best physical shape of my life
- I eat right (I'm vegan)
- I've decluttered my life
- I got rid of my car
- I got rid of cable TV

These results have happened over a two year period, I didn't rush and I didn't stress. In fact, I slowed down. The key is that I started. And you must start too. Start small, but start now.

On that note, let's dive into the 9 essential things you can simplify today, to carve out your very own minimalist utopia.

Let's make your life truly extraordinary - through the power of minimalist living.
THE FIRST THING TO SIMPLIFY

Possessions
#1 Your Possessions

Tyler Durden was a minimalist. Ponder what he said in *Fight Club* as a reason to eliminate all the meaningless possessions from your life:

"The things you own end up owning you"

Each thing you own, comes with an added measure of worry, burden or upkeep. Even the smallest possessions sap your energy and restrict your space. Collectively, they soon add up to create physical clutter and mental overwhelm. Not so good.

The solution?

*Reduce.*

To start the process of meaningful reduction, you must first distinguish between what you *need* versus what you *want.*

The first question to ask is, do I really need this thing? Or am I just accumulating ‘stuff’?

Remember, ‘stuff’ comes with a cost. The more you own, the more stress, management and maintenance hassles you’ll have.

So opt for minimalism over materialism. Avoid becoming a slave to consumerism and invest in life experiences over unnecessary possessions.

"Reduce the complexity of life by eliminating the needless wants of life, and the labors of life reduce themselves"

- Edwin Way Teale

Amazing actions you can take, right now

Carry out an inventory of your possessions. For
each, ask what’s the purpose of this object? Do I need it or do I want it? If the item has no real purpose, you must donate it, give it away or throw it out. Be ruthless, the sense of freedom you’ll experience when you remove the unessentials from your life is deeply liberating.

Create a Maybe Box in your home. If you’re too scared to chuck something out because you think you might need it later, simply toss it into the Maybe Box that you’ll keep somewhere in your home in plain sight for the next two weeks. If you need it during that time, take it back out. If you don’t, say good bye forever. Nice system, one I’ve used and one that’s worked.

“All things in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful”

- William Morris

Scan or photograph all your important documents instead of keeping them in files, folders or boxes in your home. Once you’ve got them all in digital format, upload them to a secure online storage solution like P Cloud or Google Drive. Then toss the originals, confident in the knowledge that everything is safely backed up and available in the cloud.

If you’re feeling extra ambitious, you can also extend this to include all those sentimental documents - cards, notes letters - that you have hoarded away.

Digitise them, back them up and discard the physical versions. I know this might seem ruthless, but how often do you take them out to look at them and how healthy is this anyway? Besides, you’ll have them backed up if you ever do need them.
THE SECOND THING TO SIMPLIFY

Caring About What Others Think
#2 Caring About What Others Think

Nothing complicates your life and consumes more of your precious headspace than caring about what other people think of you.

As you embark on your journey of minimalist living, you'll undoubtedly face resistance from people around you. In fact, anytime you deviate from what's considered ‘normal’ you'll face challenges from others.

But it's important to remember that ‘normal’ will never be exceptional, so always take the path less traveled.

I’ve encountered external resistance from others, usually to the things that have ended up making me the happiest of all; putting myself out there through my blog, going vegan and of course, living a more minimalist life.

From those who mock you, to people who discourage you, you’ll experience it all. But you know what? When you get resistance from others, take it as the ultimate sign that you’re on the right track. Instead of listening to the criticism and pulling back, lean into your shit even more and go harder than ever.

See, when you put yourself outside of your comfort zone you grow. But by doing this, you make others feel outside of their comfort zones. And they don't like it. They feel uncomfortable. So they sneer or judge or rationalize things by saying that you're crazy.

But you know what? Soon they'll be scrambling to catch up, because you're the one living ahead of the curve.

Amazing actions you can take, right now

This might sound a little bit out there but trust me, it works. This simple action has single handedly transformed my outlook, to point where I couldn't
give less of a fuck about what others think of me. To achieve this I've used affirmations.

Affirmations are a proven method of self-improvement that have the ability to actually rewire your brain. So how do you apply them? Well, the affirmations you choose must be positive, present tense statements about the things you wish to attract into your life.

Attaching emotion to these affirmations is important - your subconscious mind cannot differentiate between something that's vividly imagined and something that's actually happened. Here are some of my own affirmations:

This is my reality, everyone else is just a guest.

I don't care what anyone else thinks of me.

My respect and approval have to earned.

Me, and whatever I am doing, are are always the best things going on.

The key to success with these is to be consistent. To achieve this, I integrated these affirmations into a powerful morning ritual that I practice at the start of each day.

Soon these affirmations became subconsciously ingrained into my mindset and simply became part of who I am. My mind believed them to be true, so they manifested in my behaviour.

You can download my personal morning routine here, it's completely changed my life.
THE THIRD THING TO SIMPLIFY

Your Finances & Debt
#3 Your Finances & Debt

Look, it’s a simple equation;

*Earn more than you spend and save the difference.*

It’s not about how much you make, it’s about how much you get to keep.

So let’s get tough on your finances and debt. Put on your financial armour and become bulletproof with your money.

Think of money as the precious manifestation of your life’s energy. After all, you’ve traded your time, intelligence and skills in exchange for it, so don’t just squander it. Manage it.

Create a monthly plan and follow it with conviction. Put together a budget to help you spend wisely and save diligently.

When you’ve written down all of your incomings and outgoings, do as much as you can to reduce your recurring monthly costs so you can keep more of your hard earned cash for yourself, to invest and to save.

Reducing those regular monthly payments is critical to your financial well being.

Another smart move is to avoid debt like the plague. Debt eats up your money and and your freedom. Kill unnecessary debt by paying it off as quickly as possible and avoid falling back into the trap at all costs.

*“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

Every 3 months, review your expenses and cut back further on anything you can. This way, you’ll gradually
make more of your income available to keep. Here are some expenses I’ve eliminated over the last two years by doing this:

- My car (kept my wife's car, got rid of mine)
- Car insurance on one car (got rid of one car, kept one)
- Car tax on one car (got rid of one car, kept one)
- Petrol for one car (got rid of one car, kept one)
- Cable TV
- New clothes every month (much less frequently now)
- Credit card
- Daily coffee (cut it in half by making it instead of buying it in a store everyday)
- Eating out for lunch (make it instead)
- Transport costs (I cycle to work, rain or shine)
- Gym fees (I do a minimalist home workout instead)

What debt and monthly costs can you reduce or eliminate now, so that you can save that precious cash for yourself and your future?

“Nothing is yours except the essential things – air, sleep, dreams, the sea, the sky – all things tending towards the eternal or what we imagine of it”

– Cesare Pavese

Amazing actions you can take, right now

Decide to live the 'less' lifestyle (it's actually more). It's a pretty simple philosophy;

- Buy less
- Consume less
- Eat less
- Worry less
- Spend less

Guess what happens when you live the less lifestyle? You end up with more. More cash in
your pocket, more savings and more peace of mind.

Create an emergency fund. Have you ever noticed that if you’re hungry but have no food, then all you can think about is eating? Well, the same is true of money. People with money, really don’t think about it all that much. But people who have no money, can think of nothing else.

So set up an emergency fund and aim to save about $500. Once you hit this target, keep saving until you have around 3 months total living expenses squirreled away. The knowledge that you have an emergency fund will lift a weight off your shoulders and will free you up to focus your energy on other things.

Start using cash envelopes. Once you’ve finished your weekly or monthly budget, get a few envelopes. Then, for each major area of expense you’ve budgeted for, take an envelope and write the name of that expense on the front.

You might end up with one envelope labelled ‘Food’, one labelled ‘Gas’, another called ‘Car’ and so on. Next, withdraw in cash the amount you’ve budgeted for each and stuff it in the relevant envelope.

That’s it. The rule is you can only spend what’s in each envelope and no more. Plus, you’ve physically removed the money from your bank account, so it can’t be blown on anything other than its intended purpose.
The Fourth Thing to Simplify

Your Health & Fitness
#4 Your Health & Fitness

There's something I want you to do;

Commit to becoming a *fitness minimalist*.

This is probably the single most significant thing I've done in my life. Fitness is the one area that I refuse to let slide. Why? Because the stakes are so damn high.

Your body is the vehicle that you'll use for this amazing journey called life. If your vehicle is in good condition, then you'll have a wonderful experience and you'll reach your destination with ease. If not, then your journey will be difficult and you might not even get to where you need to go.

Health is *everything*. And what I call *minimalist workouts* give you all you need to keep fit without joining an expensive gym or spending hours at a time exercising. By becoming a fitness minimalist, you'll use strategic, high-intensity workouts that deliberately use a large range of muscles in short bursts of exercise.

By using minimalist workouts over past last year, I've got myself into the best shape of my life. I'm fit, healthy and have reached my natural weight. And I've achieved this without one trip to the gym and without any personal trainer.

In fact, I've achieved this using just 5 different pieces of kit that I have stored away neatly in my home. They're simple, compact, portable and super effective.

These 5 items have become my go to fitness tools for healthy minimalist living.

And most importantly, they've delivered the best weight loss and body definition results I've ever had.

Using these awesome fitness tools can help you on your path to minimalist living and a happier minimalist lifestyle.
Here they are:

- Kettlebells
- Dumbbells
- Runners
- Running Watch
- Bike

You can read more about my minimalist home workout here.

I've found this to be extremely effective but honestly, once you're exercising regularly in any form you're all good. I'm simply sharing what's worked for me. But please, commit to staying in shape.

Health is wealth my friend.

Amazing actions you can take, right now

Research and design your very own minimalist workout. Spend some time researching online to find something that you feel comfortable with.

I've recently subscribed to an app called Freeletics, that creates personal minimalist workouts for you based on your age, weight, height and fitness goals. It's a great app and a super cool way to stay motivated and in shape.

Here's a helpful article I discovered on the subject of minimalist workouts

This is another useful guide I found online.
THE FIFTH THING TO SIMPLIFY

Your Time
Ok, so we’ve already discussed how important it is to get your money right, right?

But guess what? There’s something even more valuable than your hard earned cash.

It’s your time.

You need to respect and appreciate your time, and budget it with the same focus you give to your finances. Those who manage their time intentionally will undoubtedly find themselves less stressed and less distracted. Fact.

And the key to budgeting your time is focus. Simple.

But before you can develop that zen-like lazer focus you need, you must first overcome one of the biggest obstacles standing in your way. It’s the disease called multitasking. I call it a disease because multitasking systematically kills your time.

See, somehow, we’ve convinced ourselves that multitasking is a valuable skill. This misconception is primarily perpetuated by corporate culture but also through society in general, which has mistakenly accepted multitasking as a necessary evil of modern living.

But nothing could be further from the truth.

Multitasking is destructive and it sucks.

Trying to have a conversation with someone, surfing the net on your phone and peeling an orange at the same time simply doesn’t work.

The same applies to any combination of tasks you try to complete simultaneously. You’re simply dividing your
attention and doing a shitty job on lots of things instead of tackling a single task like a champ.

I’ll say it again, stop multitasking. Learn to unitask instead. If you prioritise correctly, there’s simply no need to try and do everything at once.

So check it out. Each day, pick the two most important tasks that will deliver the most value and focus on them, one by one, start to finish, until they’re complete. Simplicity and focus will deliver much more than chaotic division of your attention and resources.

The second thing you can do to dramatically free up your time is learn to say no.

We already know that one of the core principles of simplicity is focus. For this reason, ‘no’ is the most important word you’ll ever say. Dropping the ‘n’ word is the only way you’ll keep complexity at bay. Without this, you’ll end up inheriting other people’s priorities and have no time to pursue your own dreams. Say yes if it’s important. And say no to everything else.

Amazing actions you can take, right now

Say no to all unnecessary obligations in your life. In this way, you’ll reclaim your time back from commitments that really don’t benefit you. Remember, your time is the most precious resource you have.

Stop multitasking. Focus relentlessly on the one or two tasks that will deliver you the most value each day.

Spend time alone. Get comfortable with your own company. Enjoy it and use it as time to work on your inner self. Get to know who you really are by
journaling, practicing mindfulness, meditating, being around animals – whatever works for you.

“As you simplify your life, the laws of the universe will be simpler; solitude will not be solitude, poverty will not be poverty, nor weakness weakness”

- Henry David Thoreau

Get back to nature. With the amount of information being hurled at you everyday, it’s never been more important to fully unplug. You need to regularly get away from all of the crazy shit competing for your attention.

And there’s no better way to do this than getting back to nature. Exposure to nature has been shown repeatedly to reduce stress and boost well being. So go for a walk, a run or a cycle somewhere that has trees, grass, greenery and birds singing. All that natural shit. Detox and recharge on the regular.
THE SIXTH THING TO SIMPLIFY

Your Food
#6 Your Food

If your body is the vehicle for your life's journey, then your food is the fuel you operate on. You need to fill your tank with clean energy, so your engine purrs and you run perfectly.

By simplifying your diet, your food and even how you prep what you eat you’ll garner amazing health benefits and you'll also claw back more of that most valuable of resources, your time.

The key to unlock these wonderful benefits is to eat clean. Consciously reduce the amount of processed foods you put in your body and consume as much whole foods as possible.

Eating a clean diet must become one of your priority long term simplicity goals. By eating clean now, you’ll avoid serious health complications later. Nothing makes life more difficult than health problems (think doctors, hospital appointments, expensive medication – you get the idea). Quite the opposite of simplicity. So start to eat clean now to avoid a world of pain later.

And don't worry, clean eating can be TASTY. You needn't sacrifice flavour for health. I've adapted a 100% plant based diet (I'm actually vegan) and I've never eaten such amazingly flavoursome foods in my life.

My current diet was a gradual process, so you don't need to go all in from the start. Every meal counts, so start small and build from there.

Amazing actions you can take, right now

Get your cook on. Research a healthy recipe that tickles your fancy and cook it up. Minimalist Baker is an awesome resource. Each recipe has
only a few ingredients and few steps to prepare. Clean eating doesn't get tastier.

Bulk cook. This is a great way to simplify your evenings. During the week, I cook on a Monday, a Wednesday and Friday. Each time I cook, I make enough for the following day’s lunch and dinner. This lets me cut the amount of time I spend in the kitchen in half.

Get interested. Become a student of healthy eating. Explore the benefits of whole foods and experiment with more plant based meals. Try cutting back on dairy by using yummy alternatives, like almond milk.
#7 Your Goals

We often tend to associate success and ambition with the amount we achieve and the number of goals we have. But success isn’t about quantity.

See, the success of your personal goals will be determined much more by pursuing them with a clear focus than by biting off more than you can chew (trust me, I’m speaking from experience).

Ambition is awesome, but spreading yourself too thinly across a wide range of unrealistic targets only achieves one thing; you set yourself up to fail. Soon things become frustrating and ultimately, you run the risk of burning out and quitting (the absolute nemesis of any goal).

So I propose that you take a bold new approach to your personal goal setting. Simply reduce the number of goals you’re striving to achieve, by reducing them to the one or two that will transform your life the most. Create a small number of dream goals, and resolve to conquer them no matter what.

By pursuing less but thinking bigger, you’ll have crystal clarity and renewed energy for the goals you want to achieve, plus you’ll dramatically increase your success rate too.

And remember, this approach doesn’t mean you’re lacking in ambition.

As soon as you achieve your current big goal of focus, cross it off the list and move onto the next.

Simply focus on less so you can achieve more.

Boom.
Amazing actions you can take, right now

Make a list of goals that make your soul sing. Next, prioritise them in order of their transformative impact on your life. Tackle your top two heavy-hitting goals and once complete, move the down the list. Congrats, you're now pursuing your life goals like a frikkin' champ.

Take action immediately. Before you put your list away, take one small action that will move you closer to your most important goal. It can be something as simple as a quick phone call or any other action that sets your plan in motion. Remember, never leave the site of a goal setting exercise without taking at least one immediate action, no matter how small. Continue this daily. Again, it doesn't matter how small of an action you take, once you do something everyday.

Remember, no progress is bad progress, so make a commitment to take daily action on the goal that will have the single biggest impact on your life.

You'll be astonished by how much this simple approach will move you towards your goals rapidly and effectively.

Read my article called How To Set You Life Goals In 7 Easy Steps

Download my free guide on Renegade Goal Setting For The Modern Day Maverick
THE EIGHTH THING TO SIMPLIFY

Your Tech
#8 Your Tech

Do you check your phone 150 times a day? Has it become a compulsive habit? Do hit refresh on your emails constantly for no particular reason? Do you scroll aimlessly through your Facebook feed without knowing why?

If you've answered yes to any of these questions, then welcome to the club buddy.

Having every piece of information in human history instantly available at your fingertips is probably the single biggest blessing of our time.

But on the flip side, having access to the equally astounding amount of useless and even toxic information that comes wrapped up with it is likely the biggest curse.

So the trick is to find a balance. Use technology, but use it mindfully. Align it fully with your minimalist lifestyle and your personal goals. Use it to simplify your existence, not to add another layer of noise and complexity.

Amazing actions you can take, right now

Become *mindful* by observing how you use technology. Simply notice your patterns, how much time you spend and how useful your use of tech is. Do you check your phone for no reason? How much time do you spend on social media? How much are you learning when you use your devices? Are you using apps and tech to simplify tasks or to distract yourself? Once you take stock, you can address any issues.

Stop being available 24 x 7. I recently set an autoresponder on my email to run every day. It
simply says that 'I'll check emails at 9am and again at 4pm. If it's super urgent, call me or come speak to me'. You know what? Nothing seems to be that urgent and I now just check emails twice a day. How can you reduce your online availability so you can create more space in your day?

THE NINTH THING TO SIMPLIFY

Your Downtime
#9 Your Downtime

Your downtime is the precious time you’ve got left to enjoy life and to spend as you wish, after all your other obligations are taken care of.

Through your downtime you can experience the world and all it has to offer, with the people you love.

With this in mind, let’s explore another radical concept; one that has the power to give you back more time for yourself.

The concept I’m talking about is called *life outsourcing*.

Living in this wonderful era of technology and innovation means it’s never been easier for you to outsource a lot of the drudge work that consumes your time.

There are countless smart online services you can use to delegate menial tasks that eat into your valuable downtime.

Most involve a small cost (yes, you have to pay somebody to do that stuff), but as a busy professional, you’ve got to weigh this cost up against the benefit.

Do you wish to spend your downtime grappling to complete mundane tasks, or would you prefer to be enjoying life, relaxing or working on personal projects?

If you can afford it, I highly recommend outsourcing some of your life’s unfulfilling chores. With the internet at your can do this easily with a few clicks.

See, with life outsourcing you treat your life like an *enterprise*. You make choices about your personal time using the same logic you’d use to run a business.
For example, when a company outsources to an external service provider, they incur a cost. However, they often save money back on other overheads, utilities and the like. The same applies to outsourcing your life too.

For example delegating your grocery shopping (or doing it online and having it delivered) means less use of your car and less petrol. Plus, you get back that precious time.

Outsourcing your laundry means less use of water, detergent and electricity.

Hiring a cleaner for your home means a tidier living environment without spending hours of your spare time cleaning.

You get the picture, right?

So weigh up the cost of these services against the valuable time you'll get back and the exciting ways you'll spend your new found freedom.

Amazing actions you can take, right now

Outsource menial tasks to free up your time. Weigh the cost associated with each against the freedom you'll get back and how you'll use this precious time you've reclaimed. If it makes sense, go for it. Or at least try it out. Some things you can outsource:

Online admin work - hire a virtual PA that can organise your calendar, post blogs, input data, type reports, make appointments, research subjects you need info on, send emails on your behalf. You'll be surprised how much time this might free up.

House work - hire a cleaner. Grocery shopping - use online shopping with a grocery delivery.
Wake up earlier and go to bed earlier (I get up at 4.30am whenever I have an exciting personal project I want to concentrate on).

Turn off the tv. Carefully monitor how much of your precious downtime you spend watching tv. Instead of passively watching things on tv, go out and really experience them in your own life.

Put the phone down. Make a 'no screen' rule. No screens (tv, phone or tablet) for certain chunks of the day that you want to reclaim. Apply the ‘no screen’ rule with extra vigour for the last hour before bed. This will help you unwind and get a better night’s sleep.

Discover what you love and do it more.
Conclusion

“This consumption society has made us feel that happiness lies in having things, and has failed to teach us the happiness of not having things”

- Elise Boulding

As you embark on your quest for an elegant, beautiful and simple existence, I hope you can take with you some of the big ideas put forward in this book. If you apply even one thing from this to your life, it will make the time I’ve spent creating it more than worth while.

Remember, once you discover that all you really want is only that what you need, true happiness will soon follow.

Our souls are not hungry for material possessions. That’s why once we ‘get’ something we believed we wanted, it soon becomes old and uninteresting, and we move onto the next ‘thing’.

What our soul really needs is a life of meaning, filled with profound and amazing experiences.

So my final advice to you is opt for nourishing life experiences over material possessions at every opportunity.

Live life as the powerful being you truly are.

And most importantly, enjoy yourself.

Your friend,

Keith

RedesignMyExistence.com