



Living the Simple Life: A Guide to Scaling Down and Enjoying More

Elaine St. James

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If you've thought about simplifying, but don't know where to begin, LIVING THE SIMPLE LIFE is the blueprint you need. And if you've already started to simplify, it will give you new insights and ideas for what to do next on your journey to a more balanced, peaceful life.

In these pages, you'll discover how simplifying your life will:

Give you more time to play and relax

Make you more productive at work

Unleash your creativity and open up new possibilities

Free up time for you to face the challenges you've been avoiding

Scale down. Enjoy More.

Living the Simple Life: A Guide to Scaling Down and Enjoying More Details

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From Reader Review Living the Simple Life: A Guide to Scaling Down and Enjoying More for online ebook

dianne says

A simple book about living simply. Lots of common sense. Lots of repetition. Lots of suggestions that you do what you already know you should do - not a lot of new info. Maybe i am looking for a bit of analysis - why is it so hard to simplify? Why is it so hard to get down to only what one needs to live? This book is full of stuff i suspect you already know.

Perhaps it warrants 3 stars but i gleaned very little.

Tami Sparks says

I loved this book. Made me realize how much clutter we have in our lives and motivated me to start downsizing. It's so freeing! With little one to two page sections, you have the opportunity to embrace each lesson and let it sink in before going to the next.

Cheryl Sterling says

300+ pages = Get rid of your stuff. Don't do everything.

Anabel says

A book that promotes simplifying our lives, to enhance are standard of living. It broken down into several sections. Starting out with the why change to a simple lifestyle. The benefits and pluses you can gain from simplicity. Theres sections of how to simplify your life; your possessions, your consumerism, your work, etc. If your intrigued by simplicity this is a good book to read and get ideas floating to make some changes toward simplicity.

Brian Wood says

This book is worth a read but I feel like it becomes repetitive at some point and loses my attention. There are principals to simplifying that you can apply to any aspect of your life. Those are about the first 2/3 of the book. Then it begins to repeat these for different areas of your life.

Caroline says

it's hard to enjoy scaling down unless your significant other does so, too

Megan says

a bit dated, good advice, good pointers

Elizabeth says

Basically, this book is hysterical. Best read as a satire, particularly if you are very, very poor and/or don't give a shit and are a normal person.

Some suggested ways to simplify your life:

Stop making your bed

Stop doing your laundry

Get rid of the car phone (even though the price has dropped below \$500!)

Get rid of all phones

Don't answer any phone for any reason

(the Internet is not mentioned once, so no worries about that)

Don't answer the door for any reason

Dump your friends

Hang out alone, doing nothing, silently

You're going to look horrible no matter what you wear, so dress like a man, because it's 1997 and women are still having to choose between "double or single breasted blazers, droopy or puffy shoulders or peplum."

(What is peplum?!)

Make a spreadsheet organizing your weekly shopping organized according to the aisle where it's located in the grocery store, print out a couple dozen copies, and use that for your shopping

Instead of houseplants, just go to the Botanic Gardens

Never let your pet outside for any reason

(Maybe just don't go outside at all either)

Live within walking distance of the beach and mountains

Only spend 10 minutes doing your makeup

Stop going out for expensive multi-course dinners every single night

Stop going to any cultural event, including cabaret's

Instead of watching TV read your favorite plays aloud

Take a cold shower instead of going shopping....

Mildly surprised she didn't suggest killing your spouse and children, as prison is ultimately the most clutter free, simplistic lifestyle choice out there.

Elaine St. Jaimes. I don't know what Gibbs does, or how you afford your insane lifestyle where you can afford to cutoff all human contact or sources of information and still live affluently within walking distance to the ocean. It's been 20 years since you wrote this book, and it's aged well. Remarkably well. Like a time capsule of the crazed yupsters of yore. Loved it!

Adrian says

I'd say the book is slightly dated. I tabbed a few pages to go back to though. Quick read.

Kami Weeks says

I know this author is considered to be very dated by new minimalists; but, I feel she really started the movement back in the 1990s. I have kept three of her books on my shelf for many, many years; and, I find myself referring to them often.

Manzoid says

"Living the Simple Life" is an expansion on "Simplify Your Life", written 2 years earlier. Compared to that book, which reads like a laundry list of tips on cutting down on laundry, this one is more reflective. It has fewer bite-sized "tips", and more thoughtful, open-ended suggestions. I found its tone still gratingly 'yuppy' in places (e.g., "i can't help having an emotional attachment to my BMW"), still 'Martha Stewarty' in others (e.g., yet more discussion of linens) but these were less frequent than before.

"Living the Simple Life" appears to be aimed at those who simply are over-burdened and want off the rat-wheel to have more time for families and hobbies. This is fine insofar as it goes, but I'd have given 4 stars if there had been any mention of the simple life as a route back to a life of community, how the simplicity movement relates to a larger yearning for a healthy society. Many see the simplification movement as vital to maintaining a healthy human presence on the planet, since our atomized, resource-gobbling, materialistic society is transforming into a less livable place in many ways. Lowering our consumption and getting in touch with each other and our roots seem like a natural, healthy response. However this connection either simply did not occur to the author, or it was edited out. There was a brief passage on having time to volunteer, but the other 340 pages were about personal goal-setting, time management, motivation, self-assertion, and other mechanics of simplifying. Personally I think not mentioning the larger implications of the act of simplification, i.e., beyond one's personal gain, made the book a bit shallow, although it's still much better than its predecessor.

Sarah says

A quick read, and a lovely one. I can only assume that I'm enamored with the idea of simplicity because it's been evading me for so long. Like, my entire life. I am an anxious, hectic person by nature (and probably some nurture...) and I envy those who've somehow managed to clear their lives of the extraneous junk we as a society have inanely convinced ourselves is necessary— or admirable, even.

Slow and steady, and with the help of books like this, I am consciously making my way to zen and quiet and simplicity. I don't know if I'll ever get there (as if there were a "there" to get to), but I'm at least making some room in my closet along the way. Trust the process, right?

Either way, you should read this short little book and make some room in your life. A bit of clear and quiet is bound to do us all some good.

Puffling says

It's dated enough that a lot of it isn't applicable. But the basics are there: think about what you want your life to look like, and here are some practical steps to make that happen.

A few ideas I liked:

- multiple identical pairs of socks coming out of a mesh bag, then into a mesh "dirty" bag for laundering - all your socks are accounted for at all times
 - being aware of the physiological triggers when the urge to buy something strikes you
 - taking breaks from social engagements and just saying no to everything
-

Lisa says

It was nice to see that I am already doing many of the ideas presented in the book. I think that the author goes overboard a bit, but I think it's always good to be reminded to simplify! In the future, I would like to have all of my clothes be the same style so I don't spend so much time figuring out what to wear.

Darla says

Pulling this book off of my bookshelf the other day reminded me of just how long I have been "meaning" to simplify my life- I bought St. James' book almost FOUR years ago (and a slew of similar ones 8 years before that!). Sadly, until this past December/ January, I had done next to nothing to incorporate the ideas and suggestions the authors in this genre have recommended! Twelve years of accumulating various books in my desire to declutter my life- very sad!

At this point in time, rereading St. James' words are showing me just how ready I am to start accepting the rules of scaling back in ALL areas, and I have very recently taken a huge leap into the middle of doing so (just see my Facebook page for the picture upon picture of things that have been forced from my home by way of Goodwill or trashman in the last 45 days!).

St. James' take on the whole concept of simplifying is worth the time to read. She adds to the genre by doing well to keep her words at a minimum while maximizing the personal and specific nature of her ideas. Running the gambit from removing excess belongings to time management to family life and spending habits, St. James seeks to alter our ideas regarding what constitutes a fulfilling life. Because she is older than the past and current authors I have read in this line, her words have a weight that is deeper and resounds with the maturity of one who has lived a full and very busy life; she's "been there, done that," and it shows. The best part of St. James' writing- she's not preaching at readers. What she is doing, however, is offering a helping hand. From my own experience I will say this book will be a good starting point for readers wanting to simplify, but as with all "self-helps"- only as long as you are truly ready to step into such a life with both feet and eyes wide open.

** On a personal note, chapter 25 was the lightning bolt I needed at this particular moment. It is entitled "Stop Feeding Your Ego." In this poignant section, St. James describes how the opportunity she once had to write book reviews for a major book club went from being an honor and a privilege to being pure drudgery whose payoff wasn't worth the effort. When she finally accepted that it was her ego that kept her writing for the book club more than the joy of doing the column itself, she realized it was time to move on.

I know how she feels. Writing reviews for Meridian started out as an (unpaid) honor and an (unpaid) privilege- after all, I was just marrying two things I love to do: spouting off my opinions, I mean writing, and reading. But as life changed from where I was when I started my book review column, it got to where the love of writing and reading wasn't enough to sustain my efforts.

Last spring, I really thought all I needed was a little break and I would get back to writing soon (I mean it is pretty cool to say, "My column..." or "I write a monthly column for..."). Yet, it has been 9 months since I put My Column on hold, and absence isn't making my heart grow fonder of anything but the time I have to do something other than read out of obligation and pray for the inspiration I need to write well, write quickly, and be witty without being tiresome or repetitive. Maybe you've noticed, even my Goodreads' reviews have gotten pretty slim!

I'm rather liking the time I have to read whatever I want just for the "heckuvit"- or heaven forbid, not reading at all. I like not having write in my head, as I read every word and every chapter, trying to form a column worthy of publication.

Seasons change, but I can't tell if I'm in winter or spring :) Thank you for the confirmation, Elaine!
