

Simplify Your Life and Discover Greater Happiness

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How much does it take to be happy? Americans have more than just about any other society in the world, yet we are far from the happiest country, based on surveys.

Clearly, owning a lot of stuff isn't the key to happiness. However, we're programmed to believe that we need to continuously upgrade our lifestyle. Until your perspective changes, it will be challenging to find the happiness you seek.

Consider these ideas and you'll see how easy it is to be happier with less:

- 1. Has buying something ever made you happier?** Think of all the things you've wanted and ultimately acquired. After the initial rush wore off after you purchased the item, were you any happier?
 - You can't buy your way to happiness. **In fact, accumulating stuff tends to create stress.**
- 2. Start by getting rid of the things you don't need.** A great first step is to sell, give away, or throw out the stuff you don't need. Pick a room and be honest with yourself. It might be hard at first to let go of the fondue pot you last used six years ago, but you'll feel great about having more free space.
- 3. Less stuff means more free time.** When you own fewer things, you have more free time to use as you please. When you own more than you need, you're constantly maintaining, moving, dusting, or cleaning those items.

- You have to move the stuff in the garage around just to get to your mower.
- You never seem to have enough room in your dresser or closet, yet you “have nothing to wear.”

4. **Fewer obligations mean more free time.** Simplifying your life by eliminating unnecessary obligations will also give you more free time. Work on simplifying your obligations. **Your time is your most important resource.** How are you spending it?

5. **Understand the motivation of marketers and media.** TV movies, radio, and most websites primarily exist to make money.

- Every ad you face is an attempt to get you to buy something. The primary way this is accomplished is by convincing you that you need it, even if you don't.
- Think of them this way: every ad and commercial are trying to separate you from your money. They'll do just about anything to get you to buy something.
- Understanding this will allow you to be happier with less.

6. **The desire for more is never-ending.** You might think you'll finally be satisfied with a 4,000 square-foot home, but you'll eventually want a bigger one. Owning a pool might be your dream, but once that urge is satisfied, a new desire will take its place.

- This is human nature. Recognize that you'll always want more, but also recognize that it's a trap. **It doesn't matter how much you accumulate;**

you'll always be left feeling the same way in the end. You can prove this to yourself by examining your past.

How much do you own? How much of your time is currently spoken for? **Do you believe that having and doing even more will bring you greater happiness?**

Give yourself a chance to experience a simple life and see for yourself!

Start by removing all the unneeded items from one room and get them out of your house. Also, drop one commitment that isn't adding to your life. Ensure that you're using that free time wisely. Then, evaluate after a few weeks. Do you feel better or worse?

If you've climbed the ladder of success and still feel like something is missing, try living with less in your life!