

W O R K B O O K

SIMPLIFY  
YOUR LIFE IN AN  
AFTERNOON

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

- Henry David Thoreau

# *The Philosophy Of Simple*

## **FIRST OFF: RELAX.**

This is not one of those self-improvement projects where someone very enlightened tells you exactly what to do to fix your life - handing you yet another list of things to feel guilty about not doing.

No, this is meant to be a fun little project where you get to do something tangible to simplify your life as well as doing something enjoyable to relax and nourish yourself afterwards.

Since I know that you already have about 237.48 exciting projects going alongside tonight's dinner that needs to be figured out, the activities in this workbook are no more than baby steps.

Because quick wins actually matter. Baby steps like the ones we are about to take are the very foundation of any big change we could make in our lives. This is true when it comes to simplifying as well as growing your business or starting to exercise regularly.

If I were to hand you yet another "102 steps to become a more productive human ASAP"-checklist ("If you prioritized correctly you could fit this into your calendar, no problem!" says excited personal development guru), I wouldn't be doing a good job.

Behavior change doesn't work like that.

Big changes can be paralyzing, but in the end they are nothing but a series of small steps taken on a lot of different days until you're there.

Baby steps are our sanity's best friend as well as a sound technique for behavior change (excuse me while I go geek out with one of my psychology books).

Now that we've talked about the philosophy behind this little workbook, let's look at what we're going to spend this lovely afternoon doing.

# This Afternoon

Topics:

1. PRACTICAL SIMPLIFYING
2. SIMPLE LUXURIES

The idea of this little workshop is to do something practical to simplify your life and to have a moment of sweet me-time afterwards.

The reason I've included some mandatory me-time in our little plan is that our lives won't start to feel more easeful, spacious and content if we don't give ourselves permission to do **enjoyable** things. Now. Before we get "there".

If you were to declutter and simplify your life perfectly and then went on to fill your newfound time with chores again, it'll be a better running system that still has you waking up with anxiety in your chest every morning.

To help you get started on your journey to simplifying your life I've put together an afternoon of simple and enjoyable activities.

Here's what we have on the menu for today:

*Simplified Wardrobe*

*Simplified Self*

*Simplified Brain Space*

*Simple Self-Care*



Each of these topics includes a simple activity that doesn't take much time, but has the potential to make a difference in how spacious your life feels in the long-term - or how good you feel right now.

Without further ado, let's simplify some things!

# Practical Simplifying

1. SIMPLIFIED WARDROBE
2. SIMPLIFIED SELF

*“We women have a lot to learn about simplifying our lives. We have to decide what is important and then move along at a pace that is comfortable for us. We have to develop the maturity to stop trying to prove something. We have to learn to be content with what we are.”*

- Marjorie Pay Hinckley

# Turn Your Clothes Hangers

*One of the best ways to simplify is to declutter the stuff around you. The closet is usually one of the first thing people tackle, and a worthy place to put our attention. Since a full wardrobe declutter is usually be a scary big project, you'll do something small that will help you lay the foundation for creation space in your closet.*

We want to declutter our closet based on what we're actually wearing: Those things can stay, because we either need or love them (ideally, both!). A simple tool to diagnose which of your clothes you're actually using is to turn all your clothes hangers the wrong way around,

In three or six months you can open up your closet again and check which clothes haven't been touched at all.

That's usually a good sign that letting go of them won't hurt. It'll also give you interesting insights into which clothes you're reaching for regularly. Do you actually like them or do you reach for them out of comfort or due to lack of alternatives?

There's this rule called the 80/20 principle which states that 80% of our outfits are made up of 20% of our clothes.

Meaning that if you'd just focus on your favorite 20% and started decluttering the rest, you'd still get to have the same amount of diversity and stable outfit combinations that you have right now with all the "fluff" clothes taking up space.

So go ahead, turn your hangers around and you'll have taken the first step to lighten up your wardrobe and simplify getting dressed (and doing laundry).

## **YOUR MISSION:**

*Turn all your clothes hangers the wrong way around.*

# Declutter Your Fantasy Self

*Sometimes we buy things because we wish we were the kind of person who'd actually need and use them.*

Have you ever bought a cake pop baking tray because you told yourself you'd become one of those women who always has delicious cake ready when visitors pop in unexpectedly? Or maybe you've bought some exercise equipment swearing that you'd use it every day?

*These items belong to our Fantasy Self, not to us.*

I first heard about this concept from The Messy Minimalist, a mother with a dry sense of humor who declutters her big, messy house and shares her journey on youtube.

The Fantasy Self is a brilliant concept, because labeling those certain items as Fantasy Self items makes it suddenly easy to part ways with them. When you realize that you didn't buy them for yourself, you bought them to try and be more like, say, someone who's interested in making cherry jam.

Using this idea I've been able to let go of some DIY stuff I hadn't used in five years, an old quill, and some beautiful heels. I admitted to myself that these items belonged to Fantasy Iris, not Real Iris.

Have you ever noticed that some items in your home possess this amazing ability to make you feel guilty every time you look at them? They are reminders of the things we "never get around to" - oftentimes, they are Fantasy Self items.

So to get practical and start decluttering your Fantasy Self, jot down three guilt-loaded items that come to mind. You could also go into your junk room and have a look around for inspiration.

## **Your Mission:**

*Pick one Fantasy Self item and get rid of it.*

*Well done!*

Now that you've taken these two baby steps to make your life feel more spacious by getting rid of stuff that drains your energy, let's move on to the fun part where we fill your life with some enjoyable little luxuries. In this case, me-time!

*"The question of what you want to own is actually the question of how you want to live your life."*

- Marie Kondō



# *Simple Luxuries*

- 1. SIMPLIFIED BRAIN SPACE**
- 2. SIMPLE SELF-CARE**

*“My goal is no longer to get more done, but  
rather to have less to do.”*

- Francine Jay

# Simple Self-Care

*For a lot of my coaching clients, having some me-time to do something they absolutely love feels slightly dangerous. Having a bubble bath or going for a walk can seem preposterous when you're trying to be a productive human being.*

Despite our high standards we can't be productive around the clock so most of us sneak in little breaks during the day to relax. Since we don't consciously take these breaks (because we should be working harder), these breaks often look something like playing a game on Facebook or other 'numbing out' activities that don't require our brain.

Most of the time, these activities don't feel particularly pleasurable. Their purpose is not so much to rejuvenate us, but to numb out and escape our own inner critic ("It's 11 am in the morning and every proper adult is working right now, you don't need a break!") rather than a rejuvenating break.

Trust me when I say this: You do deserve to feel good as you go throughout your days.

Even when there is a lot to do, when you're behind on things and aren't having a perfect day.

That's why it's officially part of this workbook to take some time for a treat of me-time, to do something that feels almost forbidden and too luxurious.

*For now, give yourself permission to have some time to yourself, regardless of how productive you've been today. .*

# Write to Free Your Brain

*Writing with a pen is a great way of calming down our mind and settling into the moment. That's why I've chosen a free-flow writing exercise as part of our me-time treat.*

## What is free-flow writing?

All it means is that you write without censoring yourself, you let it all flow onto the page, however nonsensical it might be.

The benefit of this is that it's almost like decluttering your brain. You catch a lot of random thoughts and clean up behind them. Sometimes, you might even find yourself glimpsing new insights about yourself.

What you write could be profound or incredibly mundane, it doesn't matter. The practice is to let it all flow out of your pen with as little judgement as possible.

So find a good pen and your favorite notebook. Settle down somewhere comfortable and set a timer to six minutes.

Once you're done, read through your words and see how you feel.

Do you feel more relaxed or is your brain full with ideas?

If writing about a life that is spacious and full has inspired you, I've written an article on my blog about what such a life would look like for me. I've copied it onto the next page, I thought you might like it.

## YOUR WRITING PROMPT:

*"I want a life that is spacious and full"*

# *I want Spacious & Full*

I want to live a creative life, one where I follow my inspiration and fill my days with things that matter to me.

I want to spend my time intentionally and not waste it numbing out with TV and snacks because I'm exhausted by the pressure I put on myself.

I want to knit, cook, dance, write, coach, read, learn and experiment with the things I want to have in my life. Because that makes me feel alive.

I want to declutter, use less plastic, make my own washing powder and go to the farmer's market to buy fresh flowers.

I want to follow my own rhythm and give up the idea that my life has to be a straight line.

I want circles and time spent travelling in all different directions.

I want space in my calendar, because that's what creativity needs.

I want pockets of time to fill with whatever I please, so that I can LIVE my life and not just cross off a to-do list.

I want late nights with friends and wine and laughter. I want tears and "me too" moments.

I want to build a life with my boyfriend that has us look at each other with sparks in our eyes and say: "Can you believe that we're here? Is this really our life?"

I want to support women with their dreams and help them marry ambition and kindness. I want to tell them "You are enough. You are doing so much! Can you see it? Be gentle with yourself." until they believe it and can tell themselves.

I want to enjoy the little moments, the cup of tea or the summer breeze on a road trip, or the quiet satisfaction of working on what matters.

I want a full life that feels spacious.

# Tea and a Good Book

*Isn't it funny how reading fiction is one of the first things to exit our lives when we become busy? Most of my coaching clients love reading a good book, but have swapped a favorite pastime for "serious" reading, if any at all.*

The idea of sitting down with a good novel can seem almost too luxurious to be allowed on a regular Tuesday night, right?

Well, that's exactly why I have made it an official part of this workbook: Go and read! Enjoy a little hour of solitude to disappear in another person's story. I'm serious.

If you have a novel (or a few) lying around that you haven't gotten around to reading, please go and pick one of them up.

If you are currently bookless, so to speak, is there an old favorite that you haven't read in years? Dipping into it again might be enjoyable.

If you have a Kindle and are in need of a new book to read, here are three favorites that I absolutely loved:

## **"100 Days Of Solitude" by Daphne Kapsali**

A humorous book written about the author's real story of moving to a Greek island in order to prove to herself that she could be a writer and, well, actually write for 100 days.

## **"The Husband's Secret" by Liane Moriarty**

An unusual murder novel where a woman finds a letter from her husband addressed to her, only to be opened in case of his death.

## **"The Hour Glass" by Tracy Rees**

A story about a woman who looks out the window at her desk and realizes that she doesn't like her life at all. She moves to the village where her grandparents lived to reconnect with herself by the sea.

THIS WORKBOOK WAS BROUGHT TO YOU BY

*iris barzen*  
Simple Living Coach



### **ABOUT IRIS**

Iris' coaching helps women simplify their daily lives so they have more time for themselves and the work that matters to them.

Her coaching philosophy is inspired by ideas around minimalism, habit work, and the psychological knowledge she gained during her B.Sc. in Psychology.

Her laser-sharp listening skills coupled with her warmth make sure you feel seen as you decipher overwhelm and turn it into clarity.

### **A SIMPLE LIFE**

A six-month one-on-one coaching program.

Simplify your life at home. Easily prioritize and feel confident about how you spend your time. Develop kind productivity habits and let go of self-doubt & procrastination.



### **WHAT THEY SAY**

"I trust my intuition more. Instead of asking permission, I'm thinking about what feels good, feels right."

- *Krystal, creator of shabby chic furniture*

"I'm back to being excited when I wake up instead of wanting to curl up in a ball and avoid things."

- *Amy, owner of Stonybrook Design*