

Why is everything so complicated?

I want to start by saying something really important: it's not you. Not in a cheesy breakup way, but in a very real 'trust me, you are not the problem' way. Consumerist society benefits from complexity, we, as people (and consumers) do not. Ever.

You walk into a shop and can leave with a new account and a new phone and a new phone number all in the space of about 15 minutes. In order to *cancel* that account? Well, plan on closer to 15 weeks. It's hard on purpose. You're busy. They know that, and they're banking on it to keep you as a customer. I'm not saying this to say 'down with all the companies' - though I'm here for this idea if it's your jam! I'm saying this to explain that companies are great at retaining customers and complexity is one of the easiest ways they get to do this. Why do you think you can't get those great newcomer deals and prices even though the service is the same as yours? I once called a phone company and said 'I feel I'm being punished for being a long-time customer instead of a new customer' and the lovely and very frank agent on the phone said 'yeah, definitely.'

The process of wading through complexity to get to simplicity is by far the hardest part of everything we'll suggest in this book, but I promise you it will be the most worthwhile.

Simplifying your home, your possessions, your finances, your accounts, and your lifestyle will change your life. I know it did for me, for my husband, and for countless others. It can for you too.

Why simplify?

"It is always the simple that produces the marvelous." - Amelia Barr

I know there's an irony in writing a simplifying book that needs more than one big page that says 'simplify' but we really wanted to design this book as an actual guide that you can follow to help you get there instead of just aspiring. The 'why' of why we did it is very easy though - simplifying is worth it. It will make you feel freer and be able to better craft the life you want.

There will be moments when you are doing the 'hard parts' and fighting through the forced complication that was put there to keep you feeling disempowered, disenchanting, and consuming, when you will ask yourself 'will this even be worth it?'

The simple version: YES, it will be worth it.

The simpler you make your life, the less you'll have to deal with. It's really that simple (see what we did there?)

But in order to be able to have something for you to refer back to, dog ear, and stay motivated. Here are just a few examples of what simplifying did for us.

- It's so relaxing to come into and interact with a decluttered space
- Our home is now a space for peace and also gathering people and ideas but without any of the strain of 'people are coming, I have to do x,y,z.'
- So much faster and easier to clean
- Always know where things are when needed.
- Both of those as well as overall simplifying really has helped us regain so much time and energy.
- Much more peaceful mentally and also physically energized in the space.
- Deepened my yoga practice by having wide open spaces to practice in.
- We dance more - wide open spaces!

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- My family is much more intentional about gifts, knowing how important simplicity is to us. It's brought us closer together.
- Happier and healthier cats - much more open space for them to run around and much cleaner so they can't eat bits of fluff off the ground (not that they don't still try to be fair)
- Happier and healthier humans - cleaner, more fresh air, way less dust and so much mental freedom.
- Decluttering the physical spaces also had a knock on effect everywhere else. We ended up decluttering digital spaces (so cleansing and freeing). Also decluttered our projects, intentions, and finances.
- Simplifying our finances was honestly just as life changing as simplifying our home - I couldn't believe the impact. Ramit Sethi's I will teach you to be rich (jokey name but great book) is really helpful as a tool for simplified finances.
- We take many more adventures and have tried several things we had always wanted to do
- Travelling is so much simpler and lighter so we do it more
- Travelling is easier so much more time with extended family
- Overall, happier and healthier, both mentally and physically.
- Richer literally and also in experiences and relationships.
- A deep sense of peace and freedom in life in general.
- Had the mental space and time to write this book!

Ok. I'm in. How do I simplify?

"Deep and simple are far, far more important than shallow and complicated and fancy." - Fred Rogers

Welcome to the first part of what will be an amazing journey! The water is great! We have lots of specific strategies and idea for areas of life and your home in the upcoming chapters of the book but first, know that the type of simplifying that's right for you may look different than someone else so first we're visiting with some techniques on how to simplify so you can feel empowered to use any and all of these strategies as you move through the areas of your life and home that you're simplifying. You may even come up with some of your own along the way but this should get you started:

- Questions
- The Bucket Method
- The In/Out List
- The Spark of Joy
- Choosing your mistake
- Picture the people
- Just let it go