
Welcome to SIMPLICITY AND SUCCESS™ — THE E-ZINE
A Newsletter About Creating What Matters Most in Life & Work
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<http://www.BruceElkin.com>

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*NOTE: I've expanded my coaching practice to accomodate more distance clients. I now have space for four more clients. If you'd like a copy of my information sheet describing my basic Coaching For Results package, please call or e-mail soon, as these spaces fill quickly.
— Bruce

WELCOME!

Thank you all for forwarding the newsletter to friends and colleagues. Your help is essential and MUCH appreciated. We now have 1137 members who regularly receive this newsletter. The more members we have, the more likely the newsletter is to survive. Please keep forwarding the newsletter to those who might value it. Thank you!

I continue to receive great feedback on my book SIMPLICITY AND SUCCESS: CREATING THE LIFE YOU LONG FOR. I recently appeared on two local television shows and spent an hour answering listener's questions on the CBC'S Almanac Show out of Vancouver, BC. The buzz is beginning to grow and you can help.

Please call your local library and bookstores. Ask them if they have copies of Simplicity and Success. If not, ask them if they will stock it. You don't have to order one for yourself, just ask them to bring the book in so that others may benefit. In Canada the book is available through Dempsey Distributors. In the US, it's available through Baker and Taylor, or Trafford Publishers. Thanks so much for your help.

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QUICK TAKE: Goal Setting That Works!
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Well, we're a couple of weeks into the New Year. How are you doing with your resolutions? A national quit smoking program quotes research that shows there's two key times when people give up resolutions such as to quit smoking. In the first week or two and six weeks later.

I've found that quitting anything -- smoking, drinking, book buying -- doesn't work, at least not for long. Most people don't quit things until those things become a problem and then not until the intensity of the problem gets so great they can't stand it. So they take action to reduce the intensity. But if the action is successful, the problem becomes less intense. There's less reason to take action. The problem is neither eliminated or solved. Eventually, they drift back into their old habits until the problem again becomes intense.

And this is true not only for smoking, but for other resolutions, such as dieting..

The best way to quit smoking, I've found, is to focus on becoming a healthy, fit, non-smoker. Instead of merely trying to get rid of the twenty extra pounds you don't like, focus on creating the fit, lean and healthy body you'd love to have. These results are constant. They're something you want, not something you just want to get rid of it. They act as both an anchor and a beacon. They draw you forward yet keep you rooted in reality.

By shifting from seeing smoking as a problem that must be solved to seeing a healthy, fit, non-smoking lifestyle as a creation that you want to bring into being, you change the dynamics at play in your life. You are much more likely to achieve your goal. Same with dieting. A vision of a fit, lean healthy body is a much more powerful and lasting motivator. Almost all the diets that I've worked with who took this approach succeeded. None who tried the "quitting" approach succeeded in the long run.

If you need more help with this, see last issue's article on Turning Resolutions Into Reality. You can find it on my website at www.bruceelkin.com/news/news_vol2_2.html.

FEATURE ARTICLE

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CREATING A SIMPLE AND INTEGRAL LIFE

To understand the whole, it is necessary to understand the parts.

To understand the parts, it is necessary to understand the whole.

Such is the circle of understanding.

– Ken Wilber, The Eye of Spirit

On a walk through the park the other day, I stopped to watch two kids try to balance a seesaw. You know this game. The goal is get the board stopped so that both kids are suspended motionless in space. It's almost impossible, particularly if one kid is heavier than the other is, as was the case with the kids I watched.

As they tried to balance, the bar wobbled up and down. To dampen the wobbling, the small kid scooted out to the end of the plank and leaned back. The big kid leaned as far forward as he could. Just as they almost found the balance point, another kid slapped the smaller kid on the backside. That small disturbance threw the system out of balance. The little kid leaned in, the big kid sat up straight and then dropped to the ground.

Undaunted, they tried again. And again.

I watched for an hour but they couldn't balance for more than a few seconds.

Many people approach their lives as the kids approached the seesaw. They try to balance conflicting values and competing desires. To do so, they shift their focus back and forth between one desire and another.

Work or family? Simplicity or success? Friends or "the relationship?"

They feel pulled in two directions, torn. Most of their effort is spent trying to dampen the oscillations, the back and forth, between the two desires. They desperately seek to achieve a balance and hold it. However, they usually achieve about the same success that kids did in trying to balance the seesaw.

Balance is difficult to achieve and more difficult to sustain. It is a tenuous goal around which to organize a life. One of the dictionary definitions of "balance" is "to cancel out." Could our search for balance be canceling out both simplicity and success?

Balance is a mechanical concept, not designed to explain living systems. Recent discoveries in complexity theory show that life results not from balance but from the turbulent complexity that occurs "far from equilibrium."

Life is constantly making connections, integrating pieces and parts into wholes, then integrating those wholes into larger wholes and the larger wholes into still larger wholes. The relationships between those many wholes are complex, sometimes even chaotic. But life emerges and thrives, say complexity theorists, "at the edge of chaos." Life searches, not for balance, but for integration, harmony, and what David Bohm called "flowing wholeness."

When we try to balance competing desires or values, we stop the flow of wholeness. We compromise, often settling for less than we want on both sides of the beam. Rather than seek balance, I urge my clients to seek harmony. I suggest they integrate their values, desires and actions in a way in which they align and resonate with each other and with the end results they want to create. That way, they are more likely to create what they most deeply want, and more. They also create an integral life, a life of simple, flowing wholeness.

So what is an integral life?

Integral is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) as "of a whole or necessary to the completeness of a whole" and "made up of component parts which together constitute a unity." To integrate is to make whole.

Wholeness is defined by the OED as "the character of having all its parts in due connection; an undivided state; ...a complex unity." An integral life is an undivided life, a life in which all the necessary parts are integrally connected. Although it is made up of a multitude of parts, an integral life has a unity, a oneness, to it. And in that unity, that oneness, it becomes elegantly simple.

The OED defines simple as "easily understood or done, consisting of one element or operation." By integrating the pieces and parts of your life into one complex unity, you can transcend the messiness of a complicated, fragmented life in favor of harmonious, higher order simplicity — the simplicity on the other side of complexity. Your life can become simple, rich, and whole.

How do we create a life of simple and successful wholeness?

I suggest that there are three basic approaches to life creation and an evolutionary process that we can use to make our lives simpler, whole, and integral. The Rich and Comfortable Life is what most of us seek, initially. This is a life in which happiness is equated with pleasure and, often, the accumulation of things and experiences. However, pleasure are often fleeting, stuff turns into clutter, and research now shows that beyond the basics of comfortable survival, more money and stuff does not add much to life.

Eventually, with insight and creative action, such a life gives way to The Fully Engaged Life. Our focus shifts to matching our key strengths and talents with challenges that stretch our personal capacity. Rather than just fleeting pleasures, unnecessary stuff, and the envy of others, we experience the deeper gratification, the sense of "flow", and the true respect that comes with successful mastery and meeting challenges we've set for ourselves.

Many who have combined sufficient pleasantries and comforts with an engaging life and work would likely say that they have achieved "the good life." And in many respects, they'd be right. But there is yet more that goes into a good and integral life.

When we realize that we have achieved significant levels of competence, we also realize that we can better serve our own good and the good of the greater community by focusing our competence on what truly matters — to us and to the world. Then, we embark on The Purposeful Life, in which meaning becomes the most important factor.

In the purposeful life, we not only create what matters to us, we do it in a way that matters to our community and to the community of the earth. This, as George Bernard Shaw said, is the true joy in life, " the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one . . . the being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."

These three different lives are not mutually exclusive. Together, The Rich and Pleasant Life, The Fully Engaged Life and The Purposeful Life comprise an evolving continuum of growth and transformation that leads to a deeper, richer, more authentic and integral life.

I like to think of these lives arranged on an evolving spiral in which we first achieve our essential physical needs. Then we focus on our higher needs for challenge, competence, and success. Grounded in material "enoughness" and empowered by mastery, we focus on the still higher values of meaning, purpose, and the greater good.

With insight into the nature of this upward spiraling process and mastery of the creative process, we discover that we can pull these three different approaches together into one simple and integrated life that is rich, fully engaged and deeply meaningful. In such a life, we truly are a force of nature. We understand the whole, and we understand the parts. The cycle of understanding and creation spirals upward toward yet unseen promise and potential.

[I'll talk more about the specifics of the three kinds of lives in issues to come.]

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER UNDERSTANDING

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My book SIMPLICITY AND SUCCESS: CREATING THE LIFE YOU LONG FOR continues to receive rave reviews from readers around the world. Here are some examples:

"Happy New Year and thank you for your wonderful book and newsletter. As a "follower" of Robert Fritz for many years, I've found your book to be inspiring, yet refreshing and practical." — Don, NM, USA

"What a marvelous book, "Simplicity and Success." I have just finished reading it and do believe you should charge even for the e-book version, it is hands down one of the best e-books I have come across." — Brett, Melbourne, Australia

These are just a couple of examples of the feedback I've been getting. If you'd like a personalized, signed copy of Simplicity and Success, they're available from me at \$23 plus \$3.50 shipping and handling in Canada. In the US, send \$17 plus \$3 shipping and handling.

For more information about SIMPLICITY AND SUCCESS: CREATING THE LIFE YOU LONG FOR, go to: <http://www.bruceelkin.com/simplicity-book.html>

If you can't afford to purchase a book, you can download a PDF copy at <http://www.bruceelkin.com/whats-new.html>

Simplicity and Success is also available from AMAZON. Go to http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/1412002966/qid=1073923381/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/102-8830826-6224155?v=glance&s=books (Make sure you get the whole address in).

*** SIMPLICITY AND SUCCESS RETREAT IN MARCH**

In Mid -to Late March, we'll be offering a 4-night, 3-day Simplicity and Success Retreat on Saltspring Island. Details have not been finalized with the resort (we're trying to get the best rate we can) but they should be by the time the next issue reaches you. For more info on our retreats, go to <http://www.bruceelkin.com/simplicity.html> or call or e-mail Bruce directly.

FROM MY BOOKSHELF

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I'm repeating myself with this issue's recommendation but only because I'm re-reading THE POWER OF FULL ENGAGEMENT by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz to help jump-start my new year's results. This book states that "Managing energy, not time, is the key to high performance and personal renewal." The authors, who have worked with top-flight international athletes, have years of experience helping both the pros and ordinary people make remarkable transformations in their lives. They provide exciting and practical ways to increase physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energy and to use that energy in support of your most important goals. Published by Free Press in 2003, I highly recommend this book.

THE SMALL PRINT: Copyright and Getting On and Off the List

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THE LAST WORD: QUOTABLE QUOTES

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"Reminding one another of the dream that each of us aspires to may be enough for us to set each other free."
-- Antoine de Saint-Exupery

"When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me.'
-- Erma Bombeck

"Simplicity is the most difficult thing to secure in this world; it is the last limit of experience and the last effort of genius."
-- George Sand

Well, folks, that's it for this issue. I hope the New Year has started well for you. Remember, you have to live those resolutions, especially during this first, critical six-week period. Good luck with that. Thanks for reading and forwarding the newsletter. I appreciate it. All the best. Cheers!

Bruce

Bruce Elkin: High Performance, Full Potential Coaching
Author of SIMPLICITY AND SUCCESS: Creating the Life You Long For
< A book about organizing life, work and relationships
around what most matters to you.

<http://www.bruceelkin.com/simplicity-book.html>

" Find what you really care about and live a life that shows it."
— Kate Wolf

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