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

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IN THIS ISSUE
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1. Quick Take: The Meaning of Life
 2. Feature Article: Creating A Meaningful Life
 3. Resources for Further Understanding
 4. From My Bookshelf
 5. My Basic 8-Week Coaching Package
 6. The Small Print: Getting on and off the list
 7. The Last Word: Quotable Quotes
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QUICK TAKE: The Meaning of Life
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Okay, so it's a trick heading. I'm not going to talk about the meaning of life. I'm not sure there is one meaning to life. It's more like each of us has to create the meaning in his or her own life.

"Meaning" means "significance," "importance."

So to think about the meaning of our own lives, we need to think about what is significant, what is important, what really matters to us. Asking the question, "What really matters to me?" can expand your vision of your own life. It can open you to purposes and possibilities that you might miss. It can help you imbue your life with significance and importance.

Unfortunately, many of us get so caught up in things that don't really matter but for some reason seem important that we do not get around to discovering what truly matters. I know. I've been there.

For many years, I've made lists of the creations I wanted to bring into being each year. Although I was usually successful, I felt I was missing something. About ten years ago, I reviewed these lists and noticed something important. Although every year or so, my most important priority changed, the second priority every year was writing. When I saw that, I realized that writing was what truly mattered to me.

I put writing at the top of my list and it changed my life. Since then, I've learned to write well, written a number of booklets, many articles, this newsletter and my book SIMPLICITY AND SUCCESS. I've expanded my coaching practice based on the book and reinvented my entire work life.

Doing so simplified my life and made it more successful. I'm more focused now. I'm better able to practice what I preach. And I'm not only financially successful but I'm successful in terms of increased mastery and meaning. As such, I feel more fulfilled, happier, and better able to contribute my gifts to my community and the world. Who could ask for more?

PLEASE HELP ME GET MY BOOK ON LIBRARY AND BOOKSTORE SHELVES!
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Once again, I'm appealing to you to call your local library and bookstores and ask if they have copies of SIMPLICITY AND SUCCESS on the shelf. If you haven't done so, I beg you, please do. You don't have to order one for yourself, just ask them to bring it in so others may benefit. Libraries and bookstores appreciate these kinds of calls and I appreciate you making them.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

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CREATING A MEANINGFUL AND INTEGRAL LIFE

- Part 4 of 4. For previous articles go to <http://www.BruceElkin.com>

Over the last three issues of Simplicity and Success, I've discussed three approaches to life creation. First, we looked at the rich and pleasant life. In this approach to life, we strive to fulfill material needs. We provide ourselves and our families with comforts and conveniences. However, at a certain point of material well being, we realize that more of the same does not bring increased happiness, satisfaction, or fulfillment.

By asking the questions, "What really matters to me?" and "What's worth focusing on?" we shift our focus from accumulating more stuff to extending our mastery. We get good at what matters to us. When our skills and challenges are about equal to each other, we find ourselves in a state of flow, where doing is it's own reward.

As we develop the capacity — the mastery — to live a rich yet simple, pleasant, and fully engaged life, we keep stretching. We feel a desire to go beyond ourselves and to create a purposeful life; a life imbued with meaning. To the question, "What really matters?" we ask, "Why does it matter?"

A purposeful life is one in which we see our lives in service of something greater than ourselves.

Most of us experience our self, our thoughts, and our feelings as something separate from the rest. We judge ourselves based on our intentions but we judge others based on their actions. We see the world only through our own eyes.

However, this creates, as Albert Einstein put it, "a kind of optical delusion of our consciousness."

Deluding ourselves in this way imprisons us in a limited perspective. We restrict ourselves to personal desires and to connection with and love for a few persons close to us.

"Our task," urged Einstein, "must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty."

As we learn to transcend our own, narrow ego-defined lives, we become better able to see ourselves through the eyes of others and to see the world through the eyes of the many. When we do so, we become committed to purposes that extend beyond our narrow self-interests and desires.

We expand our circle of compassion by caring for our neighborhoods, our communities, even our cities and nations. Some of us are able to embrace and care for the well being of all nations, of humanity itself, and for our entire world. We take a stand for the health and sustainability of local, regional, and global eco-systems because we realize that all of our health, wealth, and well being depend on them.

As we widen our circle of compassion to include all beings, our purpose expands to include a commitment to evolution itself and to connecting with Spirit. As our purposes become larger, deeper and more in service of things beyond ourselves, life gets better.

" This is the true joy in life," said George Bernard Shaw, "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."

Crafting a materially comfortable is only the first step in evolving an integral life. It provides us a rich and pleasant foundation. Stretching to fully engage life by matching strengths to challenges provides flow and the gratifications of a masterful life. Widening our circle of compassion allows us to transcend ourselves and to experience a deep, purposeful, and meaning filled life.

We can integrate these three approaches into one simple yet rich and fulfilling life by letting our higher purposes guide our mastery activities and fill our material lives with meaning. When we do, we experience a deep sense of coherence, a sense that life is integrated, all of a piece. Deep down, I think, we all want a life of unity, wholeness, and coherence. Such a life is possible if we allow ourselves to evolve from a merely focusing on ourselves and accumulating stuff and money. Consciously crafting a masterful life organized around our highest aspirations and purposes widens our circle of interest and compassion. Such a life tends to naturally and harmoniously serve Life itself.

Is anything less truly worthwhile?

RESOURCES YOU CAN ACCESS

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SIMPLICITY AND SUCCESS: CREATING THE LIFE YOU LONG FOR

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

"HIGHLY RECOMMENDED! I found Simplicity and Success to be a fresh and thought-provoking voice in current simplicity literature. I believe that Elkin's approach to simplicity is not only in alignment with the concepts in Your Money or Your Life but provides a new and exciting way to create and implement a purposeful vision and life plan. Although following Elkin's strategy may not be easy, it is one that, if followed, will provide a long-lasting result. Simplicity and Success is well-written and easy to follow and I think readers will find it a book they will be drawn to again and again.

— David A. Heitmiller, Co-author of GETTING A LIFE: Strategies for Simple Living based on the Revolutionary Program for Financial Freedom, Your Money or Your Life.

REVIEWS FROM READERS:

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"I thoroughly enjoyed Simplicity and Success. I want to buy copies for all my friends. I found it both inspiring and very practical. I've been following the steps of the creative process and find that it does make things more simple and successful."

— Ron Blakey, Toronto, ON

"Simplicity and Success is an excellent book. I appreciated the personal stories and the stories of clients you've worked with. Mostly, I like the way you shift the reader from a problem-focused stance to the stance of the creator. That's very powerful."

— Ishana Jacobs, San Francisco, CA

"Right on! I've been looking for a book that expands the scope of simplicity to fit with more mainstream ways of life. Yours has helped me see how I can be successful and still maintain a simple, comfortable life. Thank you."

— Philip Pugh, Leeds, England

If you'd like a personalized, signed copy of *Simplicity and Success*, they're available from me at a special subscriber's price. It's \$20 plus \$3.00 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>

FROM MY BOOKSHELF

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GETTING A LIFE, by Jacqueline Blix and David Heitmiller

GETTING A LIFE is the follow-up book to *YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE*. It tells the stories of people who simplified their lives using the nine steps outlined in *Your Money*. As well as inspiring and empowering us, *GETTING A LIFE* shows us that this kind of simplifying is really possible. Real people have done it. You can too.

Best read after you've read *Your Money or Your Life*, *Getting A Life* describes practical steps to implement the *Your Money* program. The authors, who successfully used the steps to get out of the rat race and get the life they longed for, share their personal stories along with the stories of many who now live simple and successful lives using this approach. A great book and a great read. Also, see www.gettingalife.org for more.

MY BASIC COACHING PROGRAM

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Since developing my basic 8-week coaching program, I've seen a significant increase in the results my clients produce and in the ease with which they produce them. This coaching program integrates basic skills for creating outstanding results in almost anything. It also and builds mastery of a dynamic life-planning framework through focussed practice and timely feedback.

The *Creating Results That Matter* Coaching Package will help you:

- Determine what matters most to you in your life, work and relationships,
- Craft clear, compelling visions of the results you truly want to create,
- Ground your visions in an objective assessment of current reality,
- Hold vision and reality in "creative tension," setting up a powerful container for creativity -- an organizing framework for ensuring that decisions and actions consistently support what most matters to you.
- Take actions that consistently support your visions and values — in spite of the problems, obstacles or adversity you encounter
- Identify patterns and structures that prevent successful action and results and replace them with more powerful, functional patterns and structures;

The coaching package is ideal for those wanting to simplify their lives and still be successful at what matters to them.

It's a great launch platform for those starting new businesses or wanting to integrate their business and/or career needs with their greater life goals and plans.

It's also useful for anyone in mid-career who is stuck or stalled, not living up to what they know is their potential but don't know what do or where to go next.

If you'd like more information about my Basic Coaching Package, send me an e-mail at belkin@saltspring.com with "Coaching Package" in the subject line.

You can also e-mail me to set up a 30 minute coaching session to help you clarify whether coaching would help you create what most matters to you. There is no charge, no pressure and no obligation.

I have 3 spaces coming open for new clients in April/May.

THE SMALL PRINT: Copyright and Copying

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THE LAST WORD: QUOTABLE QUOTES

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"The dedicated life is the life worth living. You must give with your whole heart."
— Annie Dillard

"Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections, but instantly set about remedying them. Every day begin the task anew."
— Saint Francis de Sales

"We are all functioning at a small fraction of our capacity to live fully in its total meaning of loving, caring, creating and adventuring. Consequently, the actualizing of our potential can become the most exciting adventure of our lifetime."
— Herbert Otto

Well, folks, that's it for this issue. I hope you enjoyed it.

I'll be tying the last four feature articles together in one essay and will let you know when that's available on my website. Please feel free to send your questions and comments to me. I reply personally to each and occasionally build a whole issue around a subscriber's question.

Thanks for reading and please keep 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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