
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>

Volume 2, Number 7, April 25, 2004. All rights reserved.

Hi Folks,

Welcome to Simplicity and Success: the e-zine. This has been a tough month for me. I fell off a ladder and sprained my ankle and bruised some ribs and a lung. Then, I got a nasty bout of the flu on top of the injury. I spent the better part of a week in bed and am still not walking or breathing quite right. But I'm working on it!

I thought I'd do something slightly different this issue. I'm going to reprint an article about simplicity that appeared in the LA Times and I'm going to reprint a review of my book *Simplicity and Success: Creating the Life You Long For* that appeared in the Victoria, BC, Times-Colonist newspaper's Books and Ideas section on Sunday, April 27.

I hope you find both pieces engaging, entertaining and useful.

Thanks to those of you who've written and to those who've forwarded the newsletter to friends and associates. Your help is essential and MUCH appreciated.

Please keep forwarding the intact newsletter to those you think would value and appreciate it. That's how it grows. And if you have received the newsletter from a friend, please consider signing up for your own copy. (Details below) Thank you!

NOTE: I never rent, sell, or make my subscriber list public in any way.

IN THIS ISSUE

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1. Report on Simplicity Conference in the LA Times
2. Please Help Get *Simplicity* on Bookshelves
3. Review of *Simplicity & Success*
4. My Basic Coaching Package
5. The Small Print: Getting on and off the list
6. The Last Word: Quotable Quotes

REPORT ON SIMPLICITY CONFERENCE IN THE LA TIMES

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<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/opinion/la-ed-simple21apr21.1.1384632.story>

A SIMPLY GRAND NOTION

Los Angeles Times Editorial, April 21, 2004

Simplicity, it seems, can become very complicated. UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Institute - not a simple name, by the way - held a Mental Health and Simple Living Conference to explore simplicity on a recent Saturday. It wasn't that simple. It took complicated minds all day to figure things out. Actually, it wasn't all that recent either. But complicated world affairs simply postponed thinking about simple.

You know how it is in this modern country, especially Southern California. Even concerned

Americans, it appears, can view news photos of an Afghan family of four on one motorcycle, ponder acquiring a third car and not for a second see any disconnect. Doing anything, however, is so complicated.

Saturdays (hang on, only three more days) used to be simple. They came once a week and were, for most, essentially free days, absent the obligations of the other six. Now, think what you must do on Saturdays - the driving, shopping, dry cleaning, oil changing, recycling, gardening, bill-paying, reading, malling to make new billing. It never ends! Probably, you've already got a "to-do" list for next chore day. What happened to RE-creation and recuperation?

Many feel anxious, even overwhelmed, by modern America's meticulous accretions of material goods, time-consuming rituals and protocols, most devolving from new gadgets and gizmos that, individually, were supposed to simplify life but, collectively, complicated everything beyond comprehension. By the time you decipher a gadget's instructions and master its arcane protocols, you lose it, break it or crave a newer version that, unnaturally, has a whole different set of procedures and buttons. The attending anxiety produces more compulsive buying, eating, drinking, worrying.

Since yoga by itself is insufficient, finding a simple life with good weather, hot showers and cell coverage is increasingly attractive, though naturally complex. So Carol Holst and a band of like-minded, well, simpletons founded Seeds of Simplicity to educate about "voluntary simplicity." Even the phone number is simple: 1-877-UNSTUFF.

Part of the education was a simplicity conference. How some 150 people simply got there was amazing, given the simply awful traffic in L.A. these years and the fact that Angelenos are always going somewhere. Judging by the ubiquity of heavy traffic, no one ever seems to arrive, or when he does, it's time to head back.

The Simplicity Conference's simple message, according to The Times' report, was that America has become a gluttonous, bloviated society controlled by its own excesses. Like not getting enough meetings during the week so take one more come Saturday? Simply put, simplicity is a grand idea. It turns out getting there requires motivation and a uniquely personal and as-yet-unwritten Thomas Guide. No instructions included.

For more info on Seeds of Simplicity, contact Carol Holst at:
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Website: www.seedsofsimplicity.org

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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REVIEW OF SIMPLICITY & SUCCESS

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I agree with the LA Times' assertion that there is no Thomas Guide to simplicity, and I'm glad that there is not. Simplicity is a very personal value and, for each of us, a unique creation. While there is no recipe or formula for successful simplicity, my approach provides you with an organizing framework -- a container for creating -- with which you can create your own version of simplicity and success.

Here's the latest review of my book from the Victoria Times-Colonist, April 25. Enjoy!

THE GLORY OF SIMPLICITY:

A Review of Simplicity and Success: Creating the Life You Long For by Bruce Elkin, Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2003. Reviewed by Barbara Julian

"I'm all for simple living, but not if it's boring."

The participant who joined Bruce Elkin's simplicity workshop with this reservation could have been speaking for me when I approached this book. I need not have worried however, as Elkin assures us early on that he is not recommending giving things up out of a sense of guilt or masochism. For him simplicity is not about frugality, but about focusing on essentials. What is essential? Not only food and shelter, but scope for creativity and doing what you truly love in life.

To get that scope, material needs must have been met, and Elkin reminds us that "those who practice voluntary simplicity (as opposed to involuntary poverty) have the material goods they need... Secure in home ownership and finances ... they choose time over money and meaning over materialism."

Time and meaning. Sometimes those go missing in a fast-paced, multi-tasking urban lifestyle, so much so that people take workshops and read books on how to find them again. The publishing industry has answered the need: there are currently over 30 titles in the local Chapters store on the simplicity lifestyle (excluding everything on simplicity in the sciences, industrial design, cookery and monasticism). Trends expert Faith Popcorn is right: "simple living is hot".

Why is this, when clearly complex living is the norm? It is largely to do with overpopulation: the more people are herded into huge crowded cities, the more complicated life is. Just getting around can be a nightmare. Solitude is rare, escape from noise impossible. Ask people what "simple living" means and they talk about small towns, few people, lots of nature. Why don't they go there then?

If they did, they would all find each other, and they'd be back to more crowds, less nature. Is this not what is happening to the whole planet? How much privacy and greenspace is left? It took humans 250,000 years to reach three billion in number (until about 1960); it then took forty years to double that number to six billion. (Think for a moment what the results of the next forty years will be.)

Wisely, Bruce Elkin says (not in this book, but in a chat room) "not much concerns me about the future, because all the world is way out of my control". And accordingly, the heart of this book is not about changing the world, but living your own best life, putting into practice your own deepest desires and greatest creativity. To that end he offers a series of steps and techniques.

Clients come to his workshops feeling a conflict between what they must do (eat, work, shop, pay bills) and what they love to do (paint, write, invent, sail, or whatever).

They experience this as a problem, but Elkin's method is to replace mere problem-solving (which focuses reactively on what you don't want) with the practice of creating (which focuses creatively on what you do want). The key is to hold in mind a clear and detailed picture of not the process but the results of your creativity. Measure the gap between what you want and the reality you have, holding both in view at once. Then, says Elkin, a creative tension arises which has the effect of pulling you in the desired direction.

As a hypnotherapist I am disposed to like this concept because acting on it is my stock in trade. Behavior automatically aligns with any deeply, clearly visualized intention (visualized ideally in a state of deep relaxation and hypnotic trance). Elkin's book amplifies this with checklists and self-questions designed to refresh motivation and put visions into practice.

Although *Simplicity and Success* is a slim book I took a long time to read it because I paused often to consider the ideas therein, some deriving from other writers on the psychology of simplicity whom Elkin cites in the endnotes. This – the psychology rather than the sociology of simplicity – is Elkin's true subject. He doesn't deny the complex, layered nature of human thinking and motivation. He writes interestingly about moving through complexity and "dancing" with rather than resisting circumstances, until simplicity is achieved as an experience of "flow", a concept derived from physics. Flow is built into the emergence of life itself and the evolution of all its forms: pattern emerges from chaos states. On the psychological level pattern is experienced as meaning, and the focused visioning mind accesses and indeed co-creates this meaning, which brings us back to the original reason for desiring simplicity in a chaotic, fragmented world: it is the need for meaning.

So Elkin touches on big subjects in this small book -- a good book not in the sense of a page-turner, but a page-linger. Elkin doesn't come across as any sort of self-important guru figure, but rather as someone eager to share ideas he has ruminated about for years and tested in his own life. Why does he think it is his job to summarize and present this subject? Because "I love it", he says. That is simplicity.

Barbara Julian is a hypnotherapist in Victoria who leads creative visualization workshops on sacred ecology.

MY BASIC COACHING PROGRAM

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I have now coached or am coaching clients on three continents and in six countries. I have worked with clients in Canada, the US, Britain, Greece, Germany, Switzerland, and Israel. I find this most gratifying.

NOTE: I have 3 new spaces coming open for new clients in May/June. If you're interested, I recommend my Basic 8-week Coaching Package.

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 builds mastery of a dynamic life-planning framework through focussed practice and timely feedback.

The 8-week 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 very 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 complimentary 30 minute coaching session, which will help you clarify whether coaching would help you create what most matters to you. There is no charge, no pressure and no obligation.

THE SMALL PRINT: Copyright and Copying

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<http://www.bruceelkin.com/newsletter.html> Click on "Subscribe to Simplicity and Success Now" and then select sub or unsub as you wish.

THE LAST WORD: QUOTABLE QUOTES

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"If you are too attached to your own thinking and how everything is done now, then nothing will change for the better."
— John C. Maxwell, author

"The basic difference between an ordinary person and a warrior is that a warrior takes everything as a challenge while an ordinary person takes everything as a blessing or a curse."
— Carlos Castaneda

"You have it easily in your power to increase the sum total of this world's happiness now. How? By giving a few words of sincere appreciation to someone who is lonely or discouraged."
— Dale Carnegie

Well, folks, that's it for this issue. I hope you find it stimulating and useful. Please feel free to send me your questions and comments. I love feedback.

Until next time, 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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