
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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Hi Folks,

Welcome to Simplicity and Success: the E-zine. May has been great. I'm recovered from my fall off the ladder. I'm riding my bike, enjoy the natural beauty of the island. As well, I had a restful week away at a cottage overlooking the ocean and the Olympic Mountains in Washington State. (USA) www.beachcottagegetaway.com

Also in May, I welcomed 3 new coaching clients, did 2 public readings from my book Simplicity and Success, and helped an organization set up a strategic design framework for creating the future they most want. A great month.

Thanks for the e-mails and cards. Your comments and questions are much appreciated and often end up in this newsletter. For example, this issue's main article is in reply to a reader who wanted to hear more about "freedom to...", a subject I touched on in Vol. 2, No. 5. So, please, keep the questions and comments coming.

Also, please keep forwarding the intact newsletter to those you think would value and appreciate it. That's how it grows. We now have 1570 subscribers. And if you have received the newsletter from a friend, please consider signing up for you own copy. (Details in #6 below) Thank you!

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

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QUICK TAKE: EMBRACING FREEDOM

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A big part of creating simplicity and success is embracing freedom. Not just the freedom from oppression that politicians tell us they are creating for us, but the freedom to create what matters most to us in our own every day lives and work.

To the extent that we are not free, it's often because we've let other people or circumstances take freedom away from us. We've given it up out of ignorance, fear, or laziness. But such things are no excuse for giving up our freedom.

Victor Frankl, a Nazi prison camp survivor and author of MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING wrote, "Everything can be taken away from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms -- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

To choose our attitude in spite of circumstances is the basis of everyday freedom. It's also the basis of creating simple yet high quality, fulfilling lives. When we realize that we are already free; life becomes simpler, more successful and more rewarding.

To be fully free, we need to do two things. Yes, we need to claim our freedom from that which we don't like and don't want. (I recommend letting go rather than fighting it.) And, most important, we must also claim and develop our freedom to -- to freedom to choose, create, and appreciate what truly matters to us.

How to do this is what this issue's main article is about.

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NOTE: So I don't have to keep including this bit in the newsletter would you please let me know if you've called your local library or if you know the book is stocked there. Thank you!

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FEATURE ARTICLE:
FREEDOM FROM ..., FREEDOM TO ..., AND QUALITY OF LIFE
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Many people think that freedom is merely the absence of restraint or restrictions. Others think that freedom is relief from bad feelings associated with problems. However, there is more to freedom than relief or being free of restraints. In fact, there are two kinds of freedom: "freedom from..." and freedom to...." Both are important elements in creating high quality lives that are both simple and successful.

Freedom to is harder to define than freedom from. It involves the complex interaction of all the skills, knowledge, abilities, and tools that a person needs to actually do something. Without the ability to act -- to create what matters, for example -- freedom from restrictions means little.

Accepting limits and then transcending them through creating is more complex than merely fighting those limits. However, it makes your life less complicated. Freedom, simplicity and quality of life come from embracing complexity and rising above it to create the higher order simplicity on the other side of that complexity.

For example, in the absence of restraints such as fences or guards, we are free to jump from a high cliff. Exercising that kind of freedom is simple, but only in a simplistic sense. It's the simplicity on this side of complexity. The result of jumping is not one that many of us would aspire to. Unless you can fly, you're not really free to jump off the cliff.

If, however, you equip yourself with the skills, abilities, and tools to parasail, you are free to step off the cliff. By embracing the complexity of parasailing through adequate preparation, you can go beyond that complexity. You can experience the flowing simplicity of flying, a kind of simplicity - and freedom - found only on the other side of complexity.

It's the same in life and work. Being free from restraints does not necessarily give us the freedom to create simple, successful lives or work. Rebelling against restraints may be necessary but, by itself, it does not lead to simplicity or success.

In his book *TO HAVE OR TO BE?* psychologist Erich Fromm described the difficulties faced by sixties rebels who did not progress from freedom from to freedom to.

"They simply rebelled," he said, "without attempting to find a goal toward which to move, except that of freedom from restrictions and dependence."

Fromm called this approach "naïve narcissism" and said it worked only as long as the euphoria of rebellion lasted. Moreover, he added, "many passed this period with severe disappointment, without having acquired well-founded convictions, without a centre within themselves. They often ended up as disappointed, apathetic persons -- or as unhappy fanatics of destruction."

Many, I think became the hedonistic over-consumers of the 80's and 90's, afflicted with Affluenza and Boomeritis. No wonder so many in Generations X and Y are depressed. They have ambition, talent and desire but no direction, no purpose. Their attempts to create the kind and quality of life they want are often centred on finding relief from in mainstream pursuits, accumulating toys and gadgets, and comparing themselves to others, mostly in the media. On such a path, they too could succumb to the dis-eases that plague the Me generation.

Although it is sometimes necessary and useful to fight against what we don't like and don't want, only doing so is rarely enough. To be truly free, we must also develop the skills, talents, knowledge and experience to do what matters most. Then we can claim and act on the freedom to create what we'd truly love to create.

Embracing freedom to -- taking a stand for what matters to us, and taking action to bring it into being -- enables us to embrace and transcend the complex circumstances of modern life. It also leads to the rich, successful simplicity on the other side of complexity. That kind of simplicity and the quality of life it yields can only arise out of the creative process. By embracing both freedom from... and freedom to..., you can go a long way toward creating the rich yet simple and successful lives and work you long for.

Your version of simplicity and success will arise out of your own fierce focus, out of your own passionate sense of purpose, and out of a deep commitment to your own authentic desires. Moving from freedom from to freedom to is largely a matter of setting out what matters and then setting yourself firmly on the path to creating it.

Purpose and passion focus our lives. They unleash our creative spirit. They help us cut through clutter and mess. They take us to the heart of what matters, to the soul of our being. Creating a rich, engaging, and rewarding simplicity is an example of what Joseph Campbell called "the soul's high adventure".

Our challenge in these complex times, regardless of our generation, is to embrace the circumstances of our lives and the attitudes we choose in the face of those circumstances. Then we can transcend them by bringing into being what we most want to create -- alone and in groups.

If soul is, as some suggest, a unifying principle -- the power and energy that arises from the center of our being -- then learning to create the simplicity and success on the other side of complexity is not only a freedom claiming gesture. It is an engaging soul-making adventure. And it can lead to us living the kind and quality of lives we most want to live.

RESOURCES

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My book *SIMPLICITY AND SUCCESS: CREATING THE LIFE YOU LONG FOR* [Trafford, 2003] continues to receive great reviews from critics and readers around the world. Here are some examples:

"[Elkin] elaborates a useful point that I have not seen covered in any other titles in the 'simple living' genre. And I particularly liked his explanation of what he calls "the simplicity beyond complexity"."

- *RESURGENCE Magazine, United Kingdom*

" [Simplicity and Success] will show you how to create results that honour who you are even as you strive to become the person you imagine yourself to be. And to enjoy the process."

- *WhoLife Magazine, Saskatchewan, Canada*

REVIEWS FROM READERS

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" I am one of your subscribers and I am willing to congratulate you for all what you are writing, not only your Newsletter but also your book. ... After reading your words, I have made a decision to start writing my [own] book right now. Thanks a lot!"

— *Oscar R. Castello, Argentina*

" This book could set you free. Read it, give it to friends, talk about it. Excellent!"

— *I. M. Phulen, New York, NY*

FROM MY BOOKSHELF

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HOW TO WANT WHAT YOU HAVE, Timothy Miller, Ph.D.

Subtitled "Discovering the Magic and Grandeur of Ordinary Existence," this is an excellent book for simplifiers who have trouble keeping their lives simple and satisfying — and for success seekers who overcomplicate their lives and suffer from stress.

Based on the timeless notion that suffering arises when desire turns into demand, this book can help you tame unhealthy desire and deepen the pleasure of living in what Miller calls the "precious present."

How To Want What You Have is not about letting yourself be taken advantage of or not stretching for success. For example, when talking about the way he plays tennis, Miller says that he plays to win but does not feel that he HAS to win to be happy or satisfied with his game. He likes to win but enjoys the game more when he does not making winning more important than playing the game.

The same principle applies to creating a simple yet high quality life. Don't let creating the result become more important than enjoying the process. Both are necessary to creating quality lives and work.

As well as helping us understand why it is difficult to want what we have, Miller's genius is to combine Buddhist wisdom with cognitive skills to provide us a method — a practice — for wanting

what we have and opening to the beauty and wonder in our ordinary lives.

This book was chosen by the Book of the Month Club and the Quality Paperback Book of the Month Club. Highly recommended!

MY BASIC COACHING PROGRAM

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My approach to simplicity and success is to integrate wanting what your heart truly wants to create with wanting what you have and opening to the joys of creating.

One of the best ways I've discovered to help people do so is my 8-week coaching program. 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 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," which sets up a container for creativity -- an organizing framework for ensuring that your choices consistently support what matters most to you.
- Take actions that support your visions and values — in spite of the problems, obstacles or adversity you encounter,
- Identify patterns and structures that prevent successful action 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 he help you create what most matters to you. There is no charge, no pressure and no obligation.

NOTE: I have 2 spaces open and 2 more coming open for new clients in June.

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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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"I learned... that inspiration does not come like a bolt, nor is it kinetic, energetic, striving, but it comes to us slowly and quietly and all the time, though we must regularly and every day give it a little chance to start flowing, prime it with a little solitude and idleness."

-- Brenda Ueland, author

" That the birds of worry and care fly over your head, this you cannot change, but that they build nests in your hair, this you can prevent."

-- Chinese Proverb

" If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment."

-- Marcus Aurelius

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