



# MINIMALIST LIVING

When Less Is More

# Minimalist Living: When Less is More

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In this day and age, many of us are under the impression that 'more is more'. Western society has led us to believe that the secret to happiness is to have more stuff and even to feel inadequate when comparing what we have to what our neighbors have, or what people on television have.

So what is the answer? To get more and more 'stuff' and constantly feel like that next purchase is going to be what changes everything? Or perhaps to try and 'let go' of that need for stuff and to find ourselves feeling more at ease as a result?

As you might have guess from the title of this short report, the answer lies with the latter. But the key is how you go about achieving this mindset. How do you stop yourself from constantly wanting the 'next big thing' and how precisely does this make you a happier person? Let's take a look...

## Are You Stuck in a Loop?

What many of us don't realize is that we're stuck in a kind of loop or a 'vicious cycle' that may be preventing us from ever

being completely happy. The reason for this, is that we are so fixated on material possessions, that we're willing to sacrifice all of the other things we need to be happy.

Think about it: if you're like many people, then there's a good chance that you currently feel over worked, stressed, exhausted and perhaps that you don't spend enough time with your family, or enough time doing the things that you really enjoy. You get home late after working until 7pm and then you have to cook, eat, get washed and tidy the house all before bed time. It doesn't leave much space for spending time with your family, or for pursuing hobbies and things that interest you.

Which is why, when you see that flashy new suit or dress, or that stunning new car... you feel tempted to buy it. You need a 'win'. You need something to feel good. And so you go ahead and you make the purchase.

But that often means that you had to pay on credit card, which might mean that you're now in debt. Or perhaps it means that you had to take out a small loan even. That then creates more stress and so the only way to make it go away is to work harder.

# How Did This Happen?

What doesn't help is that many of us equate success with career success. A successful person is someone who has a flash car, who wears nice suits, who has a Rolex and who is in a position of power and importance in their workplace. Nevermind whether they're actually happy.

Advertising reinforces this view. Models on the covers of magazines look beautiful thanks to all of the expensive health products they use. To smell like Jonny Depp (and thus find love), you need to spend \$50 on cologne. And to feel like you've accomplished anything in life, you need a TV that's at least 34" wide. Nevermind if you actually get time to watch it.

Without meaning to sound like a conspiracy theorist, this is a status quo that greatly benefits the government and that benefits any capitalist economy. The more you feel dissatisfied with what you have, the more you work and the more you spend. That means you're channeling more money into the economy.

It also doesn't help that everyone else subscribes to pretty much the same view. Take a look at your neighbor and you'll likely find that they've bought into the same notion. They too probably have a massive flat screen TV, nice car

and important sounding job. Their home is probably filled with expensive trinkets from their travels. Nevermind if they only get to travel for one week out of 52!

This is partly down to simple human nature. 'Social comparison theory' states that we look to others in order to more accurately evaluate ourselves. In other words, you feel successful based not on how much money you have but on how much more money you have compared with your neighbor. And with the models wearing the Rolexes on TV...

Studies show that if you compare yourself to someone who has less than you, then you will be happier. If you compare yourself to someone who has more, then you will become dissatisfied. The irony is that it doesn't matter how much you actually have, as long as you come out well during the the comparison!

## **It's All an Illusion – Time to Break Free**

Stop and ask yourself if this is really what you originally wanted. You might be feeling great that you've reached a position of responsibility in your job and that you're now able to afford expensive clothes... but was that ever your ambition to begin with? Or did the pressures of living force you into that position?

Is being the head of a stapler company really that exciting an achievement?

More likely, you probably started out wanting to be a rock star (to make music), wanting to create computer games, wanting to be an athlete (to play sports), or wanting to travel and see the world.

Maybe you've always dreamed of having a beautiful home.

Maybe, if you think hard about what you really want right now, then you'll find that you actually just want to spend more time with your family.

And you probably think that if you work really hard and that if you put in lots of time right now, then you can do all that!

Except what our society doesn't want you to see, is that you can actually have all those things you want right now. And working harder isn't going to get you closer to them, it's actually going to take you further away from them.

If you really want to spend more time with your family, then there is one very easy way you can do that right now. How? Just start spending more time with your family! Start clocking off from work at 5pm and coming home when you're supposed to.

Sure, you might not progress in your career as quickly as you would if you stayed later... but does that really matter if you're already getting what you want?

You could even ask your employer if you could work a four-day week. You'd be surprised how many employers will be amenable to that idea. Or how about asking if you can work from home a couple of days a week? At the very least, that means you can forget your commute and you can spend your lunch break with your family! If your current employer won't allow that, then how about looking for one that will? When you remind yourself of your priorities, it changes everything!

## **Living on Less**

The next thing you might be thinking is how you can live on 80% of your current salary if you work a four-day week.

And there are plenty of answers to that question. You could rent out a room in your house for example, or you could try and earn some money online.

But the best way? Just start living more minimally! Reduce the amount of stuff you buy, sell of extravagant things you

own... even consider moving into a smaller home which can easily reduce your outgoings by 20%.

This will immediately help you to feel far less stressed. Suddenly, all your money is your own, you don't owe anyone anything, and you don't need to work obscene hours just to avoid the debt collectors!

What you'll find is that having less 'stuff' actually liberates you by reducing the amount you need to earn just to survive.

You can also stop eating out at expensive restaurants, cancel your subscriptions to health spas or to Netflix... generally cut all of that excess that you just don't need.

Because there is plenty you can do without needing all that money and all that stuff. And what you'll find is that when you remove all of your clutter and all of your outgoings, you actually have more fun and feel happier.

You'll spend more time playing old-fashioned games with your family. You'll be able to get more exercise by working out in a home gym, or going for runs. You can read books, you can visit museums, you can go for family days out... You could learn a new language, learn to dance from YouTube, take up star gazing or painting, write a novel!



And you could get the same sense of achievement and success from writing a book or painting a work of art that you used to get from becoming the CEO of a dull corporate organization.

What's better? Being the head of a dull company and being stressed all the time, or doing a job that pays the bills while pursuing your true passions?

And the money you do spend, you'll spend on the things that really matter to you. If you love music, then buy yourself an instrument and some editing software and spend more of your time creating amazing music. If you love art, then invest in some nice paints and an easel. If you love travel, then that's where your money should go and by taking short trips, you might find it's possible to travel a lot more than you currently do.

## **More Benefits of Less**

There are many more benefits to reducing your clutter and possessions too. For one, having less stuff means you have more space in your home. When we think 'minimalism', we often think of relatively empty white rooms with lots of straight lines, no patterns and a very clean aesthetic. This is more than just a trend though, it's a style that actually

makes a home much more manageable, that makes a smaller space seem much bigger and that reduces the amount of cleaning and tidying you need to do.

The less clutter you have, the easier your day-to-day life becomes. What's more, is that having fewer items means that the items you do have will be make more of an impact – and presumably have more meaning to you.

Another advantage of having less clutter is that it makes it much easier for you to move home if you ever decide to, or even to go travelling and to leave your belongings in storage. You might not realise it, but the more physical ties you create to your current location, the less free you become.

But even beyond that, taking a more minimal approach to life can reduce stress (the less you have, the less there is to lose) and can help you to find peace. Once you realise that you don't need to have everything you see in magazines, you can stop chasing after empty ideals. Once you stop comparing yourself to your neighbors, you can let go of jealousy and find yourself feeling truly content with the things you have.

The less you have, the more you value and savor each thing that you do own.

So try living with less! You will likely find that life becomes richer and more fulfilling as a result.

## **Getting Started...**

The only problem is that you've been taught to believe that 'more is more' over the course of the last 10 or more years of your life – and making the switch isn't quite so easy!

That's why you should check out the full eBook *The Minimalist Lifestyle* and get started. There, you'll learn how to gradually reduce the amount of clutter in your life – physical and emotional – so that you can start to appreciate the things you already have all the more. You'll learn to create a minimal home, to refine and define your objectives and to let go of stress.

Forget books that tell you how to 'get rich' but that won't actually make you any happier. Instead, find the way to be truly happy right now with the things you already have... or less!