



HeelsAndTevass.com

*10 Ways to
Simplify
Your Life*

...and Be More Fulfilled

made with

Beacon

About The Divas

Barb and Lynnelle, friends as different as night and day (& **Heels and Tevas**), but as close as peanut butter and jelly (& **red wine and chocolate**). Two fun, vibrant and wicked good friends who **USED** to think 60 was old.

1960 was the beginning of likely the most impactful decade in our social history. The hope and dreams of prosperity, peace, individual freedoms, exploration, gender equality, sexual equality, political expression, science, space, civil rights – and the list goes on.

As we embrace our own 60s, that same spirit of new freedoms, exploration, and peace is shaping our vision and plans for our next chapter. We're **Barb & Lynnelle**. Join us on our **blog, Heels and Tevas Tribe Facebook Group** and **Page** various get-togethers (virtual or real) and share your many pearls of wisdom, your views, and rants on this issue or that—as we mosey through midlife; yet ALWAYS with a vibrant, humorous, and young-at-heart outlook.

Heels and Tevas is a Blog, a community, a perspective. We're women who look at 60, when we have to, as just another number.

We hope to meet you soon.

Barb & Lynnelle (&Pablo)

The Divas (& Pup), Heels and Tevas



Table of Contents



1. About The Divas
2. Introduction
3. Prioritize Your Passion 10 Minutes a Day
4. Simplify Your Life by Simplifying Your Inbox
5. Minimize Stress by Minimizing Options
6. Prioritize Alone Time & ...Just BE
7. Commit to Offline Times & Places
8. Eating Healthy ...or, Banish the Bads
9. Practice Patience
10. Prune Your Environment
11. Move and Drink Lots of Water
12. Give Without Strings
13. Thank You!
14. Heels and Texas

Introduction

Most of the time we'll wait until January 1 and make a New Year's resolution to make life changes. But, why? Isn't our life as important on March 3 or October 18 as it is on January 1?

Simple (but not easy) Ways to Simplify Your Life

2017 was a year of dramatic changes in my life – a LOT of them. I wrote this book because I felt like I needed grounding, and get my life back in line with my values and priorities.

It took me a while to quiet the noise and sort through everything, to be able to verbalize what was out of sync in my life. Then more thought to distill that down to specific actions I could take to feel better, to live 'better'.

Thanks for taking the step to download this short eBook and joining me on this journey. But you know, it's a never-ending journey. I'm doing "ok" on this list; some steps are easier than others. Even though some people may think we're getting to be "of the age" where we should relax more and not worry so much about changing ourselves, I always want to do better, to BE better, to learn more, improve my life, make a difference. Otherwise, I feel I'm just taking up space.

Instead of waiting until January 1 to make a New Year's resolution, we'd like to suggest starting today. These are 10 steps you can take to help you simplify your life and feel more fulfilled. The steps are simple - but, it won't be easy - so stick with me.

Ready? Let's go.

Prioritize Your Passion 10 Minutes a Day

How many things would you like to learn about or learn to do? For me, there are TONS of things – Painting, playing the piano, photography, speaking French, European art history, history of France and Paris, Stoic philosophy, quantum science, spirituality, write a book... and on and on and on.



What about you? What are the things you “want to learn”? Sadly, most of us don’t make these things a priority and we rarely allocate time to learning new things if it isn’t required for a job or generating income.

There’s always something “more important” that needs to be done.

Really? More important than our quality of our life? We can’t even prioritize a few minutes a day – out of 24 hours – to something that would increase the richness of our life. Really? Yes. Sad.

That's why #1 on our list is:

#1 – Prioritize A Passion for 10 minutes a day.

Even giving ourselves one day-off a week, that’s still 6 days at 10 minutes a day, or 60 minutes – a single hour a WEEK. Certainly, we are worth that.

- The dishes can wait 10 minutes.

- The kids / husband / neighbors can wait 10 min.
- Certainly, the dog can wait 10 minutes.
- You can wait to check your email for 10 minutes –
- Your friends on Facebook and Instagram can wait 10 minutes.

No one will think you're ignoring them. The world will not fall apart. Trust us.

Being realistic will help, too.

Being caretakers, pleasers and nurturers we'd like to think our families, co-workers, and friends would fall apart if we "let them down". But, really – what does "let them down" look like to you?

A friend tells me she spent a ton of time making an hors d'oeuvres for a friend's party, time she didn't have to spare. She loves the friend and the friend loves the dish, but that was a lot of time taken away from something she really needed to get done for herself. I asked why she decided to make the dish considering all the things she needed to focus on, to which she said that she didn't want to "let the friend down". Don't get me wrong. I love how she loves her friends, one of which I am very honored to be. The point is still about prioritizing OURSELVES and our passions. It isn't about our friends not being important. It's about us and the importance of OUR goals, objectives, and passions.

Think about your calendar or to-do list. How many things are scheduled for you, by you? Not scheduled for you by someone or something else. Not scheduled by you to make someone else happy (even though that might make you happy in return); but scheduled for you, by you because it's a passion of yours and will make you more fulfilled. Huh?

10 minutes. That's it!

- Sit down at the piano and do some scales.
- Pick up that book on Picasso.
- Watch the first lesson of that CreativeLive Photography course you purchased 3 months ago. (Heels Diva, hanging her head.)

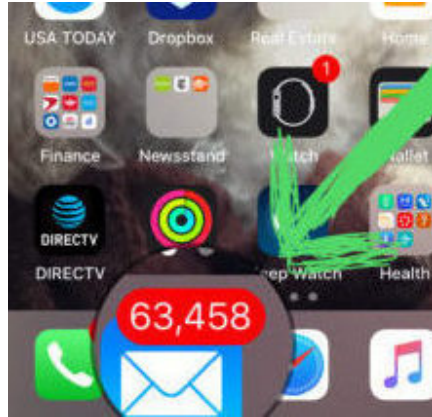


If all you have is 10 minutes, read (or do) for 10 minutes. If you have longer and you get lost in the reading or doing – then great! But an initial commitment of only 10 minutes — that’s nothing! Heck, the worst that can happen is that you gain 10 minutes additional knowledge on something you’re passionate about.

If we’re consistent with this daily ritual, at least 50% of the time, imagine how much more you’ll know this time next year. Even at 50%, you know some of those 10 minutes will end up being 30 or 60 ...or more. If it’s really a passion, it will. And if not, think of the guilt you WON’T have about not doing that thing you’re not really passionate about – and the extra time you’ll have for that thing you ARE!

What will you dedicate 10 minutes to do each day—just for you?

Simplify Your Life by Simplifying Your Inbox



Not counting work, how many emails do you get a day? Have you had so many that you've had to create a 2nd email address (or 3rd...) to start over? As part of our 2018 focus of a more simplified and fulfilling life, unsubscribing to emails is #2 on our list. (#1 is here)

After all the online shopping over the holidays and the "sign-up here for 10% off" offers, it's probably even more overwhelming. Houzz, Ebates, HGTV, Bon Appetite, Betabrand, Grommet, Etsy, On-And-On-And-On... Heck, Ebates, alone, sends TWO emails a day. If anyone were to send me an important message via email, I may not find it for days.

Don't get me wrong, I LOVE looking through the recipes on Bon Appetite, the designs on HGTV, the deals on Houzz... And I LOVE Ebates! (I'll be getting a check from Ebates for at least \$68.00 from my online Christmas shopping. No, it's not a ton, but it's a nice mani-pedi!)

#2 Unsubscribe from Email Lists

Doing so can help you create a more simple and fulfilling life in three ways:

Simplify. Is there anything LESS simplified than an overflowing inbox of marketing emails? Emails that are ALL vying for your attention and your wallet? Vying for attention, aka: shouting and waving and jumping up and

down – “Hey! Here’s a new, shiny, thing you really, really cannot live without!” My blood pressure is rising and my pulse is racing just thinking about it – and not in a good way. Unsubscribe!

What a TIME SUCK! I clocked myself while I was preparing for the holidays. There were a couple of emails I wanted to check out for Christmas dinner recipes, not that I was missing any information; the email just caught my eye and I wanted to compare with recipes I already had. Fast forward 25 minutes – when I’ve gone through two other websites and am reading about something not even slightly related to Christmas dinner... Whaaaat? ...What had I learned? How much better was my life for having “INVESTED” that 25 minutes? Nada. Think of the time I’ll get back. Unsubscribe!

I don’t need added temptations to spend money. I do pretty well on my own. Those emails reminding me of all the “new, shiny things I really, really cannot live without” are pouring fuel on the fire. Unsubscribe!

Not only did I unsubscribe to a gazillion marketing email – part of this effort is to NOT sign up for any new emails. Hopefully we’ve matured past the point of needing to be one of the cool kids. Being comfortable and knowing we’re way cooler than the cool kids is just one of the benefits of being over 60. No FoMO for us!

There, you have it; #2 – Unsubscribe. ...Except not to us. Heels and Tevas email list is the exception!

Minimize Stress by Minimizing Options

You know how difficult it can be to order a meal when the restaurant menu has 10 pages of options? How about looking in your walk-in closet trying to decide what to wear among the packed-in and piled clothing? What about looking in your fridge/pantry to decide what to make for dinner? Not-to-mention, walking up and down the cereal aisle in the grocery store—200++ different options; REALLY? Or, my favorite mind-bending experience —strolling the aisles in DSW trying to decide what pair of shoes to buy with your \$50 Gift Card. Option Overwhelm!



Choice overload is stressful. The more options, the more things you have to say “no” to – the more chances of making the wrong decision! Yes. Stressful. It may sound ridiculous. And, intellectually, it IS ridiculous. But, emotionally, however, it is very real. Therefore, #3 on our list for creating a more simplified and fulfilling life is:

#3 Minimize Options

It sounds counter-intuitive, doesn't it; minimize choice to increase fulfillment. There are a number of ways you can purposely minimize your options. Here are three of mine:

1. Create Your Capsule Wardrobe – Earlier this year I spent a few weeks **going through each item in my closet** culling out things I didn't like, didn't (or couldn't) wear and didn't need. Even though I didn't reduce my wardrobe down as much as I wanted, it did simplify the decision process of getting ready. In

another month or so, when I make a 2nd pass at my remaining wardrobe, I'll end up with more of the capsule wardrobe I imagined when starting this project. Why will a capsule wardrobe increase your fulfillment? First, if done correctly you'll end up with only those items that are well-made, that you love, and that look fabulous on you. Second, you won't have to stand in front of the closet stressing about not having anything to wear because you can't see over the stacks and piles of twisted fabric and shoe boxes.

2. Eat Clean – This one's tough for me, but goes hand-in-hand with **Barb's goal of banishing sugar**. Even after retirement, so many of us are still trying to do so much, we never seem to ~~make~~ have time to eat real food. Breakfast cereals, boxed mixes, canned soups, bagged bread, frozen dinners and fast food—three courses in 15 minutes and you only need 5 minutes to eat it! Eating clean checks off a few boxes on my desire for a more simple and fulfilled life. First, I want to learn to cook again. There was a time when I cooked quite a bit but when my work took me to NY and the travel increased, my time and energy was focused elsewhere. Second, I want to make healthier choices and avoiding processed foods is part of that. Third, cooking will turn “shoveling-food-into-my-mouth-to-get-full-time” into mealtime, hopefully, shared with family and/or friends.

3. Year of No Shopping – Another tough one. Looking through Facebook, emails, magazines we're inundated with new, shiny things we didn't know we needed. **(Fortunately, we are seeing far fewer of these ads because we unsubscribed to most of those pesky newsletters.)**



Impulse buying – I'm a sucker. Facebook ads touting the eyebrow pencil that will miraculously turn your 1960 Twiggy brows into Brooke Shield's 1980's brows – all for only \$28.95. I'm in. (Hey – if \$28.95 would make us all look like the Brooke of 1985 – we'd ALL be in.) Or the Korean skincare line that is proven to turn the clock back 20 years... Yep. In addition to the cost of these things, I now need to make room for these new items among the other potions and makeup tools purchased previously.

Do you know I have 5 – **F-I-V-E** half-full bottles of shampoo for tinted hair in my bathroom cabinet? How about 4, near full jars (tubes) of facial moisturizer? We won't go over the number of lipsticks nor eye shadows nor shoes nor purses. Thank goodness I completed the first phase of the Capsule Wardrobe project. Since then, I've been on

the “No Clothes Shopping” wagon.

Before making ANY purchase this year, there will be two questions I ask myself:

ONE – “Do I really need this?”

TWO – I’ll wait 48 hours and ask myself the same question again, “Do I still need this?”.

If the answer is “Yes” to both ONE and TWO, then I’ll buy it. If not – then I don’t buy it.

The 48-hour test will help on the impulse buying, for sure. Giving up shopping can be tough for those of us who are strong members of our consumer, materialistic and status-seeking society. I’m thinking of starting a 12-step program support group.

No matter what, making these changes will take discipline and patience and commitment. Last December I read a good article in the [NYT by Ann Patchett](#). (The article that gave me the idea (the courage) for the year of no shopping.) There’s a quote in that article that stuck with me.

“The things we buy and buy and buy are like a thick coat of Vaseline smeared on glass: We can see some shapes out there, light and dark, but in our constant craving for what we may still want, we miss life’s details.”

Let's not miss any more details.

Prioritize Alone Time & ... Just BE



Productivity. Produce. We're all about productivity, doing more, getting more done, multi-tasking, more return on equity (ROE for us business types), etc. etc. etc. Get more done. Improve productivity! (Why a picture of George Clooney? You'll get the connection at the end. Got your attention, though – right?)

But being productive isn't achieved only by **DO**ing. By taking the time to **BE**, you'll help yourself be more productive. When's the last time you let yourself just – BE? It's not about meditating, although it could be. Some say they aren't into meditating because they can't sit sit still cross-legged for long or they think the whole mantra thing is rubbish... I think, however, meditation is more about BEing with yourself than the way you sit, hold your fingers, or chant mantras.

Have you ever been in a tense situation, lots of activity going on, shouting, people running around, noise, clanging, crashing, whatever—lots of noise—people yelling questions or directions (Those with a houseful of kids probably know what this is like.) – and you hit sensory overload and have to scream “ENOUGH!! –Be quiet – I need time to think!” This is the catalyst for #4 to creating a more simple and fulfilling life.

#4 Prioritize Alone Time – and Just BE

Even when your conscious mind doesn't recognize this, deep down your subconscious knows when it's had enough and needs a break. How can you tell? Your blood pressure, your skin tone/ breakouts / fever blisters, the number of colds you catch, the weight you gain (or lose), the not-so-great-decisions you make, the snappy comments you regret, the negative self-talk, and yes... the lack of productivity or creativity.

Being alone, without an objective of getting anything done, per se, is hard for most of us. Like learning any skill, taking alone time and feeling like it's giving you any benefit can take practice. But, trust me. It's a good practice. You can calm your mind (or at least slow it down a bit) and give yourself some mental space. The benefits of alone time are physical and real. If you don't believe the Heels and Teva Divas, [Psychology Today](#) backs us up:



Brain Reboot

Your brain needs to rest and reboot just as your body does, which is why sleep is so important. We know many of us don't get the amount of sleep we should, what we do get isn't always restful, and even the restful sleep is hampered by dreaming – which doesn't give the mind much downtime. A rested mind equals better decisions, more patience, more creativity and better productivity (and we've already established how important that is.).

Alone time gives you the opportunity to think, generally, and to think about yourself, specifically. When we're "ON" all the time, going and doing we're focused externally. Heels and Texas is focused on fun, vibrant women who've spent a lifetime focused externally and we're now at the stage where we're

more able to – and more motivated to focus on ourselves. Not only what we want – but who we ARE. Or, *want* to be. This kind of thinking doesn't happen when we're planning the dinner party or playing online solitaire—even if we are alone. Planned alone time helps you to think more deeply and hear yourself; some call that observing the

observer, observing the voice in your head and recognizing it as distinct from the being doing the observing. (Getting deep here, but stay with me.)

Being alone and having the time to decompress, think and rest can also help to improve relationships. We've already covered how alone time will help increase our boiling point (aka: more patience). Maybe that will enable us to hold our tongue when we've told someone what day you were going to dinner with the neighbors and they still made other plans for the same day.

What do you DO when you're alone? You can DO nothing, if that works for you. Just BE. Again, some of us are not about to DO nothing (aka: meditate). For those folks, how about writing with a pen and paper? "Write about WHAT?", you ask. Nothing – Or, everything. Just write whatever comes into your mind; the Observer is writing what is observed. If you find yourself writing a grocery list – just stop it, and then start again; meditating longhand. Whatever gets you into that "flow" is good. Painting? Writing? Quilting, Knitting or Sewing?

Your alone time doesn't have to be indoors. If it's not -10F (-26C) go for a walk. Alone. Without your earbuds. Go for a run or a bike ride. Do yard work, if you're a gardener.



How to Find Time to BE

All in all, it's a small and very simple thing you can do to improve your being (and productivity), prioritizing alone time regularly. A few things you can do if you are thinking "I'll never be able to do this!"

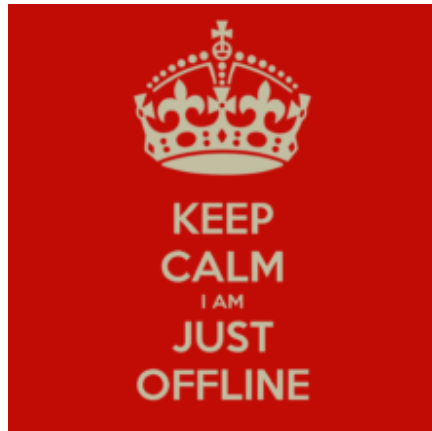
Get up a bit earlier. While this one might be tough, setting the alarm a bit earlier (or setting it at all, for some of us), even 15 min earlier than normal will be a good start. It's 15 minutes people. Come on.

Turn off the TV. Turn off the computer. Put down the phone or tablet. Sit down and just be. Giving up the episode of Forensic Files you've seen twice before or waiting 30 minutes to watch the next episode of The Crown won't kill you and it certainly won't change the storyline.

If you're working outside the home and have a door, close it. You can leave a sign on the outside that says "NO Interruptions" – unless of course there's a fire... or George Clooney stops by for a visit.



Commit to Offline Times & Places



Not only to simplify and increase your fulfillment, but surprisingly you can increase your productivity by going offline. Trust me. it can be tough to do; so much of our lives are lived online. But it will be like a breath of fresh air and that's why #5 on our list of ways to simplify your life and be more fulfilled is:

#5 Commit to Offline Times and Places

We **LIVE** online. How did this happen? No question; we women over 60 have seen the most dramatic innovations in human-kind. (Men over 60, too, but we women actually noticed.) Most have been helpful, too.

What would life be without the invention of:

- An ATM
- Birth Control Pills
- GPS
- The Internet
- Remote Control (the men noticed this one)
- Cordless tools
- Cell Phone
- Digital Music
- Smoke Detectors
- Prozac

Seriously, can you even imagine? While technology had a role in the development of birth control pills and Prozac, all others ARE technology. Not only they all a technology, today they're all managed / accessible through the internet.

- ATM – mobile banking;
- GPS – Google Maps or Waze;
- Remote Control – Apple TV, Direct TV online, Dish Hopper...
- Cordless Tools – well, not REAL tools, but still there's an app for a lot – levels, lights, compass, etc...
- Cell Phone – Skype and Viber and Google Talk and...
- Digital Music – Spotify, iTunes, Pandora,...
- Smoke Detectors – how about smart houses, Nest, remote access to your smoke detector...



What in Life Does NOT Involve the Internet?

The areas of our lives that do NOT involve the internet is becoming the exception rather than the norm. The internet has completely changed our existence. The change is for the better, for the most part, as long as we have healthy boundaries. Setting boundaries can protect us from the unhealthy behavior of others. Boundaries can also protect us from our own unhealthy behavior. In addition to all the wonderful things the internet makes possible, the internet can also instigate some bad behavior by making us:

- Waste our time
- Be lazy
- Spend money we don't have
- "Say" evil, mean-spirited things we'd never dream of saying to anyone in person
- Believe everyone else online has the perfect life and ours is sub-par

I wrote a post last year about how fast time passes. As we reach 60 and over, it doesn't slow down. Wasting time (or money) is not something I want to do anymore. If you read the [Time Flies](#) post, I don't need to elaborate on ways the internet can sap our productivity, relationships, and health, nor the difference between being connected and being "in flow". Taking control of when, where and how I immerse myself (or not) online is key to improving my productivity, relationships, and health. It is key to a more

simplified and fulfilling life. This year I'm committing to:

Offline Times

Mealtime

Bedtime

Standing in line time

Drive time

Offline places

Dinner table

Restaurants

Driver's seat

Public seatings (theaters, arenas, churches, etc)

These may, or may not work for you. You may add others. Let us know what you think.

PS – "Word of the day" is:

Digiphrenia: the constant, insane dual personalities people are immersed in between their phones and the real life around them. Or, from 2013's Douglas Rushkoff's book *Present Shock*, "The tension between the faux present of digital bombardment and the true now of a coherently living human generates the second kind of present shock, what we're calling digiphrenia—digi for "digital," and phrenia for "dissordered condition of mental activity."

Eating Healthy ...or, Banish the Bads



Eating healthy – or just plain eating can be a difficult topic. It's an emotional crutch for some, self-punishment for some, a reward for others. I'm fortunate in that I've had a fairly good relationship with food throughout my life. That's not to say I've not had my own struggles along life's path, but for the most part I think I deal with food fairly normally. That is, I love bread, fried chicken, chips, Baby Ruths, French fries, Red wine and vodka martinis. That's normal, right?

There was a day when I could eat pancakes for breakfast, chicken fried steak for lunch and a pile of fried shrimp for dinner with a Braum's hot fudge sunday for desert and NOT gain weight. I haven't seen that particular day for a few decades, but I remember them fondly. The bonus of that time was not only did I not gain weight, but I didn't realize how bad that diet was, in general. Ignorance was, in deed, bliss.

Today, I do (sadly) gain weight and am no longer ignorant of what constitutes a healthy diet. Because of this, it is a stressor when I eat poorly for a period of time. Well, it's not the eating poorly that's the stressor, it's the gaining weight and the feeling like crap because of the eating poorly. It is for this reason #6 on the list of ways to create a more simplified and fulfilling life is:

#6 – Eating Healthy ...or, Banish the Bads

There's no shortage of information on healthy diets. Since that "day" of eating

anything I want without consequences is over, I know I need to change my lifestyle, not go on a diet. Therefore, the one-off's will be when I cheat – not when I eat healthy.

That's the plan. What that means for me is making the following changes – overall. Permanently. (except on cheat days).

1. **Banish the Bads:** Eliminate refined sugar; processed foods; white flour
2. **Manage portions and proportions:** 1/4 protein (less for animal protein); 1/4 healthy starch; 1/2 vegetable
3. **No starch, fruits, nor alcohol** for one week a month. Only lean protein and fresh vegetables allowed.
4. **Eat larger meal mid-day**, not eating anything after 8pm
5. **Cook 3 meals a week.**
6. **Budget alcohol:** Not sure I have a set LIMIT, but being aware of the calories not over indulging on a regular basis.

#3 – on our list, "**Minimizing Options**", also addresses eating. Limiting what you eat to REAL food takes away a lot of the decisions you have to make. If you can't buy it in the vegetable aisle, the dairy section or the meat counter – it's probably not going into your shopping cart.

We Are Not Health Fanatics

But, we are committed.

Here's an example of a good, healthy(ish) meal. This is the basic **Chateaubriand recipe I used for Christmas Dinner**. It.Was.Fabulous. (...she says with all humility.) The only thing I changed was to add a bit of demi-glace to the red wine and shallots as it reduced down. We served the Chateaubriand with sautéed French green beans, and unhealthy, traditional, delicious mashed potatoes. Eliminate the potatoes and manage the portions, you've got a great, healthy meal.

For those of you interested, I steam the green beans until slightly al dente and then rinse with cold water to stop the cooking. When the rest of the meal is about 10 min

until ready, I sauté some thinly sliced yellow onion in a tiny bit of EVOO. After a couple of minutes, add the steamed green beans, stir, and cover for a couple of minutes. Uncover, stir again and the beans should be warmed up and ready to serve. I don't know what it is, but the sautéed onions completely change the green beans. Lovely.

I'll share more recipes that rock our world, as they come along. Please do the same with us – and good luck!

Practice Patience



Not many people would say I'm a patient person. (I'd disagree, of course, but that's for a different post.) Impatience is a stressor. Impatience causes conflict. Impatience is a result of trying to control something that is not within your control. Give up control; have more patience, and less stress. For these reasons, #7 on our list of ways to create a more simplified and fulfilling life is:

#7. Practice Patience

The first step in practicing patience?

1. Recognize impatience when it hits you.

- You're stuck in traffic and you're late or an appointment.
- You're standing in a checkout lane at the grocery store behind "that" person with 102 discount coupons, half of which are rejected by the computer requiring a review of the purchased items and a manual entry.
- Waiting at the airline gate for your delayed flight after the third announcement that "we'll have more information for you shortly".

Instead of going into autopilot and flipping out, recognize that your heart rate has

increased, as has, most likely, your blood pressure.. Take a breath and feel it. You can probably feel the beating in your chest and your face might even be beginning to feel warm. Think about the fact that something that is **completely and totally** external to anything you can control has control over your vital signs. Amazing, right? Does it make that person with 51 non-working discount coupons reasonable, polite, or right? No. Does it make the traffic any better or help you get to your appointment on time? No. But it does keep your mind calm and your words civil. Recognize when you're feeling impatience. Is there anything you can do about it other than complain or make others as miserable as you? If not, chill. If so, do it.

Manage your boundaries – aka: Cut the toxic people off.

It's amazing how others impact our moods, which effects how we react to events, meaning impatiently. I've found that eliminating the people that take more energy from me than I receive from the "friendship" makes me a much nicer and more patient person.



Commit to being early.

I hate to waste time. Somehow my being has turned this aversion to wasting time into procrastination. Intellectually, I know it's not a help. But something deep in my soul chants "LATER" when thinking about doing something that doesn't HAVE to be done now. This will hopefully help me avoid the traffic jam impatience or racing around town trying to find pre-made demi-glace for the Chateaubriand you're making for that dinner party tonight.

Have Gratitude.

Sitting in Austin traffic, we're going to be cutting it close for the start of the movie. Rude drivers are using the shoulder on the right to go around us and then to merge back in a few cars up, slowing the backup even further. Yep – my blood pressure is rising now just typing this. It was bad. But – I sat there, looked at Kurt who was taking me to the movies. How lucky am I to have a wonderful guy taking me to the movies?? We're sitting in this traffic in a lovely Mercedes Benz with a full tank of gas. AND, it was

because I couldn't find my sunglasses that we left later than we wanted in the first place.

Have Empathy.

Let's think about that person in the checkout line with 102 discount coupons, 51 of which weren't working. This person spent a lot of time and energy getting those coupons together for a reason. It didn't appear to be a crazy couponer, but someone who needed the discounts to make ends meet. I respect for that. I have empathy for them and gratitude that I'm able to shop for necessities without needing discounts (although I love to save money).

Give up the Expectations.

Of the times you've been the most impatient and frustrated, how many were because something or someone else did not meet your expectations? All of them? Probably, yes. Every example in this post is a negative situation only because something unfolded that was not expected. Every one of these examples is also a situation in which we are the bystander and are not in control. We are not the driver creating the traffic jam, nor the shopper with the coupons, nor the merchandise manager stocking the shelves. We're allowing the situation, over which we have no control— but all the expectations— frustrate us. How can we eliminate the frustration other than venting about how frustrated we are and possibly saying something we'll regret? If there is something we can do, do it. If not, chill. As Shakespeare said:



"Expectation is the root of all heartache."

Maybe 'ol Bill was onto something.

There are certainly other things you can do to improve your patience. Deep breathing, counting to 10, getting enough rest, exercising, etc. Let me know what works for you. For me, these are where

I'll focus and how I'll practice patience.

Prune Your Environment



When you prune a tree or shrub you make way for the new growth, which comes in more beautiful and stronger. Can the same be true for us? If you prune your environment, you'll make room for yourself and new growth.

After moving into the new house last year, unpacking my clothing in my new, GORGEOUS closet, I

couldn't shake a feeling I had. It's hard to put into words, but it felt like I was going to jump out of my skin. As I hung up dress after dress, business suit after suit, and put away more pairs of heels than would fit on the floor to ceiling shoe wall, I sat down in the middle of the closet and burst into tears.

In part, I was on overload from the stress of everything going on at that time and the other part was that it felt like all my STUFF was burying me. Sitting there on the floor, looking at everything in that closet, I saw... excess. Ridiculous excess. I sat there for a while and just looked. That's when I made the decision to cull out everything, one-by-one, and get my wardrobe down to the basics. With a goal of simplifying and reducing stress I committed to getting my excessive, now inappropriate wardrobe to a minimum; "Get thee down to basics."

Capsule Living

What if you take the **Capsule Wardrobe** approach prime time and apply it to your entire environment? What if, indeed.

#8 Prune Your Environment

That's what I'm doing. Going through my surroundings, my environment, my house one room – one bookcase, coffee table, closet at a time. Looking at each tchotchke, book, random pen and clicker (FOUR clickers - aka: remote controls on my coffee table... <sigh>) at a time asking myself what function it serves.

- Do I already have 350 others just like it? (Pens. I love pens and paper. It's an addiction. I horde pens. And paper pads, notebooks, journals.)
- Do we USE it for something? How often?
- Does it cost money for upkeep?
- Is that upkeep in line with or contrary to the value the item gives?
- And, yes, what is the sentimental impact of this item?

I'm trying to be honest with myself in this review process. It's weird because there are two reactions I'm having - and one non-reaction..

1. My gut wrenches.

Pictures that are gathering dust. They're not placed in open, easy to see places so



removing them would not change how often we see them. It would simplify the bookcase and reduce the upkeep efforts. But, would it be disrespectful to take the picture down?

Souvenirs sitting around, gathering dust. When I see the frame sitting on my piano (broken and unable to hold a picture any more), it makes me think of my dear friend Greg who brought this back for me from his dream trip to India. Greg passed away about 10 years ago. I can't look at the this frame without remembering him and what a good friend - and person - he was. Almost everytihng

sitting on a shelf, bookcase or in a drawer is a memory of SOMETHING.

Books and books and books that either have been read (a few) or will be read (most of them and...MAY be read...maybe). Books on French history, Einstein's biography,

Picasso's Blue Period and how Dan Harris learned to be 10% Happier (I did read this one, thank you very much.) I just KNOW I'll get to those I've not read yet and will definitely want to revisit those I have. I love books.

2. *My palms sweat*

Hotel pens we brought back from our recent road trip that are laying on the counter by the pen holder because there are already 100 other pens crammed in there and not one-more-pen could possibly be added. But, we've already established; I love pens.

The multiple pairs of earbuds and old iPhone, 30-pin charger cords because... you never know when you're going to need them!

All the clothes culled out of my closet during the capsule wardrobe exercise and relegated to the back closet before tossing or donating. Am I SURE I won't need those 6 black turtlenecks or those 8 dresses that totally look like a bank uniform?? OR – how about those size 26 jeans?? I just KNOW I'll fit into those again one day. No, no, NO!! I don't want to fit into those again!! If I do, that will mean I've gone through another relationship breakup. Please, Jesus, no. I'm happy with these additional 10 pounds, thank you.

3. *No Reaction*

- Kurt's Chicago Cubs souvenir glasses.
- Kurt's PS4 equipment and games.
- Kurt's golf videos, shoes, clubs, etc etc etc.

You get the drift. It's wicked hard to downsize STUFF that means something. For me, and possibly for you, it's easier to start with #2. #s 1 and 3 are fraught with risks. That's not to say you shouldn't go through STUFF to which you have emotional attachments – or STUFF that is the property of someone to whom you're emotionally attached, it's just that those things have to be handled a little more carefully.



Me – I can deal better with my sweaty palms (aka: #2). I KNOW I don't need another pen.

As much as I LOVE them, I know my life will not be better with another pen; or, another pair of earbuds; or an irrelevant 30-pin charger that fits nothing I own any more. And! I am not going to put any of this STUFF on eBay, spending 6 hours to earn a dollar-fifty. Into the Goodwill box it all goes. The size 26 jeans – off to Goodwill. If I ever fit into size 26 jeans again, send help. I'll need some wine, chocolate and a kind ear. (See [WTF for more details](#))

Tiny Living; Minimalism; Simplifying

Give it whatever catchy name you'd like. "Minimalist environment" and "Minimalism" are hot terms now. Capsule living? Even if you don't actually live in a "tiny home", it can be freeing and liberating to sort through and prune your STUFF as if you did. So, call it what you'd like; what I'm talking about is creating an environment that supports your more simple and fulfilling lifestyle – for a happier life.

Move and Drink Lots of Water



I know I know I know – I need to exercise.
Yes. Yes. Yes, Get off my back.

I know I know I know – I need to drink more
water. Yes. Yes. Yes. But we don't. At least
not consistently.

Do you feel like this? If you say “no”, you’re
lying.

#9 Move and Drink Lots (64oz/day) of Water

We KNOW it's for our own good, but we
don't do it; not consistently anyway. It's not
that anything you read here will make you
KNOW it any better. What WILL make a
difference and lead you to ACTION?

Candidly – I don't know.

What I DO know is that being honest with yourself is important if you want to make a change. For some, the community and socializing aspect of going to a gym is the key; whether it's some type of class – spin, yoga, CrossFit or just getting on a treadmill or

using the free-weights in a group setting. For others, the act of getting out of the house

and going someplace dedicated for exercising is important.

For me, it's just a discipline thing. I just need to make myself "do it". I won't participate in classes more than a few times. I won't go to a gym after the first few weeks. I know it. I'm over 60 years old and my history proves this is the case. Every 5 years or so I would test the "but THIS time I will be consistent and use the membership." Nope. Yoga, Barre, Planet Fitness, nope. Not going to happen.

Bottom line, there's no special gym, class or coach that will magically make you love going to a gym if you don't like gyms, nor make you love group classes if you're a loner, nor make you love working out at home without strict discipline.

I wish it were different. But it's not.

You just gotta Cowgirl Up

There's no secret, sorry.

Step 1: Be honest with yourself.

Me? I know I won't go to a gym after the first couple of weeks. That hasn't kept me from joining gyms – and paying for the privilege to not go. I know I won't go to classes consistently – yoga, barre or otherwise. That hasn't kept me from signing up for classes – and not going. I wasn't honest with myself. I thought "this time..." But, no. I have, however, been successful at working out regularly at home using DVDs and online memberships. Not recently, but I know that's my best shot. I won't join another gym or exercise class.



Step 2: Commit.

Think about WHY this is important. If you don't think it's important – then you shouldn't care and you shouldn't torture yourself. Go back to Facebook or cleaning the kitchen or whatever.

If you DO think it's important to workout/exercise – to NOT sit on your ass all day. Commit to making it happen. Every day, think about why it's important. Recommit yourself, EVERY DAY, that you will actually go to the gym, attend the class, USE the DVDs - do the workout. Have the discipline to get in the car and drive to the gym, the class; have the discipline to put your workout clothes on, put the DVD into the player and DO the workout. Regularly. No special trick here. As much as I procrastinate, I ALWAYS feel better after working out, even a simple walk around the block. You're probably the same. Once the workout is over, it always feels great; physically AND mentally. The next day when, like a little pouting child, your inner voice is saying "but I don't WANT to work out!" think about why you're doing this and recommit.

Step 3: Only 10-minutes REQUIRED

Taking a cue from #1 in our list -Prioritize Your Passion 10 Minutes a Day, you only have to commit to 10 minutes here, too. If you really don't feel good, have too much to do, or whatever... you only have to get through 10 minutes.



That's only 0.7% of your day, less than 1% of the day! 10 minutes out of 1440 minutes a day. After 10 minutes of walking, running, dancing, exercising - chances are you'll get into it and finish the whole thing; a complete, effective workout. Nine times out of ten, it's not the work out that you're avoiding, it's the getting started. Once you get started, the rest is "easy" (figuratively).

Again, I wish I could share some secret that would make you just love spending time getting sweaty, out of breath and...hey, hey, hey... that's not what I meant—I meant make you love exercising. Unfortunately, I haven't learned that secret. If you have, PLEASE, by all means call me immediately. So, the secret formula to success is ... not so secret.

#1. Be honest with yourself.

#2. Commit. Every day. Over and over And. Do. It.

#3. 10 Minute milestone. All you HAVE to do every day is 10 minutes.

Drink More Water



As for they hydrating... that's another "just do it". I'm rarely thirsty, but I know how important it is to overall health; digestion, skin, blood pressure, etc. etc. At least 64 oz a day is optimal.

That's a lot of damn water. That's a lot of bathroom trips, too. But for me, surprisingly, the trips to

the bathroom for #1 do subside after a couple of days. I'm not sure why, exactly, but I have a theory. For me, it

seems that after a few days of drinking 64 oz+ of water every day, #2 bathroom trips get more regular and the #1 trips aren't as inconveniently frequent. Maybe the additional water intake starts increasing the moisture in the solid waste rather than just running through as increased #1 output.

Ha! How **THAT** for a fun discussion about pee and poop?

Please know – if you didn't already – I am not a medical professional and haven't been approved by the FDA to talk about pee or poop. What I'm sharing here is based on my own research and experience.

You're welcome.

Give Without Strings



Giving without strings attached is more than giving something without receiving anything in return, it is giving without EXPECTING anything in return – which can be rarer than a Dodo sighting. How many of us can say we do something every day – or week – or ever, without expecting ANYTHING in return?

- We hug our S.O. and we expect a hug back.
- We say, “I love you” and we expect to hear “Love you, too.”
- We smile at a stranger we pass in the street and we ‘expect’ a smile or gesture in return.

This isn’t bad, it’s human nature.

There’s giving – and then there’s GIVING. Your employer may have an annual campaign encouraging you to “Give Your Fair Share”. If you sign up and have 10% of your salary given to United Way, is this without strings? Not really. A campaign like this makes you feel obligated to participate, right? Yes, United Way is a well-known and respected non-profit. Still, this kind of company-encouraged giving is not in the spirit of what I’m talking about. Nor is tithing, since tithing is normally an expected part of church (community, organizational) membership.

#10 Give With No Strings Attached



Without Strings means, no obligation to give (perceived or not) AND no compensation or rewards in return for doing so.

Consider this; last week I was in the drive through at Starbucks. I pulled up to the window to get my Venti Flat White and the cashier said, "Have a great day. The car in front of you paid for your order." Whaaaat? Seriously? How nice! By the time I realized that person had paid for my coffee they were long gone. They probably knew how surprised I would be, in a good way, and smiled to themselves imagining the look on my face when I found out.

Did that gesture impact my life in a major way? No. But, did it change my thoughts? Yes. Was my day better because of that gesture? That moment was better, so yes, probably. If that moment was better, possibly making my day better, then, it COULD have positively impacted my life. Right? Maybe. Something as simple (and inexpensive) as you springing for a stranger's coffee can possibly make someone's day (life) better.

It's easy to think about how your life can be more fulfilling by giving without strings. Not only does this kind of anonymous giving make you feel good, I think it unites us, too. I don't know the person who paid for my coffee, but I'll bet if someone introduced them to me in the future we wouldn't feel like total strangers. we'd feel connected – at least at some small level. Creating or changing an experience of another, even in a small way, unites you, with each other at a human level. (If you're a critical thinker, you may wonder if the

fulfillment one gains from the act of giving is, in fact, “a string”? We can debate this separately, but for now let’s say “no”.)

How does this No Strings Giving simplify your life?

I don’t know about you, but it’s complicated work to constantly keep track of “what’s in it for me” and who did what, returned the favor, ignored a kindness or reciprocated appropriately. Imagine the weight off your shoulders if you didn’t have to pay attention to whether you got a “thank you” or not. Yes, it’s always nice to be acknowledged or appreciated, but it doesn’t change the act. On top of that, you have no control over how someone will or won’t react – to anything. If you are truly giving without any obligation or expectation, the pressure is off. You’re doing what you know to be good and appropriate. Period. Any reaction – or not – after doesn’t change that.

What and how can you Give without Strings?

Giving doesn’t have to be financial, or create a hardship. For example:

- At work, walking by the mail-room you see a package for 'Bob' that’s been dropped off. Delivering mail “isn’t your job”, but you pick it up and drop it off at Bob’s desk. The person who would normally be responsible for delivering the package has a few more seconds freed up.
- You’ve been standing in the checkout line, waiting and waiting, seemingly forever. Someone joins the line behind you, holding 2 items. You have a basket-full and, even though you’ve been waiting (and waiting) in line, you let them move in front of you
- Here's something Barb shared. She walked to a local coffee shop and passed by 4 men who appeared to be homeless, huddled up on the steps nearby, bracing themselves against the cold wind. She got herself a coffee and 4 additional cups, giving the 4 men the coffee as she passed by on her way back home. She didn’t say anything to the men other than “Here are a few coffees for you. Enjoy!!”



- Every time I go grocery shopping I always include a donation to the local food bank/soup kitchen. I stock up on my food for the week and donate a meal for someone else, as well.
- Or, as was done for me – you can always “pay it backward” at a Starbucks drive-through (or McDonald’s, or ... the drive-through of your choice)

These examples are small. Again, it doesn’t have to be big things. We’ve all heard the big gestures of “a Secret Santa paying off everyone’s layaway at the local Sears” stories and those are WONDERFUL. But consistently doing small things, giving in small ways without any need for reciprocation, acknowledgement or recognition in return, can change your world in Simple and Fulfilling ways.

This wraps up our 10 ways to simplify and create a more fulfilling life. We'd love to know what you thought and if any of the 10 resonated with you enough to take it on. If yes, which one and how's it going? If no, what are your thoughts on simplifying and increasing your fulfillment / happiness levels?

****THE END****



Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to read this. We hoped it was helpful in giving you ideas of ways you can bring some peace and simplicity back into your life. I'd love to hear your thoughts.

Do you know anyone with whom this short eBook might resonate? You could, of course, send them this copy - but we'd appreciate it if you'd send them this link to so they can download their own copy of [10 Ways to Simplify Your Life and Be More Fulfilled](#). Sending them this link will help us track how many people this eBook has reached.

[Heels and Tevas website](#) and [email list](#) is the best way to keep in touch with what we're doing:

- Podcast Schedule
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If you haven't already, please join us on Facebook. We have a [Heels And Tevas FB Page](#), where we post various updates and links about Heels and Tevas. [Heels and Tevas Tribe FB Group](#) is where other women, who USED to think 60 was old come together to share, discuss and support each other. It's a fabulous group of women. Check us out and chime in.

Thanks again!

Lynnelle (Heels) and Barb (Tevas)



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