

How To Simplify, Simply: Cut Your Number Of Decisions



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I remember one time I read a book called *Simplify your Life*, I almost laughed out loud - who knew “simplifying” could be so complex! Nevertheless, over time I developed my own (hopefully simpler) ways to simplify your life. I’ll share one of them today: look for repeatable patterns.

Let’s talk about what that means. Repeatable patterns are things you can do over and over again: decisions you can make, places to keep things, what you wear, what you choose, for example. The more repeatable patterns you create, the more you reduce your stress, the less you have to decide – the simpler your life becomes.

There’s actually science behind this. It turns out that self-control is a finite resource. What that means is that your brain can only make so many decisions in a day, and when you overdo it, you can start to

tire out and lose the self-control that's so important for maintaining the details of your life. So the more you use up, the less you have later.

You can preserve brain power by making fewer decisions and making those decisions easier.

Let's start in your office. In your office if you have 25 different colors of pens, and your brain is constantly searching even just to find a pen. Let's find a repeatable pattern – choose your favorite pen. Have one pen. Now whenever you need a new pen, whenever a pen is missing, maybe you have a stash in your desk drawer – take one out.

What about in your meetings? Maybe in every meeting there is a discussion that has to take place, multiple emails going around to decide on the agenda and presentation slides. What if you created a repeatable pattern instead? We always use the same agenda template, we always use the same slide template and the same people speak in order.

Ultimately, you can reduce the time and energy it takes to make any decision and simplify the days in your life simply by looking for repeatable patterns – and replicating those patterns instead of having to make the same decisions again and again. There are opportunities to simplify your life everywhere. Simply look for ways where you can make once decision, one time instead of several. Practice the strategy when the opportunities present themselves and simplifying your life may just become a repeatable pattern in itself.

See Joelle's book [The Inner Edge: The 10 Practices of Personal Leadership](#) for 10 more strategies to become the leader of your own life and reach better levels of effectiveness.

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