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NARRATIVE OF SIMPLE AND HAPPY LIFE

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Abstract:

Life, in biological concept, is the ability to breathe, grow, produce generation, etc that people, animals and plants have before they die. A happy life for humans, in sociological purview, can be defined in various ways, as it often depends on individual values, beliefs, and circumstances. Humans seek meaning of life in the metrics of happiness in worldly activities, and happiness is more concerned in our feelings in the present and related to our satisfaction in general. This includes relationships, work, achievements, the people around us, level of pressure, zeal in life, and all other things that we care about and everything is integrated into the essence of simplicity in human life. As a matter of fact, a simple life is usually aligned with individual values and belief, which gives him/her room, time and energy so that he becomes free from mental and physical anxiety, stress and pressure. In fact, simplicity can give us a happy life and a simple and happy life is the common desire of mass people. It is an analytical and reviewed article, where the author has narrated and evaluated different schools of thought, and many scholars' wisdom came towards a common idea of simple life for happiness.

Key Words: Happiness, simple life, religion, secular, philosophy

Introduction

Life is necessarily a collective concern and it is the quality which people, animals, and plants have when they are not dead.¹ Human life is a lovely journey that is meant to be embraced to the fullest every moment. Definition of happiness varies depending on individuals. Happiness emerges several common themes like health and well-being, personal achievement, purpose and fulfillment, meaningful relationships, financial stability, balance between professional and personal life, gratitude and mindfulness, etc. So, a happy life is usually characterized by a combination of these common themes or factors, tailored to individual preferences and circumstances.² Happiness is not possible in the absence of hope. Happy people will satisfy their needs right away, even if it doesn't serve them much purpose in the future.³ Again, a simple lifestyle comes and goes out of fashion. The dominant idea here is to reduce the outer complexity of our life by choice. Limiting the way, one chooses to live to focus time and energy towards a deeper inner calling. American former mixed martial artist and professional wrestler Mark Coleman has said that nature teaches us simplicity and contentment because in its presence we realize we need very little to be happy.⁴

Since the dawn of civilization, humans naturally landed into a philosophical insight to live in unity for peace and success to seek the meaning of life. Hence, theocracy, religion and sociological bindings appear as indispensable aspects to culture in life for simple living. One should not compare his/her life to others. We have no idea what their journey is all about. Some people practice simple living by reducing their consumption and minimizing their waste. Joshua Becker has said that the first step in crafting the life you want is to get rid of everything you don't. Lowering consumption can reduce individual debt, which allows for greater flexibility and simplicity in one's life. If one spends less on goods or services, one can spend less time earning money.⁵ The time saved may be used to pursue other interests, to help others through volunteering, or to improve their quality of life, for example, by pursuing creative activities.

People who reduce their expenses can also increase their savings, leading to financial independence and the possibility of early retirement.⁶ Most of the religions explain that gratitude reveals the fullness of life.

It turns what we have into enough and gives us satisfaction. If anybody cannot find peace within his/herself, he/she will never find it anywhere else. Perhaps one of the most fundamental aspects of simple living is to learn to let go.

Simple living refers to practices that promote simplicity in one's lifestyle. Common practices of simple living include reducing the number of possessions one owns, depending less on technology and services, and spending less money.⁷ In addition to such external changes, simple living also reflects a person's mindset and values. Simple living practices can be seen in history, religion, art, and economics.⁸ Enthusiasts may choose simple living for a variety of personal reasons, such as, spirituality, health, increase in quality time for family and friends, work life balance, personal taste, financial sustainability, increase in philanthropy, frugality, environmental sustainability, or reducing stress.

Simple living can also be a reaction to economic materialism and consumer culture. Some cite sociopolitical goals aligned with environmentalist, anti-consumerist, or anti-war movements, including conservation, de-growth, deep ecology, and tax resistance. Another secret is minimalism and that is a concept that emphasizes simplicity and living with fewer possessions, focusing on what truly adds value and meaning to one's life. It is all about owning only what adds value and meaning to our life and at the same time living with the people who we care about and removing the rest. It's about removing the clutter and using our time and energy for the things that remain. As we know, we only have a certain amount of energy, time, and space in our lives.

One of the beautiful secrets of a simple life is to stay away from people who always want to be important. Remain with those who are humble, helpful and compassionate. We must remember that in this world sometimes we do the hard work and set the table and somebody else eats the meal as said by Brian Burke. American founding father and first president George Washington has said that ninety-nine percent of failures come from people who make excuses.⁹ Again, Barack Obama has said that change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we have been waiting for. We are the change that we seek. He also said that if you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress.¹⁰

We must be selective with our time and energy because both are God gifted and very limited. The Genevan philosopher, writer, and composer Jean-Jacques Rousseau said that the world of reality has its limits; the world of imagination is boundless.¹¹ We should ask ourselves a few questions like Who am I? Where am I from? Where shall I go? What do I want? Why do I want it? How will I achieve it? We should donate our extra items to others who could make more use of the items than us and should feel the joy in owning less. In this analytical and research article, the author has taken an effort to narrate both common and different way of thinking of different schools of thought and many scholars as well as summarize the idea of simple life for happiness. Living a simple life helps us to minimize disturbances, leaving more time to focus on the things that we love, which brings us joy and happiness.

History and Religion about Simple Life

The most religious and spiritual traditions allow and advise simple living, and which viewed as a path to spiritual growth, peace, and a deeper connection with the divine. It involves reducing material possessions and attachments, focusing on values like humility, generosity, and service, and prioritizing spiritual practices like prayer, meditation, and contemplation. So, most of the important religious and spiritual traditions encourage simple living.¹² Early examples include the Sramana traditions of Iron Age India and biblical Nazirites. These traditions were heavily influenced by both national cultures and religious ethics.¹³ Simplicity was one of the primary concepts espoused by Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism and who was the semi-legendary Chinese philosopher and author.¹⁴ This is most embodied in the principles of Pu and Ziran.¹⁵ Confucius has been quoted numerous times as promoting simple living.¹⁶ Gautama Buddha espoused simple living as a central virtue of Buddhism. The Four Noble Truths advocate detachment from desire as the path to ending suffering and attaining Nirvana.¹⁷

Messenger of God Jesus, a central figure in Christianity, is often seen as a model of simple living, focusing on his ministry, relationships, and spiritual growth rather than material wealth.

The Bible contains passages that encourage simplicity, such as, the parable of the rich young ruler who was asked to sell his possessions and follow Jesus. Simple living in Christianity is seen as a way to cultivate humility, generosity, and a focus on spiritual matters, ultimately leading to a closer relationship with God. Messenger of God Mohammad, a central figure of Islam, exemplified simple living in Islam, demonstrating humility and contentment despite having the potential for greater wealth and comfort.¹⁸ He engaged in everyday tasks, such as mending clothes, repairing shoes, and helping with household chores, showing that simplicity wasn't a sign of weakness, but a choice rooted in faith.¹⁹

Islam encourages contentment with what one has, emphasizing that worldly possessions are a test from God and should not be the primary focus of life. Islam emphasizes charity and giving, urging Muslims to share their resources with those in need and to avoid hoarding wealth.²⁰ While encouraging simple living, Islam also recognizes the importance of enjoying the world's blessings, but with the understanding that everything should be done with good intentions and a focus on pleasing God.²¹ Islam urges humans to think and find all in one and one in all in the society. It motivates people to share their possessions with others to seek inner peace, divine blessings and heaven hereafter what everybody craves for as an ultimate goal of human existence.

Hinduism encourages individuals to focus on their inner selves and their spiritual development rather than on external achievements and material possessions. Simple living can be seen as a way to align with one's dharma (purpose) and to reduce the accumulation of negative karma (actions with consequences). On the other hand, Buddhism's Eightfold Path includes right livelihood, which encourages ethical and simple living that minimizes harm and suffering. Buddhism teaches that attachment to material possessions is a source of suffering, and that detachment can lead to inner peace and enlightenment. Whatever our religion we can donate to charities and encourage others to do the same which will create the most happiness. There are many organizations and individuals doing an incredible amount of good to improve happiness and peace in the world.²²

Messenger of God Jesus is said to have lived a simple life. He is said to have encouraged his disciples "to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics".²³ He also told his disciples that they cannot serve God and money at the same time, and explained that God is capable of providing them with the essentials for life (food and clothing), so long as they "seek his kingdom first".²⁴ The Apostle Paul taught that people should be content with food and clothing, and that the desire to be rich is the cause of many kinds of evils.²⁵ Life style of Messenger of God Mohammad was remarkably simple and unpretentious. He did not possess any luxuries, and the gifts he used to receive were often distributed among others or given away in charity.²⁶ However, any other notable religious individuals, such as, Benedict of Nursia, Francis of Assisi,²⁷ Leo Tolstoy, Rabindranath Tagore, Albert Schweitzer, and Mahatma Gandhi, have claimed that spiritual inspiration led them to a simple lifestyle.²⁸

Sufism in the Muslim world emerged and grew as a mystical, somewhat hidden tradition in the mainstream Sunni and Shia denominations of Islam. Sufism grew particularly in the frontier areas of Islamic states,²⁹ where the asceticism of its Fakirs and Dervishes appealed to populations already used to the monastic traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity.³⁰ Sufis were influential and successful in spreading Islam between the 10th and 19th centuries.³¹ Some scholars have argued that Sufi Muslim ascetics and mystics played a decisive role in converting the Turkic peoples to Islam, mainly because of the similarities between the extreme ascetic Sufis (fakirs and dervishes) and the Shamans of the traditional Turco-Mongol religion.³² Interesting, Muslims believe that the Quran, the central religious text of Islam, was revealed to Messenger Muhammad by God.³³ Again, Messenger of God Muhammad was sent to guide people to Islam, which is believed not to be a separate religion, but the unaltered original faith of mankind, and believed to have been shared by previous prophets including Adam, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.³⁴ In the earliest era, Prophet PBUH and his companions provided practical examples; they were role models for followers. Later, wealth eroded that simplicity. Caliphates of Umayyad and Abbas left simplicity and adopted opulence. Same can be said about Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and other important religions.³⁵

In all important religions, simple living often goes hand in hand with mindfulness and meditation, which help cultivate inner awareness and detach from worldly distractions. Plain people typically belonged to Christian groups that practiced lifestyles that excluded forms of wealth or technology for religious or philosophical reasons. Such Christian groups include the Shakers, Mennonites, Amish, Hutterites, Amana Colonies, Bruderhof, Old German Baptist Brethren, Harmony Society, and some Quakers.³⁶ A Quaker belief called Testimony of simplicity states that a person ought to live her or his life simply.

Some tropes about complete exclusion of technology in these groups may not be accurate though. The Amish and other groups do use some modern technology, after assessing its impact on the community.³⁷ The 18th century French Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau strongly praised the simple way of life in many of his writings, especially in two books: *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (1750) and *Discourse on Inequality* (1754).³⁸ However, life is complicated and chaotic with and without religion.

Secular Thinking about Simple Living

Epicureanism, based on the teachings of the Athens-based philosopher Epicurus, flourished from about the fourth century BCE to the third century CE. Epicureanism held that the paradigm of happiness was the untroubled life, which was made possible by carefully considered choices. Epicurus pointed out that troubles entailed by maintaining an extravagant lifestyle tend to outweigh the pleasures of partaking in it. He therefore concluded that what is necessary for happiness, bodily comfort, and life itself should be maintained at minimal cost, while all things beyond what is necessary for these should either be tempered by moderation or completely avoided.³⁹ Henry David Thoreau, an American naturalist and author, made the classic secular advocacy of a life of simple and sustainable living in his book *Walden* (1854). Thoreau conducted a two-year experiment living a plain and simple life on the shores of Walden Pond. He concluded: "Our life is frittered away by detail. Simplify, simplify, simplify! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million-count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumbnail."⁴⁰

In Victorian Britain, Henry Stephens Salt, an admirer of Thoreau, popularized the idea of "Simplification, the saner method of living".⁴¹ Other British advocates of the simple life included Edward Carpenter, William Morris, and the members of the "Fellowship of the New Life".⁴² Carpenter popularized the phrase the "Simple Life" in his essay *Simplification of Life in his England's Ideal* (1887).⁴³ C.R. Ashbee and his followers also practised some of these ideas, thus linking simplicity with the Arts and Crafts movement.⁴⁴ British novelist John Cowper Powys advocated the simple life in his 1933 book *A Philosophy of Solitude*.⁴⁵ John Middleton Murry and Max Plowman practiced a simple lifestyle at their Adelphi Centre in Essex in the 1930s.⁴⁶ Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh championed a "right simplicity" philosophy based on ruralism in some of his work.⁴⁷

George Lorenzo Noyes, a naturalist, mineralogist, development critic, writer, and artist, is known as the Thoreau of Maine. He lived a wilderness lifestyle, advocating through his creative work a simple life and reverence for nature.⁴⁸ During the 1920s and 1930s, the Vanderbilt Agrarians of the Southern United States advocated a lifestyle and culture centered upon traditional and sustainable agrarian values as opposed to the progressive urban industrialism which dominated the Western world at that time.⁴⁹ The Norwegian American economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen warned against the conspicuous consumption of the materialistic society in his *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899); Richard Gregg coined the term "voluntary simplicity" in *The Value of Voluntary Simplicity* (1936). From the 1920s, a number of modern authors articulated both the theory and practice of living simply, among them Gandhian Richard Gregg, economists Ralph Borsodi and Scott Nearing, anthropologist-poet Gary Snyder, and utopian fiction writer Ernest Callenbach. Economist E. F. Schumacher argued against the notion that "bigger is better" in *Small Is Beautiful* (1973)⁵⁰; and Duane Elgin continued the promotion of the simple life in *Voluntary Simplicity* (1981).⁵¹ As we believe that time isn't the core and key of life. So, let's start a decluttering journey to make our life simple and happy.

Technology and Simple Life

Choosing to live a simple life in a modern world is not about deprivation at all. It's about enjoying the simplest things we have in our lives and being content with them. People who practice simple living have diverse views on the role of technology. The American political activist Scott Nearing was skeptical about how humanity would use new technology, citing destructive inventions such as nuclear weapons, chemical/biological weapon.⁵² Those who eschew modern technology are often referred to as Luddites or neo-

Luddites.⁵³ Although simple living is often a secular pursuit, it may still involve reconsidering appropriate technology as Anabaptist groups, such as, the Amish or Mennonites have done.⁵⁴ Technology can make a simple lifestyle within mainstream culture easier and more sustainable. The internet can reduce an individual's carbon footprint through remote work and lower paper usage.⁵⁵ Some have calculated their energy consumption to show that one can live simply and in a satisfying way by using much less energy than is typically used in Western countries. Artificial intelligence, robots, blockchain, internet, big data, etc may help us in daily life and decision-making process as well as that can make our life simple and happy.

Simple life is about having and being enough and thinking that it is more than enough. It is about not being burdened by physical things as well as mental clutter.⁵⁶ Technologies they may embrace include computers, photovoltaic systems, wind turbines, water turbines, sidelight communication, artificial intelligence, etc.⁵⁷ Technological interventions that appear to simplify living may induce side effects elsewhere or in the future. Evgeny Morozov warns that tools like the internet can facilitate mass surveillance and political repression.⁵⁸ The book *Green Illusions* identifies how wind and solar energy technologies have hidden side effects and can actually increase energy consumption and entrench environmental harms over time.⁵⁹ The authors of the book *Techno-Fix* criticize technological optimists for overlooking the limitations of technology in solving agricultural problems.⁶⁰ On the other hand, a new economics movement has been building since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972,⁶¹ and the publications that year of *Only One Earth*, *The Limits to Growth*, and *Blueprint for Survival*, followed by *Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered* in 1973.⁶² James Robertson's *A New Economics of Sustainable Development* inspired work of thinkers and activists who participate in his working for a Sane Alternative network and program. According to Robertson, the shift to sustainability is likely to require a widespread shift of emphasis from raising incomes to reducing costs.⁶³

Wiseman Thinking about Simple Life

The great Chinese philosopher and thinker Confucius said that life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated.⁶⁴ He also advised us to be able under all circumstances to practice five constitutes perfect virtue; these five things are gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness. He used to say before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves.⁶⁵ The ancient Greek philosopher and polymath Aristotle used to say happiness depends upon us.⁶⁶ He also said no great mind has ever existed without a touch of madness. A friend to all is a friend to none. Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet. It is not enough to win a war; it is more important to organize the peace.⁶⁷ Alexander the Great said that whatever possession we gain by our sword cannot be sure or lasting, but the love gained by kindness and moderation is certain and durable. There is nothing impossible to him who will try.⁶⁸ He said I am not afraid of an army of lions led by a sheep; I am afraid of an army of sheep led by a lion.⁶⁹ The Spanish painter, sculptor, printmaker, ceramicist, and theatre designer Pablo Picasso used to say everything you can imagine is real.⁷⁰ The South African anti-apartheid activist and politician Nelson Mandela used to say it always seems impossible until it's done.⁷¹ The Baptist minister and major leader of the Civil Rights Movement Martin Luther King Jr. has said time is always right to do what is right.⁷² The great German theoretical physicist Albert Einstein once said that life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.⁷³ The American writer, humorist, and essayist Mark Twain said that if you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything.⁷⁴ The South African actor, writer and director James Ryan has said that learn to live with less so that you appreciate more.

The German-born Jewish girl who kept a diary documenting her life in hiding amid Nazi persecution during the German occupation of the Netherlands Anne Frank said that we all live with the objective of being happy; our lives are all different and yet the same.⁷⁵ The highest spiritual leader and head of Tibetan Buddhism Dalai Lama said that happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions.⁷⁶ The English singer, songwriter, musician and peace activist John Lennon advised us that life is short; make it sweet. Every moment matters. So, cherish the little things. Life is beautiful when you stop and look around. Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans.⁷⁷ He also said, Count your age by friends, not years. Count your life by smiles, not tears. The Austrian American management consultant, educator, and author Peter Drucker advised us that the best way to predict the future is to create it.⁷⁸ He said that if you want something new, you have to stop doing something old. Efficiency is doing the thing right. Effectiveness is doing the right thing. He also said that results are obtained by exploiting opportunities, not by solving problems.⁷⁹ He advises that, "the most serious mistakes are not being made as a result of wrong answers. The true dangerous thing is asking the wrong question."⁸⁰ The Irish author, poet, and playwright

Oscar Wilde advised us that the best way to appreciate your job is to imagine yourself without one.⁸¹ American popular president Abraham Lincoln has said that you cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.⁸² On the other hand, the longest serving American president Franklin D. Roosevelt has said that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.⁸³ The writer, poet, and physician Oliver Goldsmith has said that life is a journey that must be traveled no matter how bad the roads and accommodations.⁸⁴ He also said, I love talking about nothing. It is the only thing I know anything about.⁸⁵ The British writer Vivian Greene has advised that life is a continuous journey where every step is an adventure, and every moment is a treasure.⁸⁶ There is a saying in Chinese Proverb: "the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is now."⁸⁷

The American author, disability rights advocate, political and activist Helen Keller has said that "life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all."⁸⁸ The greatest painters in the history of western art Leonardo da Vinci said that, "one can have no smaller or greater mastery than mastery of oneself."⁸⁹ The author of very popular book 'Essentialism' Greg McKeown has said, "remember that if you don't prioritize your life someone else will."⁹⁰ On the other hand, Brene Brown told that, Joy comes to us in moments, ordinary moments. We risk missing out on joy when we get too busy chasing down the extraordinary. The American self-help author Napoleon Hill has said that "if you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way. Simple living is just one label for the act of decluttering and simplifying life."⁹¹ The American Christian pastor, author, educator, and radio preacher Charles R. Swindoll said that "life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to it. Princess Diana has felt that lead from the heart, not the head."⁹² The German theologian, organist, musicologist, writer, humanitarian, philosopher, and physician Albert Schweitzer has advised that "success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success."⁹³ The American famous actor and musician Johnny Depp said that "laugh as much as you breathe and love as long as you live. Mother Teresa has advised that life is an opportunity, benefit from it. Life is a beauty, admire it. Life is a dream, realize it. Life is a challenge, meet it. Life is a duty, complete it. Life is a game, play it."⁹⁴ World famous Sufi mystic, philosopher and lover of humanity Rumi has advised that "life is a balance of holding on and letting go."⁹⁵ Saint Augustine of Eastern Orthodox Church has advised that "life is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page."⁹⁶

Wiseman Thinking about Happiness

Happiness is a compound and complicated emotion that contains a wide span of positive feelings, from satisfaction to deep pleasure. Happiness is a state and not a trait. We decide whether our glass is half full or half empty. Scientists argue that happiness happens on a spectrum of feelings. Everybody usually experiences a wide group of positive and negative emotions and experiences. It can also arise spontaneously, without any apparent external cause.⁹⁷ Happiness is the combination of well-health and optimum freedom. Freedom means that I can do what I want, when I want, and where I want. Freedom without being healthy cannot be able to enjoy this freedom, which will not make us happy.⁹⁸ Personal happiness can be affected by cultural factors. Happiness depends on personality and attitude. There are few people who are cheerful and optimistic most of the time. Their positive personalities make it easier for them to be happy.⁹⁹ Researchers have found that more than half of happiness depends on things that are under our control. They also found that happy people are healthier, live longer, learn better, and have better inter-personnel skill. Finally, they find that happy people are simple and successful.¹⁰⁰ Happy people have positive feelings and emotions like joy, gratitude, love, compassion, hope, creativity, admiration, delight, playfulness, interest, excitement, humor, inspiration, assertiveness, kindness, calm.¹⁰¹ The American popular president Thomas Jefferson put the "pursuit of happiness" on the same level as life and liberty in the United States Declaration of Independence.¹⁰² Today, many countries (e.g. Norway, New Zealand, and Bhutan) and organizations regularly measure population happiness through large-scale surveys.¹⁰³

Philosophy of happiness is often discussed in conjunction with ethics. Ethicists have made arguments for how humans should behave, either individually or collectively, based on the resulting happiness of such behavior.¹⁰⁴ The great Greek philosopher Aristotle stated that happiness (also being well and doing well) is the only thing that humans desire for their own sake, unlike riches, honour, health or friendship.¹⁰⁵ The German philologist, philosopher, poet and composer Nietzsche meant that making happiness is one's ultimate goal and the aim of one's existence, in his words "makes one contemptible."¹⁰⁶ The Russian famous writer Leo Tolstoy said that if you want to be happy, be.¹⁰⁷ The French philosopher, author, dramatist, journalist, world federalist, and political activist Albert Camus said that "you will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of. You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life."¹⁰⁸ Anne Frank said, "Whoever is happy will make others happy. Be happy with what you have while working for what you want."

The American young adult novelist, Ann Brashares said, "Being happy isn't having everything in your life to be perfect. Maybe it's about stringing together all the little things."¹⁰⁹ American president Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort."¹¹⁰ The American writer Ben Sweetland said, "happiness is a journey, not a destination."¹¹¹ The American essayist and writer Agnes Repplier said, "it is not easy to find happiness within yourself, but impossible to find it elsewhere."¹¹² In a study of older adults evaluate that those who volunteered had higher life satisfaction and will to live, and less depression, anxiety, and traumatization.¹¹³ A large body of research also evaluates that engaging in pro-social behavior can increase happiness.¹¹⁴

Example of Contemporary Renowned and Rich People Enjoying Simple Life

Benjamin Franklin is the most influential intellectuals of his time and was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. He was the drafter and signer of the Declaration of Independence.¹¹⁵ He was a writer, scientist, inventor, statesman, diplomat, printer, publisher, political philosopher and popular leader.¹¹⁶ Franklin was active in community affairs and colonial and state politics, as well as national and international affairs. He was born at Boston in 1706 in the Province of Massachusetts Bay. Franklin became a successful newspaper editor and printer in Philadelphia.¹¹⁷ As a scientist, Franklin's studies of electricity made him a major figure in the American Enlightenment and the history of physics. He used his understanding of electricity to develop a cheap solution to keep houses from burning down. The rod diverted electricity from a lightning strike into the ground near a building. He became very popular, and even King George III had one installed at his palace.¹¹⁸ Benjamin Franklin's life was deeply imbued with principles of charity and humanity, evident in his numerous philanthropic endeavors, advocacy for social reforms, and belief in the inherent dignity of all individuals and he has articulated through institutional innovations and individual acts of compassion. He was influential in founding vital public institutions in Philadelphia, including the first hospital, a public library, a volunteer fire department, and a college, aiming to advance civic purposes and support self-help efforts. He spread education; develop skill and knowledge among youth and caring for society.¹¹⁹ He utilized his own wealth, to organize the Pennsylvania militia and founded the first hospital in the colonies. Under Franklin's influence, the city streets were clean, and colonists in Philadelphia had homeowners' insurance.¹²⁰ He used his influence to advocate for causes like the abolition of slavery and improvements in prison conditions.¹²¹ Franklin's belief and promoted the common good over personal gain like, not copyrighting his inventions, and was reflected in his enduring advice and writings, particularly in *Poor Richard's Almanack*.¹²² Franklin died at his home in Philadelphia in 1790 and his last word was "a dying man can do nothing easy."¹²³ His personal pursuit of virtue through a system of thirteen virtues also guided his moral compass and interactions with others.¹²⁴ He led very simple life, struggle severely, and spend his time and wealth for humanity, charity, development society and community with good moral. He distributes his money and wealth for needy and poor people.

Mahatma Gandhi was the father of the nation of India; stands among history's most significant advocates for civil rights and social change. His dedication to peaceful resistance, known as satyagraha, was crucial in securing India's freedom from British rule and later motivated other civil rights champions, including Martin Luther King Jr. He was born in 1869 in India and he went to pursue a degree in law at University College London, and becomes a qualified lawyer.¹²⁵ After returning to India with limited success in his legal career, he took a position with an Indian law firm in South Africa in 1893. In South Africa exposed him firsthand to the systematic racism that Indians and other minorities endured under colonial systems.¹²⁶ These encounters transformed him from a practicing attorney into a committed activist, shaping his core beliefs about peaceful resistance.¹²⁷ His South African advocacy work became the groundwork for his later revolutionary leadership in India. Gandhi faced multiple imprisonments for his protest activities against British rule. During his time in jail, he frequently employed hunger strikes as a form of moral protest against specific British policies, transforming his sacrifice into a compelling tool for change. In the early 1930s, he fasted for six days to oppose Britain's plan for separate electoral systems for lower-caste Indians, arguing this would deepen social divisions.¹²⁸ Public pressure from his supporters forced the British to abandon this policy. Tragically, he was killed in 1948 by a Hindu nationalist who disagreed with his efforts to promote harmony between Hindus and Muslims after India's partition. Gandhi's principles of nonviolence, truth, and equality continue to inspire social justice movements and activists worldwide.¹²⁹ His life demonstrates that meaningful political and social transformation can emerge from moral courage and compassion rather than force or

violence. He kept no wealth and no money for his family.¹³⁰ He just passed his entire life with minimum consumption of food, cloth, enjoyment and wealth.

On May 11th, 1998, India conducted a powerful nuclear test that stunned the world and marked a historic moment. Behind this achievement stood one man Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam, the Missile Man of India, a visionary scientist, service to poor and extreme philanthropy and the beloved the most popular President of India.¹³¹ But his life story is not just one of power or fame; it is the inspiring journey of a boy from a small town who dreamed big and worked relentlessly to change his nation and the world. Dr Abdul Kalam was born in 1931, in South India. His family was poor but rich in values and he was the youngest of several siblings, and from a young age, he showed an insatiable hunger for knowledge.¹³² Despite financial difficulties, He helped support his family by selling newspapers in the early mornings, studying under the dim glow of kerosene lanterns at night. In 1969, Kalam moved to the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), where his passion for space and rocketry came alive. As mission director, he led the development and launch of India's first satellite launch vehicle (SLV-3). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Kalam led the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP), developing key missiles such as Agni, Prithvi, Trishul, Akash, and Nag, establishing India as a strong and self-reliant military power.¹³³ His leadership was characterized by humility, hard work, and an unwavering belief in India's potential. He famously said, "We don't need to depend on anyone; we will build our own technology." In 1998, Kalam was the chief scientist behind India's Pokhran-II nuclear tests a mission shrouded in secrecy and precision. On May 11th, India successfully conducted nuclear tests that shocked the world, officially joining the ranks of nuclear powers. His contributions earned him the title "Missile Man of India" and national hero status. In 2002, the people of India elected Dr Abdul Kalam as the 11th President of India, a unique choice since he was a scientist, not a politician. His presidency was marked by a focus on education and inspiring youth.¹³⁴ He visited thousands of schools and colleges, encouraging students to dream big and work hard. One of his most famous quotes was, "Dream is not what you see in sleep; it is something that does not let you sleep." After his term of president ended in 2007, he returned to his passion teaching and writing. On July 27th, 2015, while delivering a lecture at IIM Shillong, great Dr Abdul Kalam passed away peacefully, doing what he loved most: inspiring students.¹³⁵ When he died, he has nothing, just 6 pieces of old shirt and pant. He never married, dedicating his entire life to his work and country. Despite lacking wealth or luxury, Kalam's heart and vision touched millions. His life remains a beacon of hope and motivation, proving that no matter where you start, with perseverance, humility, and dreams, you can change the world.¹³⁶ As he said, "Don't take rest after your first victory because if you fail in the second, more lips are waiting to say that your first victory was just luck.

Ranada Prasad or RP Shaha was born in 1896 in British Bengal. He dedicated his entire life to humanitarian causes and supporting those with nowhere else to turn. His childhood was marked by deep tragedy when his mother died prematurely due to poverty and lack of proper care. This heartbreaking loss deeply shaped his worldview and future mission. During World War I, Ranada joined the British Army and later became a Viceroy's Commissioned Officer in the 49th Bengal Infantry.¹³⁷ His military service brought him into contact with fellow soldiers, demonstrating his courage in the face of danger. For his bravery during the war, he was invited to London, where King George V personally honored him with awards. Upon returning home, Nobel Prize winner Poet Rabindranath Tagore welcomed and celebrated his achievements. After the war, Ranada was become one of the richest person in East Bengal, establishing himself as both a successful businessman and generous benefactor.¹³⁸ During the devastating Bengal Famine of 1943, Ranada operated over 250 community kitchens to feed starving people. He also donated 250,000 rupees to the Red Cross fund supporting World War II soldiers and their families. In recognition of his humanitarian efforts, Field Marshal Wavell, the Viceroy of India, awarded him the title of Rai Bahadur in 1944. He promotes women's empowerment and education. Ranada's core philosophy was straightforward: "simple living, high thinking." As a secular humanist, Ranada often declared: "There is only one religion - that of humanity. I am human; this should be my most important identity." In 1947, just before Partition, He founded the Goadini Welfare Trust, donating all his wealth to this organization, fulfilling his childhood dreams and inspiring future generations.¹³⁹ Despite the political turmoil, he decided to stay in East Pakistan rather than migrate to India, continuing his business and welfare efforts. When offered the title of "Hilal-i-Pakistan" by the Pakistani government, but he refused. During Bangladesh's 1971 Liberation War, Ranada refused to leave his homeland or its people. RP Shaha along with his son was kidnapped by the Pakistani army and never came back.¹⁴⁰ He sacrificed his everything and kept nothing for his family. He established many school, college, hospital, charity organizations. He led very simple life and his life was for service to poor and extreme philanthropy.¹⁴¹

Ratan Naval Tata, born in 1937 in India and the most revered industrialists and humanitarians. Despite being born into immense wealth, his early life was marked by emotional hardship. His parents separated when he was just ten years old, and was raised by his grandmother and Tata later reflected, “My grandmother made me what I am.” Tata has pursued his architecture degree from Cornell University of USA.¹⁴² He never married, choosing instead a life of quiet dedication to work, service, charity, and solitude. Tata began his professional journey in 1961 not in a boardroom, but on wearing a helmet and wielding tools, he undertook hands-on work to understand the lived realities of the workforce. This experience grounded him in humility and shaped his later decisions as a leader.¹⁴³ Perhaps his most symbolic project was the Tata Nano—conceived as the world’s most affordable car. Tata’s legacy, however, is not limited to business. He was deeply committed to philanthropy. Through the Tata Trusts—which control approximately 66% of Tata Sons—he dedicated billions to education, healthcare, rural development, and disaster relief.¹⁴⁴ His generosity included a \$28 million Tata Scholarship Fund at Cornell University, support for the Indian Institute of Science, cancer care initiatives, and large-scale relief efforts during floods and pandemics.¹⁴⁵ Tata maintained a modest lifestyle and steered clear of public glamour and said “I don’t believe in legacy. I believe in doing something today that people will remember tomorrow.” In 2024, Ratan Tata passed away at the age of 86 in Mumbai.¹⁴⁶ He left the world as quietly as he had lived—with grace, dignity, and humility. He led very simple life and his leadership was marked by integrity, his philanthropy by empathy, and his legacy by impact.

While both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush once held the highest elected office in the United States, their lives after the presidency offer a compelling study in contrast; one that reveals fundamentally different values, priorities, and interpretations of public service beyond elected office.¹⁴⁷ Following his presidency, Bill Clinton has embraced a lifestyle characterized by wealth, visibility, and global influence. He resides in a lavish \$80 million beachfront estate in Long Island, New York, a property complete with a private dock, swimming pool, and helicopter pad.¹⁴⁸ His post-presidential career has been marked by extensive global travel and highly lucrative speaking engagements, reportedly generating tens of millions of dollars annually. This sustained public presence underscores a commitment to maintaining influence and prestige, positioning Clinton as a continued figure on the international stage.¹⁴⁹ On the other hand, George W. Bush (Jr Bush) has opted for a quieter, more understated life centered on humility and civic responsibility. Choosing to live in a modest home in Dallas, Texas, Bush adheres to a disciplined daily routine, rising at 6:00 a.m. to engage in community service, including volunteering for local street-cleaning efforts.¹⁵⁰ Notably, he declined the annual presidential pension of \$219,000, stating simply that he did not wish to draw on taxpayer resources. Rather than seeking the spotlight, Bush directed \$37 million toward the establishment of a rehabilitation center for military veterans—an initiative that reflects a long-term commitment to service, particularly toward those affected by the wars that defined his presidency.¹⁵¹ These divergent post-presidency trajectories illustrate two profoundly different understandings of legacy. Clinton’s path reflects an orientation toward continued public engagement, financial prosperity, and international recognition. Bush’s, by contrast, is rooted in personal modesty, principled restraint, and a deep sense of duty to those who have served the nation. While one continues to earn and influence, the other continues to give and serve.¹⁵² This contrast offers not only insight into their individual characters, but also broader reflections on the nature of leadership, legacy, and the role of former heads of state in civic life.

Jack Ma’s journey from repeated academic and professional failures to becoming one of the most influential entrepreneurs in the world is a testament to the power of perseverance, vision, and self-belief. He has born into a modest family; Jack Ma faced numerous setbacks from an early age.¹⁵³ He failed multiple times in primary and middle school, leaving many to doubt his potential. When it came time for higher education, his struggles continued like failing the university entrance exam twice before finally succeeding on the third attempt.¹⁵⁴ Even after graduating from a teachers’ college, he found little satisfaction in the profession. Seeking other opportunities, he applied to over 30 jobs including KFC and the police; but was consistently rejected.¹⁵⁵ Despite these disheartening experiences, Ma maintained an optimistic outlook, telling him that his luck had simply not yet arrived. In 1994, during a visit to the U. S., Ma encountered the internet for the first time. Fascinated by its global reach, he returned to China inspired to start a business centered on this technology. At that time, China had no internet infrastructure, making the venture extremely difficult and in 1999, against all odds, Alibaba was born.¹⁵⁶ Beyond his business achievements, Ma has become a thoughtful voice on the future of technology and society. He urges young people not to fear artificial intelligence and other advance technology, and emphasizing that machines may be smart, but humans are wiser.¹⁵⁷ He points out that while machines can calculate faster and never forget, they lack empathy,

creativity, and heart. He serves the poor and needy people and lead very simple life. Jack Ma's life story is not just about overcoming odds; it is about embracing a vision larger than oneself, creating opportunities for others, and maintaining resilience in the face of relentless obstacles.¹⁵⁸ His legacy teaches that with belief, innovation, and compassion, even the most ordinary beginnings can lead to extraordinary outcomes.¹⁵⁹ He leads very simple life and donates his wealth for needy and poor.

Presently, there are few billionaires living a simple life. Co-founder of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg has net worth close to US \$100 billion, but his lifestyle is super simple.¹⁶⁰ He wears mostly basic brands, and you'll often see him in a t-shirt and jeans. His car is nothing fancy and he doesn't even own a luxury vehicle.¹⁶¹ He said that he's not into the wealth and luxury that comes with it, focusing instead on work and social responsibility.¹⁶² Tom Hanks is an American actor and filmmaker who owns US \$300 million, has never been into luxury living. He's revealed that his car has been around for years and often gets repaired instead of replaced.¹⁶³ Tom knows the value of money and spends most of his wealth on charity.¹⁶⁴ Jennifer Lawrence is an American actress, and producer has US net worth around US\$120 million. She lives in a modest house with budget-friendly decor.¹⁶⁵ Most of her clothes are from high street brands, not expensive designer labels. She said that she mostly cooks for herself instead of dining at fancy restaurants.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, Chris Hemsworth is an Australian actor who has net worth about US\$130 million. He doesn't buy luxury cars and prefers affordable ones. His home is simple too. He doesn't own a resort, just stays in regular beachside hotels to enjoy nature.

With a net worth exceeding \$630 million and box office earnings from films totaling over \$11 billion, Tom Cruise is undoubtedly one of the most successful actors in Hollywood history. Yet, despite his immense financial success, Cruise is known for his unusually frugal lifestyle so much so that he's often referred to as "the poorest billionaire." Cruise's choices may surprise many. He refuses to spend money on bottled water and only treats himself to a \$5 drink once a year on his birthday.¹⁶⁷ When traveling, he opts not for luxury vehicles but for modest rentals, frequently driving \$65-a-day Toyotas. His personal driver operates a 2014 Prius with nearly 200,000 miles on it, reflecting Cruise's view that "a car is for driving, not for showing off." His wardrobe echoes the same principle.¹⁶⁸ Cruise is known for wearing \$39 New Balance sneakers often the same pair for several years and keeps his style simple with \$10 shirts and \$20 jeans. "I don't need fancy to feel good," he once said, underscoring his belief in substance over status. But what Cruise saves on personal expenses, he puts toward a greater purpose. He has quietly donated over \$200 million to various causes.¹⁶⁹ His contributions include \$50 million to children's hospitals, \$30 million to veteran rehabilitation programs, and \$20 million to build housing for disaster victims. He also funds four anonymous rehabilitation centers and has provided over \$6.7 million in scholarships for underprivileged students through his foundation.¹⁷⁰ As Cruise puts it, "If I have more than enough, I should help those who don't." In a culture where celebrity excess often dominates headlines, Tom Cruise stands out as a rare figure one whose impact extends far beyond the silver screen. His life reminds us that wealth can be used not just for luxury, but for meaningful change.¹⁷¹ Tom Cruise will remain in our heart for his simple life style and philanthropic efforts, particularly his support for children's charities and organizations focused on health, education and poverty alleviation.

Arnold Schwarzenegger has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to philanthropy and charity through a broad range of generous donations and charitable initiatives. One of his most recent acts of giving occurred in January 2025, when he pledged \$1 million to support recovery efforts following the devastating wildfires in Los Angeles County.¹⁷² The funds were allocated to several key organizations, including the Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation, the California Fire Foundation, and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles. He launched an "L.A. Strong" T-shirt fundraising campaign, with 100% of the proceeds directed to the same relief efforts.¹⁷³ Schwarzenegger explained that his motivation stemmed from a desire to lead by example, stating, "A lot of my fans have asked me how they can help L.A. I'm going to lead the way." In 2023, during the height of the SAG-AFTRA strike, Schwarzenegger donated \$1 million to the union's Emergency Financial Assistance Program. His contribution provided essential support to working-class actors facing financial hardship due to prolonged work stoppages. During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, he contributed another \$1 million to the Frontline Responders Fund. He also personally delivered approximately 50,000 N95 masks to local hospitals in Los Angeles. In December 2021, Schwarzenegger once again turned his attention to one of his most cherished causes: supporting U.S. veterans.¹⁷⁴ His commitment and donate to social causes and support for human rights and anti-racism education. Schwarzenegger has maintained long-term support for numerous philanthropic endeavors. He provides educational, fitness, and mentoring opportunities to underprivileged youth across the United States.

Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative is remarkable and he has organized fundraisers that have raised millions of Euros for climate and emergency response efforts, including Tyrolean mountain rescue. His core philosophy remains consistent and he believes those who succeed are not self-made but are supported by society and thus, they owe a duty to give back. He once remarked that giving isn't merely a responsibility—it's also deeply fulfilling.¹⁷⁵ His actions reflect a powerful model of leadership rooted in empathy, civic engagement, and enduring public service.¹⁷⁶ He leads simple life and spends very less for him and enjoys charity and humanity.

Conclusion

Life of humans has definitely a purpose. Theologically, sociologically or philosophically, without purpose life doesn't take place in its existence and nothing is born without a meaningful purpose. God or nature has placed human being in its grand design in such a way that they are to live in interdependence and humans are to seek the meaning of life there. Meaningful purpose of life is served when human being stands for each other in a society beyond the individual and family interest. We define that human being is social as it lives in the society. Yes, human being is certainly social when human being is thought to be integrated into each other in terms of meeting the necessity of every individual life, of course, for collective existential ground in unison. In fact, life stems from the soul and soul is the common source of all human beings. So, necessarily humans are for each other's common survival and co-existence in the society as they live in a society. Hard fact is no individual can enjoy its fulfillment depending only on its own without, unavoidably, depending on others. Therefore, self-centered gain beyond selfless interest doesn't ever bring peace and comfort other than restlessness and instability in individual's mind and the society as a whole. Ultimately, purpose of life is to live for others and serve each other's purpose and the God or the nature is also happy and meaning of life is meant thereof.

We were told by most of our mentors and our parents that we were born in this world to do something great. This is how we grew up, and our belief system was immersed with these thoughts. Even if we are doing the right thing, we will believe that we are doing something wrong as most of the people believe that they exist to do something great, and standing against it might make us feel that our beliefs are wrong even though we are correct. That's why many of us feel inferior to others. So, for peace and happiness we need more control in our life, we need to live purposefully. We need to fill our mind with words that make us feel confident, happy and in own control along with full trust on God. However, usually we are over scheduling ourselves because we don't know how to say no is a perfect recipe for a cluttered day. We need to realize our strengths and being aware of our weaknesses. When we simplify our ideas, those will force us to understand our strength and weakness. Then we need to focus on opportunity and threat optimally. We should look and analyze our mistakes more rather than highlighting our credits. As we know that, desire is a contract we make with ourselves to be unhappy until we get what we want. Self-satisfaction appears to be more strongly related to happiness in more individualistic cultures in the 21st century. As adding more things to our life doesn't necessarily mean more happiness, so let's try to become simple physically and mentally, try to make our desire simple, and try to make our life simple.

We need to prioritize everything like desire, people, things, task, goal, recreation, hobby, visit, sports, music, enjoyment, etc. We need to pay attention to things that genuinely matter and avoid unnecessary subjects. We need to avoid social media as much as we can. It saves time and maintains our mental health. We should avoid negative people and recycle the past. We should avoid over thinking rather we need to think simply. Many popular thinking like to become famous or become rich or become a celebrity that makes us different from everyone. This type of thinking creates a sense of competitiveness in our mind. When there is competition, then it's not possible to become one with everyone. When we compare ourselves with someone else, it creates ego. Where there is an ego of being, we cannot be the oneness of the being whole. So, it creates enemies, complexities, and anxieties. Simplicity is always beautiful. It will make our life wonderful. We need to ponder ourselves so that we are not dependent on someone else. We need to travel and see the world and meet different cultures and people and see the vastness and diversity of the globe. So, we should have some resources and cash. Above all, we are in the world for others and greater humanity. We need to become more polite, humble, compassionate, and humane. So, our desire should be limited and affordable to make our life simple and happy. In all cases we should have patience and remain calm as these are the advices of God. However, nothing brings happiness and peace like simple life, prayer and establishing relation with God. So, happiness is a choice or a state of mind that one can cultivate, rather than something dependent on external circumstances.

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