

Peaceful Simplicity: How to Live a Life of Contentment

This fantastic quote summarizes something that I've been trying to focus on recently in my daily life:

“Whatever the tasks, do them slowly
with ease,
in mindfulness,
so not do any tasks with the goal
of getting them over with.
Resolve to each job in a relaxed way,
with all your attention.”

- [Thich Nhat Hanh](#), Zen Master

In our daily lives, we often rush through tasks, trying to get them done, trying to finish as much as we can each day, speeding along in our cars to our next destination, rushing to do what we need to do there, and then leaving so that we can speed to our next destination.



Photo by [Aaron Geller](#)

Unfortunately, it's often not until we get to our final destination that we realize what madness this all is.

At the end of the day, we're often exhausted and stressed out from the grind and the chaos and the busy-ness of the day. We don't have time for what's important to us, for what we really want to be doing, for spending time with loved ones, for doing things we're passionate about.

And yet, it doesn't have to be that way. It's possible to live a simpler life, one where you enjoy each activity, where you are present in everything (or most things) you do, where you are content rather than rushing to finish things.

If that appeals to you, let's take a look at some suggestions for living a simple, peaceful, content life:

1. **What's important.** First, take a step back and think about what's important to you. What do you really want to be doing, who do you want to spend your time with, what do you want to accomplish with your work? Make a short list of 4-5 things for your life, 4-5 people you want to spend time with, 4-5 things you'd like to accomplish at work.
2. **Examine your commitments.** A big part of the problem is that our lives are way too full. We can't possibly do everything we have committed to doing, and we certainly can't enjoy it if we're trying to do everything.

Accept that you can't do everything, know that you want to do what's important to you, and try to eliminate the commitments that aren't as important. See [this article](#) for more.

3. **Do less each day.** Don't fill your day up with things to do. You will end up rushing to do them all. If you normally try (and fail) to do 7-10 things, do 3 important ones instead (with 3 more smaller items to do if you get those three done). This will give you time to do what you need to do, and not rush.
4. **Leave space between tasks or appointments.** Another mistake is trying to schedule things back-to-back. This leaves no cushion in case things take longer than we planned (which they always do), and it also gives us a feeling of being rushed and stressed throughout the day. Instead, leave a good-sized gap between your appointments or tasks, allowing you to focus more on each one, and have a transition time between them.
5. **Eliminate as much as possible from your to-do list.** You can't do everything on your to-do list. Even if you could, more things will come up. As much as you can, simplify your to-do list down to the essentials. This allows you to rush less and focus more on what's important. See [this article](#) for more.
6. **Now, slow down and enjoy every task.** This is the most important tip in this article. Read it twice. Whatever you're doing, whether it's a work task or taking a shower or brushing your teeth or cooking dinner or driving to work, slow down. Try to enjoy whatever you're doing. Try to pay attention, instead of thinking about other things. Be in the moment. This isn't easy, as you will often forget. But find a way to remind yourself. Unless the task involves actual pain, there isn't anything that can't be enjoyable if you give it the proper attention.
7. **Single-task.** This is kind of a mantra of mine, as I talk about [how to single-task](#) all the time. But it's an important point for me, and for this article. Do one thing at a time, and do it well.
8. **Eat slower.** This is just a more specific application of Tip #6, but it's something we do every day, so it deserves special attention. See [this article](#) for more.
9. **Drive slower.** Another application of the same principle, driving is something we do that's often mindless and rushed. Instead, slow down and enjoy the journey. See [this article](#) for more.
10. **Eliminate stress.** Find the stressors in your life, and find ways to eliminate them. See [this article](#) for more.
11. **How and why to slow down.** This is such an important point, that I'm going to point you to two other articles on this: [here](#) and [here](#).
12. **Create time for solitude.** In addition to slowing down and enjoying the tasks we do, and doing less of them, it's also important to just have some time to yourself. Read [this article](#) for more.
13. **Do nothing.** Sometimes, it's good to forget about doing things, and do nothing. [Here's more.](#)
14. **Sprinkle simple pleasures throughout your day.** Knowing what your simple pleasures are, and putting a few of them in each day, can go a long way to making life more enjoyable. Here's a list of [75 simple pleasures](#).
15. **Practice being present.** You can practice being in the moment at any time during the day. [Here's how.](#)
16. **Find inspirations.** Learn from the best. Here are [5 inspirations](#) for being in the moment.
17. **Make frugality an enjoyable thing too.** Instead of delayed gratification, try [enjoying life now while saving for later](#).

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