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Simply Wonderful How to Cut Down on Life's Demands

Ahh, the simple life: we all desire it, but how can we attain it? There always seems to be one more task to complete or one more preparation to make. Well, this seemingly unattainable goal may be difficult to manage, but it's not impossible. *Natural Awakenings* asked three local health practitioners about their personal strategies for achieving simplicity in their lives, and this is what they told us.

Christina J. Barea is a Daoist priest, medical qigong therapist, qigong/tai chi instructor and published author. She says, "As a practicing Daoist, simplifying my life is my number one goal. I search for harmony and the path of least resistance in all my actions and thoughts. As a result, everything I do has come under scrutiny, including when I go grocery shopping, how I prepare meals, how I schedule work, etc. Of course, being self-employed offers certain flexibilities, but it comes with great responsibility, so every moment counts." Here are some tips she recommends for keeping daily routines from getting out of hand.

Grocery shopping: Go to the store only once a week. "My philosophy is that I can go a few days without whatever it is I forgot or ran out of," she states. "If I think about how much time is invested in driving, parking, shopping and returning home to put the groceries away, it's apparent that a lot of time is invested in each trip to the store. Multiplied by two or three trips a week, that time can add up."

Preparing Meals: Cook or prepare enough food at mealtime to get through an extra day, at least. Barea

counsels, "Preparing meals is a lengthy process and requires ingredients, time and creativity. For me, the best solution is a large stew. It packs a lot of nutrients in a one-pot meal that easily reheats and usually tastes better the next day. Plus, there are fewer dishes to wash and less mess to clean up."

Setting realistic expectations is another way Barea simplifies her life. "This means not putting too many items on my to-do list and setting attainable goals for day-to-day living, as well as long-term plans. By creating an action plan that can truly be fulfilled without overextending myself, I also create a pattern of positive reinforcement. It means that instead of getting frustrated over what wasn't accomplished, there are plenty of instances of saying, 'Yes, today was a productive day!'"

These steps all take practice and patience, but by making gradual changes toward simplification and seeing the positive results, Barea was able to reinforce a pattern of clarity and simplification. As she avers, "Before I knew it my life and my mood was dramatically changed for the better!"

For more info, call 408-220-4923 or visit TheRisingLotus.com. See ad, page 37.

Meditation coach **Tracy Quantum** knows that simplifying may seem challenging in the face of experiencing stress associated with business, family, money and/or relationships and that achieving simplicity of the mind becomes even more necessary when stress is present. Often, the answers and strength or peace we need can only be revealed or received by accessing the stillness of one's own mind.

Quantum says, "The pure essence of meditation engenders an inherent quality of simplicity. One of the greatest attributes of meditation is clearing out space for the now. It is simple and free and can be as brief as five minutes a day." He gives an example of a simple, five-minute meditation.

To enjoy increased success, gently close your eyes, take a deep breath and exhale. Repeat the process three times and embrace the idea that, "I am a loveable person," without any conditions.

Then, direct your focus to the inner statement: "I am calm, relaxed and safe. I feel myself encased in a golden white light, which is so pure that it dissolves all the clutter of negative thoughts. The brilliance of this light is so radiant that each thought of the past is being dissolved into the blue iridescent healing light of unconditional love. I am being healed with the deepest compassion and love. As I focus on these thoughts, I embrace my entire space as unadulterated pure white light. This light is so magnificent it automatically dissolves all thoughts into pure sustainable 'simplistic' thoughts of peace."

After that, Quantum advises, "Enjoy the moment, taking a few more deep breaths and listening to any inner guidance that may appear. Relish the peaceful feeling of 'just being,' in this safe, clear, radiant place. Anchor it into your being before returning to the doings of the day. You can return to this simple meditation at any time. Five minutes a day can easily simplify one's mind toward embracing peace, and it will have lasting, positive effects in every aspect of life, fostering more fulfillment than ever before."

Quantum may be reached for private or group sessions at 678-266-7728 or tracyquantum.com. See ad, page 33.



Dr. Carolyn Porter is the founder of Where Miracles Happen Quantum Healing and Empowerment Center. She states that she has definite themes for simplifying her life. "Getting rid of things I really don't need. Doing less, spending less, downsizing and consolidating: they are all noteworthy ways to simplify, but they often have a negative undertone when it feels like I have to give something up. Without realizing it, this negativity may just be due to my own current inner vibration, so I've learned to help myself look at these endeavors from a positive place."

As for the benefit of this approach, Porter says, "When I rid myself of what I no longer need, I actually open up space for new to enter, not to mention the blessing I bestow on others as they receive what I let go of. Perhaps it's time to step into my real work or give to it more fully, rather than put so much emphasis and time on trivialities and pleasing others. Could I benefit by saving more, and thus be prepared for uncertain times, such as the current economy, rather than stressing over making ends meet or keeping in step with the image I've created? And what about time to 'just be,' when I quietly tune into my higher self and connect with my source, instead of being busy?"

Changing her focus to the positive perception frees Porter to raise her vibration to a higher level and a freedom she really wants. She says, "It's a place where I am able to use my inborn power of choice. The universe is telling me to wake up, and the planetary alignments of recent months have perpetuated a major shift that will continue for months to come. I am being told to let go of what isn't working and create a new paradigm."

Porter sees a bright light amid the chaos, leading her to a better life in a new world; a glorious adventure that she has the opportunity to create. She imparts, "I feel we are all being guided into a more simplistic, pure life, back to the basics where our roots are, as we rebuild a strong foundation based on truth and freedom. Simplifying life is an opportunity to create an extraordinary life!"

Where Miracles Happen Quantum Healing and Empowerment Center is located at 10180 Hickory Flat Hwy, in Woodstock. Contact 770-663-3977 or visit wheremiracleshappen.com. See ads, pages 15 and 33.