



Beauty of True Simplicity, by Jack Kornfield

The clutter of our lives binds us to the precious simplicity that surrounds us and within us. Too often we become possessed and imprisoned by the chains of our own accumulations. We live in fear of their loss; we evolve complex strategies to protect ourselves from failure and deprivation. This burden inhibits our ability to walk with lightness of heart. The noise created through our own busyness deafens us to the wonder of silence. Modern culture has wrongly learned to equate simplicity with deprivation, silence with absence, and strives to fill our lives and minds with objects, information, and distraction. We have become uncomfortable with quietude. Caught in the web of this complexity, we grow increasingly poor in spirit. We do not need to retreat to the nearest monastery, renouncing all of our possessions and engagements, in order to discover the wonder of silence and spaciousness. Indeed, confusion and preoccupation can be companion of the ascetic as well as the commuter. We do not need to withdraw from the world in order to discover true simplicity of heart. Dramatic gestures are not called for. "If one is to do good," says William Blake, "good must be done in minute particulars. General good is the plea of the hypocrite, the flatterer, and the scoundrel." Simplicity is related to not how much we have but to how much we hold on to. This simplicity is without pretension. It is like the water that simply runs downhill. In Zen, it is called our true nature. Simplicity and renunciation are acts of compassion . for ourselves, for the world around us. Gandhi once stated, "There is enough in this world for everyone's need, but enough for everyone's greed." Simplicity in our lifestyle expresses a care and compassion for the world. Simplicity in our hearts, letting go of opinions and craving, is an act of compassion for ourselves. When we let go of yearning for the future, preoccupation with the past, and strategies to protect the present, there is nowhere left to go but where we are. To connect with the present moment is to begin to appreciate the beauty of true simplicity. --Jack Kornfield & Kristina Feldman

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