

Spiritual Exercises for Simplicity (from *the Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun)

1. Ask God to help you speak the simple truth. Practice speaking simply - no half-truths that put you in the best light. Let this practice help you become aware of when you rationalize, deny, blame and spin.
2. Uncomplicate your life by choosing a few areas in which you wish to practice "letting go." Clean out your garage, basement, closet or attic. Go on a simple vacation. Eat more simply. What is this like for you?
3. Intentionally limit your choices. Do you need six different kinds of breakfast cereals, hundreds of TV channels or four tennis rackets? What is it like to limit your choices? Does it feel free, or do want and envy surface? Talk to God about that.
4. If someone admires something of yours, give it away. Find out just how attached you are to your things. What is that like for you?
5. If you can get where you need to go by walking rather than driving, try walking.
6. Make a catalog of all the gadgets you have in your home, from the dishwasher to the lawnmower. Which gadgets have made you freer? Which could you share? What could you get rid of and not really miss?
7. Where have you complicated your life with God? Consider what actually brings you into the presence of Christ. Spend time there.
8. Practice giving no excuses, no apologies, no spontaneous yeses. When you are tempted to say yes, stop yourself and say, "Let me think about this for a moment. I'll call you back in ten minutes." Even ten minutes can afford you the time to consider whether you really want to say yes. When you are tempted to apologize for something like a messy house, don't. An apology can give the impression that your house is always neat and clean. Perhaps people need to see that you do live with a certain amount of clutter and that's ok. When you want to make an excuse for something like being late or eating on the run, let the excuse go. Accept yourself and the reality of your life. No excuses, no apologies and no spontaneous yeses can actually be a step in discerning what you truly need to apologize for.

Resources on Simplicity

Simplicity by Richard Foster