

The article introducing this guide is found [here](#).

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## What This Is, Why It Exists, and How It Helps

We give ourselves the gift of awareness by giving others a window into what makes us tick. Helping others learn about you also helps you learn about yourself.

### What This Is

The Personal User Guide is an organized instruction manual dedicated to *you*. In other words, it's a framework for you to build what's important in your life.

Better yet, this template explains why the important things are important and how you go about getting them. As you complete this guide, you'll increase your simplicity, improve your communication (internal and external), and understand things like:

- Your belief systems and the significance of certain relationships.
- How people should connect with you and how you like to engage with others.
- Your goals, areas of growth, and ways to generate certain feelings or actions.

After you're done, you'll be able to communicate your essence with someone that would otherwise take *forever* to learn. This guide may seem long, but you can complete it in thirty minutes or less if that's all you have time for.

### Why This Exists

The Personal User Guide was created to help you make sense of your world and to help others get the best experience possible. Although this is intended for everyone, it's especially useful if you struggle with communication issues, misunderstandings, or having people "get you."

For more context, see the [Value of Simple article](#) introducing The Personal User Guide.

### How This Helps

Most user guides are hard to navigate and ultimately unhelpful. This one is different.

It gives you irreplaceable insight by viewing yourself through the eyes of others and how you want to be perceived. Constructing your personal framework to illuminate the seemingly unexplainable has some *huge* benefits.

And this guide goes way beyond explaining what you are. The real value comes from defining *why* you are who you are and *how* it came to be this way. **Embrace the process and your guide will be an amazing resource.**

## Additional Guidance

All sections of this guide are optional, so skip any part that you're not comfortable completing. Just keep in mind that the more you put into this, the more you and everyone else get out of it. I advise you to clear your calendar and remove all distractions like kids, Internet, TV, or hobbies before tackling your guide. You don't have to finish this in one sitting; come back to it as time allows.

## Notes about Formatting

1. This guide wasn't designed to be printed and hand-written in. If you need to print and write, then expand the sections by navigating to them and pressing <enter> until it's large enough for you.
2. The tables and fill in the blank sections expand automatically based on the amount of information in them.

## Related Documents

If there are documents related to this guide like a personal FAQ or an important online profile, list them here.

Document Name	Author	Description	Purpose, Comments or Notes	Location of Document (e.g. website link)
Joel Zaslofsky's FAQ	Joel Zaslofsky	A FAQ all about me.	To provide everyone from family to strangers a FAQ about what it's like to be me.	<a href="http://valueofsimple.com/faq">http://valueofsimple.com/faq</a>
My Story	Joel Zaslofsky	Origin story of Value of Simple and the start of my personal renaissance.	A short origin story of Value of Simple and my personal renaissance.	<a href="http://valueofsimple.com/my-story">http://valueofsimple.com/my-story</a>

## Version Details

This guide should be updated periodically. Keeping track of the revisions will help you (and others) see how you evolve.

Version #	Date	Version Notes (e.g. what was added, modified, or deleted from the previous version)	Location of Document (e.g. website link or filing cabinet in home office)
1.0	03/19/2012	Initial version.	<a href="http://valueofsimple.com/wp-content/uploads/Joels-Personal-User-Guide-v1.pdf">http://valueofsimple.com/wp-content/uploads/Joels-Personal-User-Guide-v1.pdf</a>
1.1	07/01/2012	Minor updates for the Value of Simple launch.	<a href="http://valueofsimple.com/wp-content/uploads/Joels-Personal-User-Guide-v1.1.pdf">http://valueofsimple.com/wp-content/uploads/Joels-Personal-User-Guide-v1.1.pdf</a>
2.0	04/12/2013	Annual updates made and uploaded with the new design.	<a href="http://valueofsimple.com/wp-content/uploads/Joels-Personal-User-Guide-v2.0.pdf">http://valueofsimple.com/wp-content/uploads/Joels-Personal-User-Guide-v2.0.pdf</a>
3.0	03/10/2014	Annual updates made.	<a href="http://valueofsimple.com/wp-content/uploads/Joels-Personal-User-Guide-v3.0.pdf">http://valueofsimple.com/wp-content/uploads/Joels-Personal-User-Guide-v3.0.pdf</a>
4.0	02/04/2015	Annual updates made.	<a href="http://valueofsimple.com/wp-content/uploads/Joels-Personal-User-Guide-v4.0.pdf">http://valueofsimple.com/wp-content/uploads/Joels-Personal-User-Guide-v4.0.pdf</a>

## How I Interact with the World

*We all interact with the world in unique and seemingly unpredictable ways. Describe your preferences, the environment you thrive best, and major “don’t try this with me” items to build the framework for the rest of your user guide.*

### Communication Methods

*The why, how, and what of communication. What methods do you use to communicate, how do they change based on context or the person/group, and how often is each used? Example: “I always use the phone for any important interaction with my family but never with friends or co-workers.” Get specific about your strengths and challenges.*

I prefer to communicate face-to-face, even if it can't be in person (i.e. Skype). I love the spoken word and the nuance it allows, which is missing in the written word (plus I'm a slow typer and would rather not write). I enjoy using social media – Google+ or Facebook for personal use and Twitter for business or random fun – but it can be overwhelming.

My communication style is open, informal, and matter of fact. My most meaningful communication occurs in a one-on-one setting or in small groups. I sometimes struggle with brevity, both verbally and in writing, but I'm getting better.

### Authority Figures

*Explain your approach to dealing with authority and how it will be received depending on the person (e.g., mom, police, boss, etc.).*

I rarely rebel against authority figures for the sole purpose of giving them a hard time. I respect and take direction well from traditional authority figures like law enforcement, the government, and my parents. However, I'm skeptical of most people claiming to be experts and actually find myself valuing the contributions of non-experts more.

## Handling Stress

*Stress can be subtle, brutal, motivating, incapacitating, and everything in between. Think about what the triggers of your main stress points are and how you manage them. How would you like to manage them in the future?*

I take criticism well and am not stressed out by it. I normally expect people to do the same, although the reality is different than I would like. My main stressors come from interacting with inanimate objects, like formatting blog posts or trying to fix the kitchen sink, and not from people. I'm normally only angry on the inside and, unless someone helps me cool down, I can stay stressed for a while. I handle stress the best through periodic yoga, daily meditation, long conversations with friends or my wife, and breathing techniques. When managed poorly, my stress manifests in the form of sugar binging, shutting down emotionally, or getting obsessive about a specific task until it's done.

## Honoring Traditions and Messing with the Status Quo

*Do your values come from honoring traditions or messing with the status quo? What are your values and important traditions (individual, family, business, cultural, religious, etc.) and how do you celebrate them?*

I respect people's religious and cultural traditions, but I don't have much use for them. I was born and raised Jewish and that's definitely shaped who I am more than I'll ever realize. However, I have no current role for formal religion in my life and haven't since I became an atheist around age twenty-five.

Shifting gears, doing business the traditional way doesn't interest me at all. I'd rather walk my own path, do things informally, and surround myself with people I can say "dude" and "heck yeah!" with. My values are ever-changing and can shift rapidly from one month to another. I value traditions, but often enjoy change more.

## Free Time

*Your general approach to free time (e.g. fast paced or slow, structured or unstructured).*

I used to value unstructured free time over just about everything else. Nothing was better than time to play video games, watch TV, hang out with friends, or spend time with Melinda (my wife). I'm still super comfortable with unstructured time and enjoy it, but it's become less important to me.

I currently spend my free time playing Grant and Clark, my two young sons, Melinda, talking long walks with my dogs (Emsky the Golden Retriever and Lucia the Samoyed), curating awesome experiences (online and offline), seeking new concept and ideas to integrate into my life, and many more things. I've gotten more into scheduling reoccurring hangouts with friends and family to ensure too much time doesn't pass between interactions.

## Preferred Learning Method(s)

*How do you prefer to learn (e.g. listening and reflecting, visually, experiencing and immediately doing, etc.)?*

I am highly analytical and prefer to process new information gradually. I don't prefer listening, watching, or doing to learn because all styles work well for me. My best learning is self-directed, but I do benefit from group learning as well (i.e., SimpleREV local gatherings or Live Your Legend Local events).

## Belief Systems and Blueprints

Frameworks govern how we see the world. Talk about whatever movements or labels are important to you.

### Labels and Phrases That Define You

If you could only use one word or a simple phrase to label yourself, what would they be? Multiple labels or phrases are encouraged (e.g. religious affiliation, how you analyze your thoughts, movements, or philosophies you believe in).

Connector, Primal/Paleo, intentional, simple-living enthusiast, minimalist, Experience Curator, atheist, philosopher, multipotentialite, community builder and organizer, SimpleREVer, experimenter, obsessive spreadsheet creator, extrovert, homemade card maker, project manager, World Domination Summit fan boy, spoken word lover (think podcasting and facilitating events, not poetry), analyzer, uncertainty chaser, papa, hubby, supportive friend, consumed with my legacy, and personal renaissance.

### How I Express Myself

Physically	I like giving hugs and high-fives, but I'm not a particularly touchy-feely guy. I am physically animated when I'm nervous (like watching a sporting event), excited, and in other contexts. I'm quick to smile and laugh and slow to show anger or annoyance. I practice minimalism by intentionally dressing casually and keeping the articles of clothing I own low.
Emotionally	<p>I can be good at hiding my emotions. But I like to express what I'm feeling in a transparent, real-time, and obvious way. Generosity, candor, vulnerability, and accountability – Keith Ferrazzi <i>Never Eat Alone</i> style – are my default.</p> <p>I show positive emotions more strongly than negative emotions. This is both how I'm wired and an intentional effort to highlight that most of life is wonderful. Besides, there are very few (legitimate) reasons for me to experience negative emotions.</p>
Spiritually	I express spirituality through philosophies like simplicity, yoga, or Stoicism. But I gave up my spiritual side (for the most part) when I gave up Judaism. I'm A-OK with that.
Intellectually	I'm an unabashed intellectual. I enjoy few things more than heavy conversations about topics like geopolitics, curating your existence, how to be consumed with something other than consumption, and ancestral health. Rational words or thoughts, detached from emotion, are probably the way I best express myself. I'm normally very matter-of-fact.
Other (Specify)	N/A.

## What I Care Passionately About

*What are the ideas or causes that energize and drive you? Really dig into why you're passionate about them.*

1. I care deeply about what humans consume, how much we use, and why we consume the things we do. I constantly ask myself, "How can you ensure that the world isn't a crappier place for the next generation?" I'm happy to sacrifice in the short-term to make the long-term picture better. In other words, I want to make the simple, sustainable choice the default (and easiest) one in my life and everyone else's.
2. I'm passionate about personal finance, both my family's and anyone else who cares enough about it. I want money to have less significance in my life and I can do that, and help others, by having a strong grasp of personal finance. I enjoy few things more than talking to friends and family – for hours and over multiple sessions if necessary – about personal finance and how I can help in this realm.
3. Ancestral health – via the Paleo and Primal movements – totally does it for me. My optimal life comes from honoring the way humans have evolved and what my body and mind expect me to provide them. This includes the way I eat, exercise, interact with the world, and so on.
4. I'm constantly thinking about bringing order to my life and that of others. Whether it's a physical environment (through minimalism and simplicity) or informational environment (through curating and Excel spreadsheets), I'm always trying to bring more order to my existence. The world is naturally chaotic, but order helps create eustress, build efficiency, and brings me closer to harmony with nature.

## The Role of My Relationships

*Some relationships are more important than others. What role does each relationship play and how significant is it?*

### People

Relationship	Role
Significant Other	Melinda is the most significant person in my life. She's my memory (mine is <b>terrible</b> , which explains the need for curated spreadsheets), sounding board, lover, and many more things. All other relationships take a back seat.
Friends	I rely on friends to keep me grounded, bring new personal and global awareness, and provide intellectual fulfillment. I love my good friends – and tell them straight up that “I love you” – but I'm always looking for new ones. The only thing I can't get enough of is friends (yep, I'm a true extrovert and connector).
Parents	My mom and dad give me the blueprint for many aspects of my life. I love personal finance because of my mom and honor the role of health and family because of my dad. I am very close to my parents and often talk to my mom about a tricky situation before anyone else.
Grandparents	<p>I didn't have a strong personal connection with my maternal grandparents, but my love of dogs probably comes from them.</p> <p>My paternal grandparents were both special to me, especially my grandpa who lived to 100 and passed away in July 2013. And my grandma Etta showed me how to care for the sick and overwhelmed. Her simple touch and talk is the reason I want to be “mothered” when I feel sick or discontent.</p> <p>“Big Irv,” my paternal grandpa, is the most inspiring person I've ever known. I aspire to age with grace, to put family and health first, and to value being a global citizen in large part because of him. He was a captivating storyteller and I want to emulate him even more because of it.</p>
Siblings	My older brother, Aaron, is my only sibling. Being two years younger and one grade back growing up, I was always following in his footsteps with baseball, school (he's the reason I went to college at UW-Madison), and just about everything else. I value our relationship for many reasons. Among them is that he's the person I can get the most stupid, crazy, vulgar, or careless with and not have to worry about it. For the first 20+ years of my life, I wanted what he wanted, dressed how he dressed, and let him lead the way for me. We're great friends and have more shared background than anyone else.
Co-workers	I had various co-workers at my decade-long RBC Wealth Management corporate gig. For the most part, they didn't have a large role in my life, although many served as unofficial mentors. As an entrepreneur now, I don't consider anyone I do business with a “co-worker.” They are partners, Brain Trust members, Lifeline Group friends, or other things that are more meaningful to me.
Children	My first son, Grant, was the catalyst for my personal renaissance. Separate for what

Relationship	Role
	<p>he's done for me – making me more patient, silly, engaging with nature, loving of other people's kids – I do anything I can to make his days more fun and his life healthier. He's the sparkplug of every day and makes me want to be – and actually become – a better man.</p> <p>My second son, Clark, is a true gift and a wonderful little fella. He's seventeen-months-old as I publish this version of TPUG and nobody makes me want to be more mindful – more present – than him. I missed out on some great moments in Grant's young life, so I'm grateful to have a chance at redemption with Clark.</p>
Other (Lifeline Group)	I'm in a Lifeline Group (a.k.a. mastermind group) with four other people who keep me sane and supported in my business. They rock and I bust my hump to support them however I can.
Other (SimpleREV Brain Trust Members)	My fellow SimpleREV Brain Trust members are the unofficial Board of Directors, Captains of Common Sense, and emotional heavyweights behind the brand. Even though SimpleREV is "my boat," we take turns steering the ship. I'm super grateful to them and for them.

## Things

Relationship	Role
Money	I want money to have as small a role as possible, so I'm constantly challenging myself to want and need less money. I would like to create passive income streams so I never have to think about making money again.
Freedom	This is hard to address because freedom takes so many forms. The freedom to change who I will be and express who I am is a big one. Besides the many freedoms allowed by law, I prize the freedom of risk taking, the freedom to travel, and the freedom to break with social norms.
Personal Possessions	I am unsentimental when it comes to personal possessions. I don't care much for design (of clothes, cars, electronics, etc.) and, if it doesn't have a practical use, I probably don't have a need for it. I actively work to reduce the number of possessions in my house (which sometimes drives my wife crazy).
Where You Live	<p>I've lived in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota area all my life except my four years in Madison, Wisconsin for college. My parents are here, my brother and his family are here, and many of my good friends are here.</p> <p>I love this metro area for the climate (I'm happy when it's 10 degrees F), for the friendly people, for the beauty of the lakes and natural environment, and for the rich personal history. It would take something radical and unexpected for me to permanently move to another city.</p>
Work	Work used to be somewhere I went, not something I did. It used to be all about the money. But now work is about the impact and the "thank you"s. I do what I do to fulfill a number of missions and to use my diversity of interests, skills, and passions to help others.
Technology	I love change and technological advancement. I'm comfortable with new tech and I'm

Relationship	Role
	always learning to adapt new (or old) technology to help myself and the people around me. However, I'm wary of technology's ability to enslave when it should be about empowerment (e.g., video games, Facebook, or smartphones).
Nature	Nature is where I seek silence and to spark my creative thinking. Being outside – especially outside the city – is increasingly important as I strive to spend more time slowing down or coming to a stop. Enveloping myself in nature fills me with a sense of gratitude, contentment, and abundance I can't find anywhere else.
Other (Specify)	N/A.

## The “Do”s and “Don’t”s of Communicating with Me

*Explain the strategies or tactics for communicating with you that produce the best outcomes. For example, should I engage you head-on or tactfully? Should I be formal or make heavy use of words like “dude” and “hon?”*

### Good Strategies or Tactics

1. Make sure you have my full attention before talking. I have a poor memory and I’ll probably forget what you said unless I’m undividedly yours.
2. Don’t rush my decisions. Let me analyze and consider information from various sources first.
3. Take responsibility for your own actions and errors.
4. I don’t need formal interaction, dress, or attitudes in any situation. Let’s keep it loose, informal, upbeat, and fun. Come as you are (unshaven and disheveled is OK).
5. Challenge me head-on and in the moment. I don’t mind conflict, don’t get defensive easily, and prefer immediate feedback.
6. Be open and honest, even brutally so. Don’t butter me up first. Just lay it on me.
7. Show me what you’re feeling and thinking. I hate guessing. If you want to punch me in the face, tell me you want to punch me in the face.
8. I need to feel helpful and of service to others. Appeal to that if you want me to take action.
9. If you don’t like interacting with me or are doing things purely out of obligation, stop. Use your time and energy with someone else, but let me know that I’m not worth your time.

### Bad Strategies or Tactics

1. Let me be long-winded occasionally (or prepare to be periodically disappointed and frustrated).
2. I don’t care about personal interest stories and generally regard talking about them as a waste of time. That means you can skip sharing that cute thing you saw in the news. Let’s have fun, but engage about topics of substance.
3. Don’t read into my words or actions. I meant what I said, even if it came across as callous or incomplete.
4. Ask me to explain my words or justify my actions and I’ll give you the context you need to understand (time allowing).

## My Schedule

Whether it's a weekday or weekend, a national holiday, or some other meaningful time, tell us when you interact with the world. Also describe typical activities or routines you have on a given day or at a given time.

Time Zone	CST
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	Typical Weekdays	Typical Saturdays	Typical Sundays
Best Time(s) to Reach Me	Approximately 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. or 8:30 p.m. - 9:45 p.m.	Approximately 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. or 8:30 p.m. - 9:45 p.m.	Approximately 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. or 8:30 p.m. - 9:45 p.m.
Wake Up	Around 5:55 a.m.	Around 6:15 a.m.	Around 6:15 a.m.
Morning	Morning ritual(s) of silence and empowerment. It stays quiet until my boys wake up. I do a morning routine with Grant and Clark from about 7:00 - 8:00. 8:00 - 11:30 is peak productivity time where distractions are limited and the most important tasks are done.	Morning ritual(s) of silence and empowerment. It stays quiet until my boys wake up. I do a morning routine with Grant and Clark from about 7:00 - 8:00. Then music class with Clark or swimming lessons with Grant starts around 9:30. Family fun time, grocery shopping, and food prep are also common activities.	Morning ritual(s) of silence and empowerment. It stays quiet until my boys wake up. Activities are usually focused around the boys.
Afternoon	Reserved for running errands, walking the dogs, writing, podcasting, interacting with various people, and other non-core tasks of the day.	Varies from one week to the next. College football watching related activity from Sept – Mid Nov.	Varies from one week to the next.
Evening	Dinner is between 5:45 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Clark's in bed by 7:40 p.m. and Grant's in bed by 8:15 pm. Then I have free time between 8:30 – 9:45 p.m.	Varies from one week to the next.	Varies from one week to the next. Ideal time to catch up on the phone or Skype with family and friends.
Bedtime	Around 10:15 p.m.	Around 10:15 p.m.	Around 10:15 p.m.

## Special Times of the Week/Month/Year

What are your rituals, traditions, and habits that regularly occur at certain times of the week, month, or year?

Weekly	Monthly	Annually
Friday afternoon yoga.	Personal finance review and planning with Melinda.	The last weekend of February is the Deerfield, Wisconsin Public Library Trivia Contest with college-era friends.
Annual goals review and weekly planning on Sunday nights.	Family fun time outing with the boys.	Continuous Creation Challenge (time varies, but normally in April or September).
Lifeline Group session on Tuesday afternoons for two hours every other week.		Thanksgiving day and extended weekend with family. This is my most important and favorite holiday by far.
Music class with Clark or swimming class with Grant on Saturday morning.		The World Domination Summit in Portland, Oregon in mid-July.
		SimpleREV event in early October.
		Northern Minnesota cabin trip to catch out of town family in mid- to late-August.

## How to Make Me Feel or Act...

List the common, uncommon, and unexpected ways to generate an emotion from you or cause an action by you.

Emotion or Action	How to Make Me Feel or Act This Way
Happy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take me out to a good Paleo-friendly restaurant where the dishes are cheap.</li> <li>2. Curate with me.</li> </ol>
Sad	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show me someone who has everything they could ever ask and is still ungrateful.</li> </ol>
Excited	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invite me to your wedding. I love weddings.</li> <li>2. Tell me about this awesome book, blog, video, seminar, etc. that transformed your life and why.</li> <li>3. Offer up an opportunity to help you in some way.</li> </ol>
Motivated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start with why I/we should do something. Then tell me how we're going to achieve it.</li> <li>2. Appeal to my deep-seated problem-solving urge.</li> <li>3. Explain how an action will benefit more than just me (i.e., another person or something in the natural world).</li> </ol>

Emotion or Action	How to Make Me Feel or Act This Way
Angry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make me try to build or fix something physical.</li> <li>2. Use more than one paper towel to dry your hands.</li> <li>3. Excessive water use, primarily from faucets and sprinklers.</li> </ol>
Loved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Say the words “I love you” with warmth or a smile.</li> <li>2. Give me a big hug. I mean, a good one that lasts more than a split-second.</li> <li>3. Let me know you’re thinking of me on a day that I don’t expect you to (e.g., something other than my birthday, Father’s Day, or an anniversary).</li> </ol>
Disrespected	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apply your standards or judgments to how I conduct my life.</li> <li>2. Take a moral or ethical high ground based on your religion (or my lack of it).</li> </ol>
Appreciated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Simply say a genuine “thank you,” even for routine tasks.</li> <li>2. Explain how something I created (a birthday card, blog post, etc.) was meaningful to you.</li> </ol>
Annoyed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use acronyms that most people don’t understand.</li> <li>2. Try to convince me to watch a TV show or explain why I’m “missing out” if I don’t watch.</li> </ol>
Respect You	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do things for free or selflessly.</li> <li>2. Be a member in a movement that’s important to me.</li> <li>3. Actively work to make your community or the world a better place.</li> <li>4. Be humble.</li> <li>5. Have a passion for learning.</li> </ol>
Be Responsive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Give me all the information I need up front.</li> <li>2. Let me know your deadlines and what happens if I don’t make one.</li> <li>3. Approach me casually and openly.</li> <li>4. Read my <a href="#">FAQ</a> first so you know some background and preferences I have.</li> </ol>
Other (Specify)	N/A.

## Goals and Areas of Growth

*By defining your goals – personal, professional, relational, or otherwise – and detailing areas of growth, you’ll know what’s important to you. Remember: readers of this guide might happily help you achieve your goals or assist in your growth areas ... if they know what they are.*

### Goals

Goal Type (Personal, Professional, Etc.)	Goal Length (Short, Medium, or Long Term)	Details
Professional	Long	Create a worldwide community of SimpleREVers who regularly connect online and offline.
Professional	Medium	Make a decent income from my business.
Professional	Medium	Turn my Smart and Simple Matters podcast into a weekly show.
Professional	Short	Learn to speed read on digital screens.
Personal	Long	Overcome my sugar binging.
Personal	Short	Be calm and present at home, even when my boys are going nuts.
Personal	Short	Establish a series of morning habits that can be maintained away from home.

### Areas of Growth

Area	How Do You Want to Grow
Productivity	Systematize all my recurring business tasks.
Exercise	Go on monthly half-day hikes or walks around the Twin Cities between April and October.

## Things I Like to Do and Why

*What are the activities you like to do with other people or for other people? Why? What are the hobbies or actions that energize you? Are there things you love doing so much you would do them for free?*

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working through tough personal finance issues is fun for me. Letting me help you with it (time allowing) is a treat.</li> <li>Yoga. The physical and mental benefits are amazing. The breathing techniques also help me in my day-to-day life.</li> <li>Going to the dog park. Getting outside, having a nice walk, and potentially seeing an Irish wolfhound is groovy.</li> <li>Watch sporting events. It's always more enjoyable when there's someone else to chat with during the game or to exchange high-fives.</li> <li>Read blog posts, books, opinion writers, listen to podcast episodes, or watch TED Talks about a variety of topics. This is my main source of new ideas to experiment with.</li> <li>Curate. I love having an external memory that allows me to be a go-to resource for so many people in so many ways.</li> </ol>
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## When Trouble Occurs

### Messages and Their Meaning

*When you don't like the way people are interacting with you, you'll often give off signals. List the common warnings – and their meaning – that people might generate from taking the wrong approach.*

Message	Meaning
That might work for you, but that doesn't work for me.	It's a bad idea to assume that judgments or beliefs that are important to you should also be important to me.

### Problems and Possible Solutions

*List the number of ways that your typical problems may be fixed. They can be as minor as fixing a sweet tooth to as major as reoccurring crises.*

Problem	Possible Solution
My emotional, mental, or physical rhythm is off.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask me what's wrong and be prepared to be a good listener.</li> <li>Get me some dark chocolate.</li> <li>Get my butt out of the house and take me for a walk.</li> </ol>
I have an irrational craving for something sweet	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help me eliminate my sugar binging.</li> </ol>

## Special Notes

If there are special notes or something in particular you want to call attention to, do it here.

Category	Notes
Eating	I eat Primal (a.k.a. Paleo + some dairy) 95% of the time, which means I'm probably not eating it if it's not meat, fruit, vegetable, seafood, nut, or dairy. Try not to be offended when you offer me something you made and I turn it down because it doesn't fit in the Primal framework. I do it to everyone (even my own mom).
Sleep	I'm an enormous fan of sleep. Few things have a higher priority.
Personal Care	I've been bald since about age 19, so I've shaved my head with a clippers once every couple of weeks for the past sixteen years.
Most Meaningful Quotes and Why	<p>There are <b>far</b> too many meaningful quotes I've come across, so I'll only list a few that are relevant to this guide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "You either got more friends and more enemies, when you show the world your true identity." – Aceyalone from the song Junkman. This resonates with me because I try to be transparent and show everyone my true identity. It's exhausting to have different personas for different contexts.</li> <li>2. "Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value." - Albert Einstein. This gets to the core of why money should not be important but the focus of life should be on creating value in other people's lives.</li> <li>3. "Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated." – Confucius</li> <li>4. "Attachment is based on fear and insecurity... The source of wealth, of abundance, or of anything in the physical world is the Self; it is the consciousness that knows how to fulfill every need. Everything else is a symbol: cars, houses, bank notes, clothes, airplanes. Symbols are transitory; they come and go. Chasing symbols is like settling for the map instead of the territory. It creates anxiety; it ends up making you feel hollow inside." – Deepak Chopra</li> <li>5. "I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day." – E.B. White</li> <li>6. "The prizes of our society are reserved for outer, not inner, achievements. Scant are the trophies given for reconciling all the forces that compete to direct our development." – Gail Sheehy. Achievements that can't be seen or touched are more important to me than those that can.</li> <li>7. "If we don't change we don't grow. If we don't grow we're not really living. Growth demands a temporary surrender of security. It may mean a giving up of familiar but limiting patterns, safe but unrewarding work, values no longer believed in, relationships that have lost their meaning." – Gail Sheehy</li> <li>8. "The choice isn't between success and failure; it's between choosing risk and striving for greatness, or risking nothing and being certain of mediocrity." – Keith Ferrazzi</li> <li>9. "Consumption is part of creation. You can't produce amazing stuff unless you're consuming amazing stuff." – Mark McGuinness. I can't create valuable stuff if I'm unaware of all the value other people are providing.</li> <li>10. "The recipe and the ingredients we need to maximize our health and well-being are right in front of us, but modern humans seem to disrespect and disregard the</li> </ol>

Category	Notes
	<p>profound legacy of our ancestors...With a few minor exceptions, we are indeed identical to our ancestors in how we metabolize food, respond to exercise, cycle through sleep phases each night, absorb sunlight, and deal with various other environmental influences.” – Mark Sisson. This is the core of the Primal lifestyle to me.</p> <p>11. “Action makes stuff happen. Action is the fire, not the firewood. Action is the growth of a tree and the budding of a flower, not the soil or the nutrients. Action is the wind, not the high and low–pressure systems that create it. Action is the crashing of a wave, not the water that makes it. Action is the marathoner breaking a sweat, not the marathon being run. Action is the writing of history, not the memory of history itself.” – Raam Dev. Raam reminds me that consuming without producing is meaningless.</p> <p>12. “There is nothing harsh about having to do without things for which you have ceased to have any craving.” – Seneca</p> <p>13. “If you could kick the person in the pants responsible for most of your trouble, you wouldn’t sit for a month.” – Theodore Roosevelt</p> <p>14. “If you believe that playing by your own rules is a good philosophy for your life, then it’s important to believe the same applies to others” – Tyler Tervooren. I play more and more by my own rules and need to remember to let other people do the same.</p> <p>15. “Anything can happen in life, especially nothing.” – Unknown. Left to our own devices, most people won’t do anything special with their lives. I don’t want to be one of those people.</p>
Other (Specify)	N/A.

## Create Your Own Section

*This template would look very different if you created it from scratch. This section is intended as a supplement for you to add as much as you like. Examples of section names could be “Random but important information,” “How I handle gossip”, “High level visual of how I operate” or “Warnings.” Get creative.*

Section Name	Content
Random But Important Information About Me	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I refuse to go fishing. There was an incident when I was nine with my cousins, uncle and a severely bloody lake fish that wouldn’t come off the hook no matter how hard I tried.</li> <li>2. Yes, I know I’m 6’6” ... but I don’t want to be on your volleyball team. It’s not fun for me.</li> </ol>

## What Now?

Your prize for finishing this guide is a fountain of knowledge and the ability to share it. I hope it feels good to package up the essence of you and explain it in a way that would normally take people years to understand.

Now that you've invested the time to create this special resource, its value will be multiplied by the number of people who use it. And if you have the time, different versions for different groups of people could be useful. Be somewhat careful who receives this, but you may want to distribute it by:

- Emailing to friends, family, co-workers, or that cute guy/girl you've been trying to impress
- Uploading it to your blog. You can then share it freely or control who gets access to it.
- Publishing the location of it on social media like Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, or LinkedIn

Reflecting on the new things you learned about yourself can also be extremely rewarding. Give it a try!

You can [contact me](#) whenever you like if you have questions about this resource. Even if you have just a few seconds to provide feedback on [Value of Simple](#) or [Twitter](#) and [Google+](#), **your input will help make future free resources even better!**

## Did You Find Value In This?

I hope you enjoyed completing this as much as I enjoyed creating it for you! I always try to give away my best tools and resources and this is just one of many in the Refuge of Simplicity. I would be grateful if you helped spread the mission behind this guide and Value of Simple.

### Some Simple Ways to Show Appreciation:

- Email someone a link to the [original article](#) and explain why The Personal User Guide could be valuable to them.
- Mention the guide on social media with a link to [Value of Simple](#).
- Post about this on your blog or wherever else you share your thoughts and ideas.
- [Click this to tweet](#) about the groovy stuff in the Refuge of Simplicity.
- [Send me an email](#) about your experience with the guide and its value to you. Direct feedback is awesome!