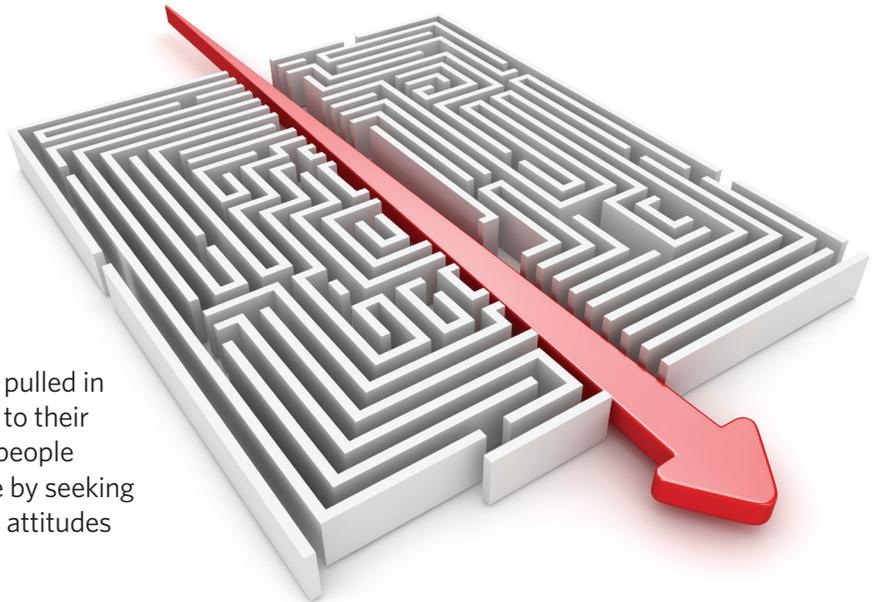


# Less Is More:

## How to Simplify Your Life



Life today is complicated. Most Americans are pulled in multiple directions every day by commitments to their families, workplaces, and communities. Many people have responded to the pressures of modern life by seeking ways to consciously simplify their routines and attitudes at home and work.

### Live in the moment

One way to simplify your life is to practice mindfulness — to slow down so you can recognize and appreciate the simple things in life. To be mindful instead of mindless, you live in the moment and become conscious of what you're doing. You don't think ahead or look back.

A good way to practice being in the moment is to follow your breath, a technique that doesn't require any special training. To breathe mindfully, take notice of your breaths and try to make them as calm and even as possible. Your breaths should be long and slow and should come from your diaphragm rather than your upper chest. Pay attention to each breath, letting thoughts fall away.

### Slow down

If you feel like you have too much information in your life, stop subscriptions to magazines, newspapers, or email newsletters you rarely have time to read. Leave the radio and TV off unless you're really listening to something that matters to you.

### Get organized

Begin by sizing up the problem areas in your home or workplace and making a plan of attack. Your goal should be to clear out clutter that causes you to waste time — a hall closet that has become a catchall for everything from clothes to sports equipment.

Learn to focus at work. To increase your focus and break free from distractions:

- Begin each day by setting priorities on what you want to accomplish.
- Check email at set times, rather than letting each new message interrupt you.
- Set aside a time to retrieve voice mail and return calls.
- Keep a calendar of your deadlines and obligations.

*Adapted from an article by Krames Staywell.*

## UPMC HEALTH PLAN

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