

## AMID THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE, KEEPING IT SIMPLE IS CRUCIAL

March 28, 2015

Simplicity is underrated. Instead, modern civilization is habituated to productivity and consumption. We send our children to school and ply them with extracurricular activities while maintaining a view toward higher education and good jobs. Along the way, our keiki quickly get the impression that happiness depends on the latest high-tech gadgets, trendy apparel and up-to-date accessories. As they grow older, the focus shifts to bigger items such as cars and then homes. In Hawaii many keep up by working two or even three jobs.



Skillful advertising meted out by big business cultivates the community palate to consume sugary sodas; deep-fried, heavily salted fast food; designer coffee in the morning; and, later, cold beer. Waistlines grow, and as heart disease and diabetes set in, health care is consumed in much the same way. Americans spend 16 to 18 percent of GDP on health care that is largely aimed at treating the ill effects of lifestyle.

These tendencies are empowered by an economic framework built on the principles of free-market competition, supply and demand, all of which depends on a certain but not excessive degree of growth and inflation year on year. This construct assumes unlimited natural resources.

The problem is that they are finite. Global warming has driven attention toward sustainability, the idea that resources do not dwindle because in the big picture they are recycled. Representatives of the world's nations keep coming together to discuss options for shifting the environmental trend. All the while, the world population continues to grow along with the modern industrial economy.

It is incumbent upon each of us to examine our own relationship to being busy. Industry, productivity, success and financial independence may have their benefits, but the very process can cause us to lose ourselves and distract us from simple joys. Consider the people we love. We might dedicate ourselves to providing for our families, but how much time do we actually spend enjoying the relationships that are the fruit of our labor?

There is great pleasure to be found actually in nondoing and simply watching the breath. Sitting even 15 minutes each day bringing the attention to the air we breathe reminds us that living in the moment is the true experience of wealth and health. Stopping for reflection, whether to meditate on a cushion, paddle a canoe or hike into the Koolau is not only enjoyable and nourishing; it also increases sensitivity, perspective and stamina when we find ourselves back in a mode of productivity.

Ira Zunin M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., is medical director of Manakai O Malama Integrative Healthcare Group and Rehabilitation Center & CEO of Global Advisory Services Inc.  
 Please submit your questions to [info@manakaionalama.com](mailto:info@manakaionalama.com)

The same is true for what we put in our mouths. There are so many drinks filled with sugar, salt, caffeine and alcohol that it is easy to forget to drink simple, clear water. Adequate hydration is important to lubricate joints, support digestion, promote healthy skin, control body temperature, eliminate toxins and protect the spinal cord. Chronic dehydration can cause fatigue, headaches, confusion, lightheadedness and weakness.

The Institute of Medicine determined that adequate intake for a man is roughly 15 cups (3.7 liters or 125 ounces) of total water — from all beverages and food — each day. The adequate intake for women is roughly 11 cups (2.7 liters or 90 ounces) daily. Sipping water at regular intervals is a simple and effective strategy to maintain proper hydration throughout the day.

Part of being free in a country founded on the principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is the ability to take the road less traveled. Keep it simple.