



ACTION GUIDE - ESSENTIALISM

One of the biggest differences between the RBC and other book clubs is this action guide. So often, we don't make time to read. And even if we do, we don't take the time to really absorb what we've learned – and put it to action in our life. The purpose of this guide is to help you document your Aha! moments and points you want to remember in one handy place, and give you a simple guide to refer to to refresh your memory and keep you on track in the future.

The point is not to recap the ENTIRE book, but instead to pull out the 20 percent that is going to make the biggest difference in your life. And, of course, my 20 percent might be very different from yours! :)

When I think of how to summarize “Essentialism,” I would describe it as a guidebook for those who want to be more effective in their lives, and are looking for a framework to approach the process of identifying and eliminating the non-essential.

Here are the elements that hit me the most:

1. **LESS BUT BETTER.** We don't pursue less for the sake of less; we pursue less for the sake of BETTER.

“There are far more activities and opportunities in the world than we have time and resources to invest in. And although many of them may be good, or even very good, the fact is that most are trivial and few are vital.”

2. **WE ARE MAKING CHOICES AND SETTING PRIORITIES EVEN WHEN WE THINK WE'RE TRYING TO DO IT ALL.** We can't do it all. By accepting that limiting fact, we can take control and be intentional in our priorities.

“Only once you give yourself permission to stop trying to do it all, to stop saying yes to everyone, can you make your highest contribution towards the things that matter.”

3. **IF THE ANSWER ISN'T A DEFINITE YES, IT SHOULD BE NO.** An easy guide for ourselves is that if we don't feel an immediate pull to something, we should turn it down. So often we talk ourselves into things: “Maybe it'll work out... Maybe I'll like it... Maybe I'll lose weight so I can wear it... Maybe I'll find something I can use it for.” STOP THAT. As creative people we can imagine a time where something might be valuable. But let's instead look for the best of the best.

“We aren't looking for a plethora of good things to do. We are looking for the ONE where we can make our absolutely highest point of contribution.”

4. **IF WE DON'T SET PRIORITIES, THEY'LL BE SET BY SOMEONE ELSE, OR BY DEFAULT.** We are overwhelmed, and we can play victim (trying to do it all, or letting someone else set the course). Or we can grab the reins ourselves and realize that no one knows more about what is right for us, than us.

“If you don't set boundaries – there won't be any. Or, even worse, there will be boundaries, but they'll be set by default – or by another person – instead of by design.”

5. **THIS IS A PROCESS.** It's something that must be undertaken repeatedly and regularly. We change, the world around us changes, and our priorities change. Sometimes we're not saying “No” to something that doesn't have value, as much as we are saying “No” to something that had high value for us BEFORE and no longer fits us.

From the past homework sheets, what were your big AHA moments?

WEEK 1: _____

WEEK 2: _____

WEEK 3: _____

WEEK 4: _____

Some tips to remember:

- **Remind yourself that you can change your mind.** Saying “yes” or “no” to something once doesn't mean saying “yes” or “no” forever.
- **It will always be hard, but it will get easier.** Eliminating excess and good but not great choices won't always be fun or easy. But as we learn more about ourselves, it will get easier.
- **Constraints are not evil.** Giving yourself guidelines doesn't mean you're penned in; it means you've evaluated and defined your edges.
- **Discipline is not the energy of enjoyment or enthusiasm.** You don't have to live a bland, empty life. Instead, this is a way to give you room to pursue the things and relationships that will be most meaningful and enjoyable for you.

If you'd like an even greater level of coaching around the books we're reading, join the [Living Life Louder Group Coaching](#) program!

