



## Live Simply

By Charles Welton, Esq.

**T**ry to stay ever vigilant to the fact that the nature of our practice of law takes us inevitably to focus on money. That is the focus of what we work to obtain for our clients. It is the measure of our success. It is our only option. In that process we must be careful not to be so focused on money that we allow ourselves to be co-opted into using money and the material goods they can bring to measure our own value. Remaining ever vigilant (despite transgressions!), I share this concern with you.

When we obtain success in our practice, it brings money to us as well as to our clients. It can be tempting to want to manifest that success by displaying our success through the material world in which we live. I urge moderation in that regard, for several reasons.

First and foremost, yes, live simply so that others may simply live. While we are constantly bombarded with messages — both overt and covert — that we must buy material goods and display them to reflect our success, these are often meaningless things in terms of both the larger world of the planet and the smaller world of our immediate needs. A lot of it is just stuff. This is especially poignant in contemporary America. We have an increasing gap between the haves and the have-nots, who struggle just to live on what they earn working full time. The gap also grows between those at the top of the economic food chain, and the rest of us somewhere in the middle.

On one hand, I regularly see homelessness on the streets of Denver. On the other hand, I am not regularly confronted by disparities I have with the wealthy, given circles within which I travel. I get occasional glimmers of it. I like to read the *New York Times*, especially the Sunday paper. Included quarterly is a *Style Magazine*. Even while espousing recognition of “value in the absence of too much” (think about that one), every page clearly aims at selling to people who have more money than they know what to do with. I am pretty confident that the targeted readers do not realize how bizarrely separate and apart they are from the rest of humanity, in their seeming catered-to obsession with “the perfect home,”

*...so that others may simply live. - Ghandi*

and “the perfectly serviced life.”

I am also confident that most of us - likely nearly all of us - are motivated to practice law as we do focusing on our service, to help others. Perhaps we remember the value of the wisdom of the advice to “do what you like, the money will come.” But when you get paid, sometimes handsomely, I would urge you to stay true to your communities. Do not strive to “stand apart” from your clients and others who have helped you achieve your success and who may look to you for leadership. Life presents choices. Those choices we make can define who we are. Ideally, they transparently reveal who we are as we strive to be true to ourselves. Maybe it is a concrete lifestyle choice, like choosing either to play golf at City Park or to join the Denver Country Club - where is your community? The choices are likely much more subtle and insidious than that.

Given the growing disparities in the world today I would hope, and I would like to trust, that we can promote the concept in our everyday lives that “less is more,” to set a transparent example for those with whom we have a chance to have impact. I readily admit that I am attracted to shiny objects as much as anyone is. I have made missteps. Yet, in stark contrast to the image of the well-tanned, shiny-suited, fast-talking lawyer, it is consistent with our practice of law and our role within our communities to focus away from accumulating material goods and redirect energy to basic values for the benefit of all. ▲▲▲

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