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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 09, 2005

Dear Real Simple Magazine

Dear *Real Simple Magazine*,

Thank you so much for the twentieth reminder, arriving in a brightly colored envelope marked "Urgent," that I have not yet renewed my subscription to your publication. As you more than anybody knows, my life is very, very complex. Why I must receive a dozen invitations to subscribe to magazines every week--and those are in addition to a gazillion credit card offers, requests for donations, and catalogs. In fact, it was you who so generously passed along my name to some of these mailing lists. I know because I gave you a fake name, which now appears on catalogs and even free mailing stickers. If I re-subscribe, do you think you could include an article on how to avoid such a situation in the future?

Thank you also for the many, many emails you've sent me. I'm sorry I haven't responded to your invitations to visit your web site, enter sweepstakes, or participate in one of your many customer surveys. In an effort to make my life easier, I've added several layers of spam filtering and it seems your electronic missives have landed in my Trash folder. I'd fish them out, but as you know, I am very, very busy.

You know, I've really appreciated your advice over the past

ABOUT ME



JLS

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year. I don't know how I'd reduce all the clutter in my life if it weren't for you telling me about all the closet organizers, binders, boxes, mailing labels, files, and other tools that would help me do so. Your articles informing me that my health and very life are in jeopardy if I don't take time to slow down and appreciate the finer things in life--especially finer things that can be purchased on sale at Target and Crate and Barrel--have really cut down on my stress. In fact, just the other day I was berating myself for not napping more often, all thanks to you. And when you suggested that I map out the aisles of my grocery store in advance, something that would only take an hour or so of my time, in order to shave off minutes during my holiday meal shopping? Wow. That was so genius, I used it in a short story I wrote about a neurotic mother who obsesses over the holiday details while ignoring the great psychological peril her own family is in. Merci! Speaking of the holidays, I'm so thankful for your gift guides! I simply don't know how I'd pick out impersonal, generic items for the special people in my life without them.

All of this is why it's so difficult to say what I have to say next: I am not going to renew my subscription. I know, I know. Your beef kebob recipe has become a favorite in my household, and the women at my friend's dentist office really are grateful when I pass you along to them. It's not you. It's me. A new year is upon us and I'm really trying to simplify my life. One of the ways I'm doing so is canceling all my magazine subscriptions. Most of them go directly my magazine container (your suggestion) and never make it out again. Yet the guilt I feel just knowing they're there--well, perhaps you could suggest something I could buy or do to help me out with that?

While I do hate to say it, there's someone else. He's a [life-hacker](#) and I do believe I love him. We met at the [New York Times Magazine](#). He never emails or writes or calls, but he's always [online](#) whenever I need him. Oh and the advice he's given me--an entire [list of codes](#), listed by company, to help me bypass phone jail, subscriber [user names and](#)

passwords to a bevy of free Web sites, meditation class podcasts. How come you never provided helpful tools like that? Why he even linked to a Wired News article I wrote, something you have never done, you trite bitch. Best of all, my life-hacker is completely free. The fewer things I have to pay for, the less I have to work, something that really, really simplifies my existence.

But no hard feelings, OK? I know that deep down you mean well. It certainly can't be easy competing against a detail-oriented, complexity-loving tyrant like Martha! I'm sure there are plenty of women who will gladly go to all the trouble and expense to find ease and freedom just like you recommend. But as for me, I sure would appreciate it if you'd leave me alone, stop sending me mail and remove me from your list. It's as simple as that.

Best wishes,
Jenn Shreve

Read previous letters: Dear Fashion [LINK] and Dear Email [LINK]

POSTED BY JLS AT 12:01 PM

3 COMMENTS:

Anonymous said...

hahahaha, the trite bitch line made me laugh altogether too much.

12/10/2005 3:36 PM

Lisa said...

Oh, Jenn, you have to promise me to send this in to the magazine. You might win a potholder!

12/13/2005 7:06 PM

Anonymous said...

wow! this is so funny and true!! I hope you sent this letter to the magazine@

6/14/2006 11:15 AM

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