



THE COMPLEXITIES OF BECOMING SIMPLE

“I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots.” – Albert Einstein

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My entire life I have heard about how technology is going to make my life simple. I take great relief in knowing this every time I get the *Blue Screen of Death* cast down upon me from the overlord Microsoft and my computer shuts down in the middle of a project, or when I can't find the digitally imaged document that I need in the next five minutes, not to mention the 250 junk emails standing between me and the one meaningful message in my Outlook inbox every day.

Well, at least teenage girls are able to break up with their boyfriends via text, Cable TV providers can hide behind a chat session for customer service in lieu of phone number, and my hypochondriac friend can self-diagnose his way into a state of madness. Indeed, there has never been a greater capability in the history of mankind to avoid dealing with difficult situations thanks to technology. In fact, it has, to some degree,

rendered us less able to effectively deal with adversity with any degree of confidence.

The latest development in the quest for personal simplicity is the invasion of the *robo-advisor* for financial planning. A number of companies have entered the arena offering the tech-savvy investor a series of online analytical tool suites for achieving their objectives utilizing models and algorithms. Human avoidance with regard to one of the most important aspects of planning for the future is now completely within your reach.

There is, however, one impediment to fully realizing the utopia of Internet-based solutions. Like it or not, we view the world through the lenses of our personal sets of values, beliefs, and experiences. Unfortunately, this isn't always the most objective platform from which to make decisions that should be based on logic rather than emotion.

One cannot underestimate the power of interpersonal engagement and critical reflection for closing the knowing-doing gap in any difficult endeavor. Can you imagine Michael Jordan rising to the same level of basketball achievement had Phil Jackson been substituted for an algorithm-driven set of solutions delivered in two dimensions? Have you ever wondered why we still have commercial airline pilots in an age where we can easily fly aircraft remotely? It is because there is no substitute for the comfort that comes from knowing that you have a connection with someone who is vested in your success. The same is true for financial planning and asset management.

The human component to managing behavior during volatile times or in the face of prodigious goals is often the difference between success and failure.

