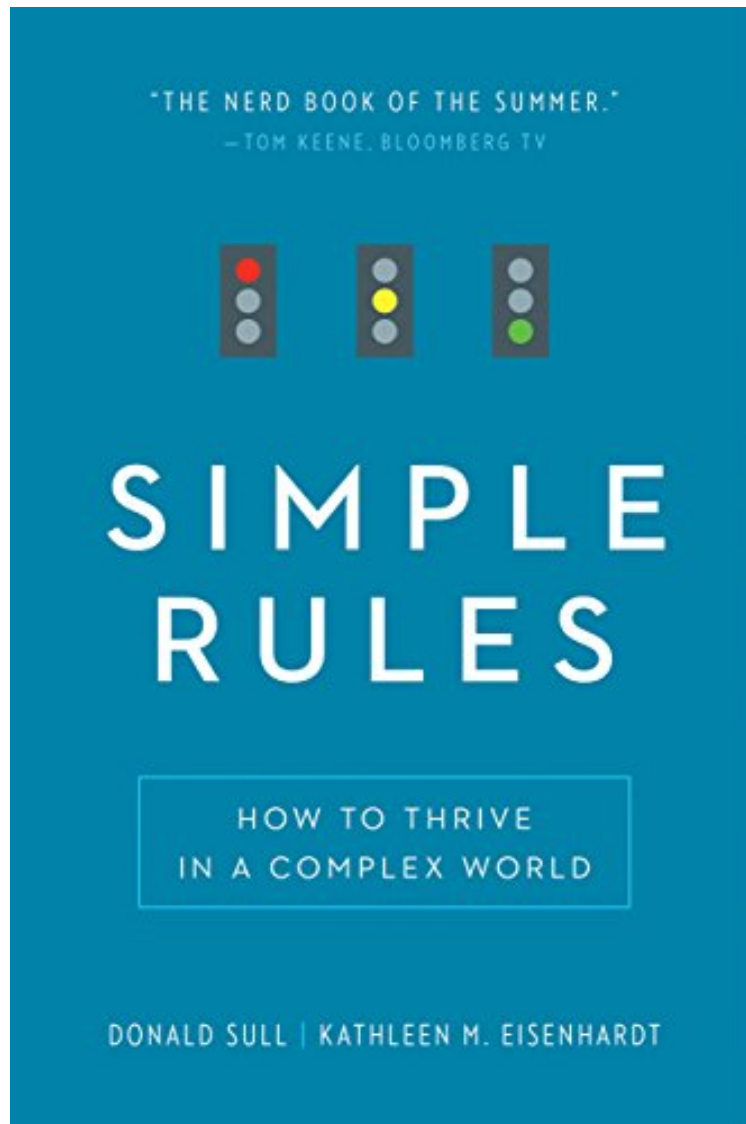


(Pdf free) Simple Rules: How to Thrive in a Complex World

## Simple Rules: How to Thrive in a Complex World

*Donald Sull, Kathleen M. Eisenhardt*  
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**Donald Sull, Kathleen M. Eisenhardt : Simple Rules: How to Thrive in a Complex World** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Simple Rules: How to Thrive in a Complex World:

123 of 127 people found the following review helpful. A complex book on simple rules filled with practices rather than platitudes. By Mark P. McDonald The book is Highly Recommended. It is not the easiest book to read compared to popular business pulp fiction. This book is full of good insight, practical advice, and ideas that you can start to apply tomorrow. This is the best business book I have read in the last six months and one I will refer to for a long time. While the world is complex, simple rules describe the world in an actionable and valuable way. That is the central premise of

Sull and Eisenhardt's book. This book is a guidebook to understanding, creating, deploying, and enhancing simple rules. The authors provide a comprehensive exploration and examination of the idea of simple rules applied across nature, personal lives, society, and business. The authors treat the reader as an adult. This is not pulp business fiction that we see where one person is selling their wares based on a single story. The ideas in the book are simple, but their explanation in the book is rather dense. You have to read this book, rather than skim it; the discussion found in the book rewards the reader for their efforts. The book contains the simple rules for creating and applying simple rules. There are three 'rules for rules': 1. Figure out what will move the needle 2. Choose a bottleneck, a constraint that is holding you back 3. Craft the rules

There are two basic groups of rules. Rules for making better decisions include: > Boundary rules - help decide between two mutually exclusive alternatives > Prioritization rules - provide the basis for ranking alternatives and assigning > Stopping rules - when do we reverse a decision or take a different course

Rules for doing things better include: > How to rules - guide the basics of executing tasks > Coordination rules - getting things done when there are multiple actors > Timing rules - guidelines for when to take action

Each set of rules is the focus of its own chapter in the book. Reading *Simple Rules* takes some persistence and focus but it is well worth the effort. The book's density comes from a rare combination of the author's desire to tell compelling stories and their academic background which calls for telling complete stories. It is a cross between the story telling style of a Malcolm Gladwell and the thoughtful prose and thinking of a Peter Drucker.

**Strengths** The idea behind simple rules and their application is elegant, actionable, and particularly helpful in the face of demands to be more agile and flexible. The book contains multiple examples of simple rules developed by others and the context in which those rules work. This is critical to help the reader understand where the rules come from, why they are the way they are and how that can apply to you. The book goes into the processes, approaches, and questions involved in creating simple rules. Across multiple instances, Sull and Eisenhardt share the behind the scenes thinking people went through to create rules. The chapter on Simple Rules as strategy is terrific and should be required reading for any business executive. The examples are rather long, but it is invaluable in building the understanding to apply these rules. It is a part other authors leave out, making their ideas seem more platitudes than practices. This book contains practices. The case stories cross a wide range of situations from butterflies, honeybees to religious orders and up, and coming companies. The sheer breadth of stories illustrates that the ideas are real and readily applicable to multiple situations. Chapters on applying simple rules to your personal life are illustrative and helpful. These chapters demonstrate the broad applicability of the idea as well as the context behind different situations where rules apply. These are not self-help chapters filled with assertions; rather they are the information needed for reflection to help you in a meaningful way.

**Challenges** The case stories are sometimes long on explanation which makes the book feel like a heavy read, particularly if you are used to skimming a business book for ideas. In this case, take the time to read as the depth of explanation often includes the micro-insights needed for execution. Not every case story is business related. This may frustrate people as they wonder how the history of the Jesuits, California landscaping or strength training matter. However, they do not only to illustrate the examples but also to demonstrate the power of simple rules. The prose is occasionally self referential, which is something rare in business books. While personal experience is helpful, it often adds words and weight to the book that is unnecessary given the other strong stories supporting these ideas.

**OVERALL** Highly recommended and a book I will return to time and time again. Particularly helpful when you are stuck and the things that worked are not working. Chances are the rules need to change.

21 of 23 people found the following review helpful. Insightful, entertaining, and useful - simply a great book

By Henning This book is intellectually stimulating, practically relevant, and very well researched. Sull and Eisenhardt provide a compelling answer to how we can navigate the challenges of today's complex world: *Simple Rules*.

Sull and Eisenhardt are the world's foremost experts on the topic of simple rules. For years, both are leading researchers on how individuals, teams, and organizations succeed in overcoming complex challenges. This book builds on this cutting-edge research, finding a way to communicate meaningful insights in a very entertaining format. The authors show how we can use simple rules to structure and simplify complex decisions. Recognizing the power of simple rules allows us to master personal, everyday challenges. For example, simple rules are a great way to increase productivity, minimize procrastination, or succeed in a diet. Once they've helped us make the right decisions, simple rules are also a great tool for implementing the decisions well. Simple rules are also highly effective for management. For example, firms like Google rely heavily on simple rules to manage their growth. I really enjoyed reading this book, and I found it very useful in my personal and my professional life. The presentation is both insightful and entertaining, reminiscent of Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers* or Charles Duhigg's *The Power of Habit*. The author's use of different topics, be they college football, complexity theory, or medical care, to illustrate the power of simple rules was fascinating. In brief, this book is full of both perceptive ideas and memorable stories.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Gracefully written and deeply researched

By SanSonoma This wonderful book offers us gracefully written yet deeply researched tools to better manage in a complex world. The power of their writing is not that they find mere simplicity or rules-of-thumb, but that they instead show how simple rules are learned, and how these simple rules enable us to manage complex problems. It is also a delight to read not only for its directness and clarity, but also because we journey along with the authors in their motivating examples that

span the Renaissance to the modern world. As an entrepreneur, I found a rich set of ideas that I can immediately use. As a pilot, I particularly appreciated their work because flying is a complex and interactive activity that demands precision and good judgment to be safe. In the same analytic tradition of this book, pilots often reduce complex judgments about power settings and control inputs into simple rules. During landing, for example, the complex interplay between attitude and power is made manageable by the rule, "control airspeed with pitch and decent rate with power." As Sull and Eisenhardt might say, this rule is not a simple platitude like "fly safely", but a rule that enables effective action and strategy. I recommend this well thought out and immensely practical work very highly.

**HOW SIMPLICITY TRUMPS COMPLEXITY IN NATURE, BUSINESS, AND LIFE** Complexity surrounds us. We have too much email, juggle multiple remotes, and hack through thickets of regulations from phone contracts to health plans. But complexity isn't destiny. Sull and Eisenhardt argue there's a better way. By developing a few simple yet effective rules, people can best even the most complex problems. In *Simple Rules*, Sull and Eisenhardt masterfully challenge how we think about complexity and offer a new lens on how to cope. They take us on a surprising tour of what simple rules are, where they come from, and why they work. The authors illustrate the six kinds of rules that really matter - for helping artists find creativity and the Federal Reserve set interest rates, for keeping birds on track and Zipcar members organized, and for how insomniacs can sleep and mountain climbers stay safe. Drawing on rigorous research and riveting stories, the authors ingeniously find insights in unexpected places, from the way Tina Fey codified her experience at Saturday Night Live into rules for producing *30 Rock* (rule five: never tell a crazy person he's crazy) to burglars' rules for robbery ("avoid houses with a car parked outside") to Japanese engineers mimicking the rules of slime molds to optimize Tokyo's rail system. The authors offer fresh information and practical tips on fixing old rules and learning new ones. Whether you're struggling with information overload, pursuing opportunities with limited resources, or just trying to change your bad habits, *Simple Rules* provides powerful insight into how and why simplicity tames complexity.

One of the Washington Post's Twelve Leadership Books to Watch for in 2015 One of Bloomberg Businessweek's Wall Street's Must-Read Books of the Summer "Whatever you want in life can be achieved if you break it down into a few basic rules. Well, that's the theory of these two business experts, and many influential figures think likewise." — Times (London) "Can't convey enough how important this is . . . Simple Rules is the nerd book of the summer." — Tom Keene, Bloomberg TV "At last, a book offering an ingenious way to fight back against the relentless assault of complexity and its insidious spawning of untold confusions, costs, crashes, and calamities. Simple Rules offers an exciting framework for both understanding complexity and rendering it harmless. Whether you run an organization or are simply trying to survive modern life, this book is gold." — Chris Anderson, TED curator "Simple Rules shows how a handful of thoughtful principles can not only sharpen the quality of your decisions, but also allow you to maintain latitude in your judgments and to see the richness of opportunity. We all deal with complexity now, and this book will show you how you can do more with less." — Michael J. Mauboussin, head of Global Financial Strategies, Credit Suisse "Our future will be increasingly complex, from accelerating technological change to global connectivity of federated teams. Simple Rules explains how we can manage to make meaningful progress in a world that exceeds human understanding. At DFJ, we use simple rules, like 'invest in unique ideas' to support breakout winners across multiple industries undergoing profound disruption. This is a harbinger of the information economy to come." — Steve Jurvetson, managing director of Draper Fisher Jurvetson "Sull and Eisenhardt have written the definitive playbook injecting sanity, creativity, and productivity into our workplaces and the other spheres of our lives. Simple Rules is brimming with clever and surprising tips, lovely stories, and compelling research that will help you spot unnecessary complexity, eliminate maddening frustration, make the right decisions faster, and have a whole lot more fun along way." — Robert I. Sutton, best-selling author of *The No Asshole Rule* and coauthor of *Scaling Up Excellence*