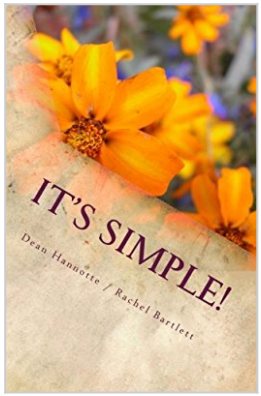

It's Simple! Ordinary common-sense explanations for everything you haven't figured out yet

By Dean Hannotte

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It's Simple! Ordinary common-sense explanations for everything you haven't figured out yet is an anthology of short essays by Dean Hannotte, edited and with an introduction by Rachel Bartlett. Requiring no special vocabulary or academic training, it yet covers the serious topics that most of us manage to forget while we're still children, and provides a pretty good start towards answering such questions as:

- Who am I?
- What am I doing here?
- What is important in life?
- Where are we going?

Designed to be absorbed in bite-size chunks, ***It's Simple!*** reflects a rigorously thought-out view of life that is both humanistic and scientific.

RACHEL'S INTRODUCTION: Like many young people, I felt betrayed and let down by my teachers, relatives, even the books in the library. I had been an excellent student, but now that I was free to go and live my own life, it turned out that I had not learnt anything of relevance. I had wasted thousands of hours learning ideological nonsense and useless factoids, but I did not know how to deal with people, how to handle myself without destroying myself, how to be happy, or what I was doing on this planet in the first place. Nobody had bothered to teach me anything useful about the things that really mattered.

Back then, there was no internet, so I could not just google it -- and, in fact, I had to re-train myself to think "just google it" whenever I found myself pondering, "I wonder if . . . ", while the internet was growing into the gigantic collection of humanity's treasures it is now. But just a few years later, this was changing, and while it is funny how the internet was instantly claimed by erotica and (what was later called) LOLcats, the early contributors also put up countless pages with their favorite quotations and collected wisdom to encourage and inspire people like me. ("Ten Rules for Being Human" by Chérie Carter-Scott is one of these early gems -- she nailed down the painfully obvious in one, short, straightforward

list. Some may feel all set after reading this list; by all means go and have fun now.) It is no longer necessary to start from scratch for those interested in living consciously; the internet is leveling the playing field in more than one regard.

Now, in the age of simply googling the meaning of life, the universe, and everything, do young people still feel betrayed by their teachers? I hope this undeserved authority of teachers has evaporated, as nowadays any kid in need of guidance can join an internet forum to discuss the really important questions. Even institutions like Yale University are recognizing the contributions of independent researchers: You no longer need the endorsement of a professor to be granted access to the best libraries in the world. So yes, a lot of progress has been made.

There is no need to invent the wheel over and over again, not even when it comes to psychological development. More people should write autobiographies, or at least essays, so their children and grandchildren would inherit more than money and fuzzy ideas of love and responsibility.

Inspired by conversations with friends and students, drawing from a wealth of experience as a psychological counselor, and decades as the leader of the Ninth Street Center, Dean Hannotte started writing these essays in the 1980s.

Long before I actually met Dean, his essays helped me see the world much more clearly and become the human I am now. They will not explain the world to you, nor will they tell you how to think about anything.

They will merely show you a way to work it out for yourself -- teach you how to think, not what to think. Regardless of where in life you stand right now, treat these essays like the words of a wise, experienced old friend encouraging you to lead an interesting, outstanding life, or to re-consider important questions . . . .

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Editorial Review

About the Author
Dean Hannotte graduated from the Bronx High School of Science and studied the history of ideas at St. John's College in Annapolis. In 1966 he met Paul Rosenfels and became a proponent of humanistic psychology. In 1973 he and Paul founded the Ninth Street Center and Dean began editing the Ninth Street Center Journal. In 1991 he published "We Knew Paul", a collection of interviews with Paul's friends and students. Since 1997 he has served as secretary of The Paul Rosenfels Community. Dean can be reached at dean.2012@rosenfels.org.

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