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Jeff Davidson, MBA, CMC  
Breathing Space® Institute  
2417 Honeysuckle Road, #2A  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514-6819

Dear Jeff:

This brief letter is my attempt to provide you with feedback regarding your presentation at the Saint Alphonsus Leadership Institute. I won't pretend to be as witty as many of my colleagues in the room that day. But I would like to say that I thoroughly enjoyed your energy, your gifts of knowledge, and your unique yet so obvious words of wisdom on living life differently and constructively, i.e. with grace.

I think that *saying* we all need to simplify is in itself so...simple. But actually taking the steps to accomplish such a task is often an enormous undertaking and becomes overwhelming for most of us. Your constructive strategies are ones that I am taking to heart and plan to continue integrating into my daily living.

I would like to share with you something that I have learned as I enter my 40s...a perspective that is relatively new to me, which is that my husband and I seem to enjoy far more simplicity in our life than most of our coworkers and friends. I'm not bragging about how we live our lives, but **making an observation** about how we have chosen to live our lives. You see, I was not blessed with the ability to have my own children. I have faced many challenges, including loss, and still many more questions about adoption. In the end, my husband and I have chosen *not* to add children to our life. What I am trying to say, ever so inarticulately, is that accepting not having children has brought far less stress and anxiety to my life, and much more freedom, time for **breathing**, and moments of relaxation than that experienced by my family, friends, and coworkers who do have children. For instance, our Christmases are relatively quiet, not filled with scouring the city, the internet, and ebay frantically seeking the latest and greatest Xbox whatever. I also discovered that I don't know about half of what kids "have to have" today, because I don't have to...and quite frankly, I don't care. That has been a very powerful discovery!

I now understand that sometimes things work out for the best. And, I truly believe there is a plan for each of us that we sometimes just can't understand or comprehend at the time. Your presentation was once again a reminder to me of the many joys I have in my life, each waiting for me to appreciate them. Thank you again for your wit and interactive presentation style. I thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon.

Best Regards,

Char Sutton  
Director of Development & Planned Giving