

Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View

Dear Listener:

Thank you for stopping by for a visit at Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View podcast! To make it easy, you will find a transcript of each episode. I hope you enjoy the visit!

Episode 4 - Start Dreaming!

Welcome to Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View. Thanks for stopping by! Grab a glass of Lemonade, pull up a rocker and join me for conversations about living the Simple Life. Go ahead. Get comfortable and settle in for a good visit. It's time to relax and enjoy!

Have you ever had your Mom look you in the eye and say, "You are grounded!" In this case, you probably did something that wasn't acceptable, and more than likely, it wasn't the first time – which is why you ended up confined to the house or your room for a determined length of time.

Well, just think of me as Mom right now. And I hereby ground you. (I'll bet you are grinning right now, ready for some solitude and quiet time – instead of wearing that pouty face you wore so long ago!)

The question now becomes, 'How long will you be grounded?' Well, that depends. How long do you need? So many of us have been so busy with life, we have forgotten how to dream. But dreaming is the first, and a very important step in learning to live a Simple Life. So, until you have finished your homework, just consider yourself grounded.

Before you get started, you need to do a few things. First, you need to find a place that is quiet, where you will be relatively undisturbed. It needs to be somewhere you can fully relax. When I started dreaming about changing my lifestyle, I chose the swing outside. If you don't have a swing but do some of your best thinking outside, then get a lawn chair. A favorite nook in the house with a comfy chair works well, too.

The next thing is you need to have some type of refreshment. You don't want to find any excuses to interrupt your dream session. If you do, the chances of you finding something else to do is a high risk. If you love lemonade or iced tea, make a pitcher of it. If you prefer hot chocolate or tea, then fix a thermos. And it always helps to have a treat to go with it. Bake some fresh cookies, brownies, or lemon bars, and put them on a plate.

You will also need to have a notebook and a pen to make notes. Some of us have a Vision Board or notebook. If you have one of those, take it with you.

Now, it is time to settle into your space, get comfortable, and start. Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and let everything else that is cluttering your mind go. It is time to start Dream Day One.

We all have them. A dream is usually something we see, we want, we pursue. They resemble a soap bubble – all colorful, transparent, yet ephemeral. They float on the breeze. We chase them, but the wind takes them just out of our reach. And then they pop. We walk back to the pan, dip our wand back in, and create a new one.

That is essentially what you will be doing. You will be watching your dreams float across your mind like bubbles. Some of them may pop before you can focus on them. Some may seem too small to think about. But for right now, you want to make a note of each and every one that is floating by. (I dare you to take a bottle of bubbles with you into your comfy place and use them as a tangible part of this lesson!)

For each dream you think about, write it down in your notebook. Don't worry whether it is feasible. Don't think about what it will take to realize this dream. And for Pete's Sake, don't even think about the cost, logic, or sanity of your dreams. Don't even worry about what other people might think. Just write all of them down.

Once you have written down the dream, move on to the next one. And then the next one. Have you been miserable in your day job and want to start your own business? Write it down. Do you just want to quit work altogether and become a housewife? Write it down. Do you think relocating to some remote island would resolve all your problems? Write it down. For that matter, if you want to become the next Mario Andretti (a race car driver), write the next best seller, or become the president of the United States, Write. It. Down.

No dream is too wild. No dream is too silly. Not one of them are too big, too small, too mundane. Every single one of these dreams have merit. The important part of this exercise is to just figure out what it is you are dreaming about. And it's okay if it is a long list.

If you aren't sure about how to dream, just ask yourself a few questions. What are you doing that you want to change? Do you want to stop doing it altogether, or do you want to step it up a notch and improve?

Answer this question:

“If I could do anything, I would _____”.

If you fill in that blank with travel, add where you want to go. If you want to learn something new, be specific. And if you want to change your lifestyle completely, make it clear what lifestyle sounds most appealing. Just don't be too specific. You don't need to know your travel plans yet.

There will be more than one way to fill out the blank, and that's okay. Keep asking yourself that question until you feel you have covered all your options.

When you fill in the blank, don't allow yourself to follow up your answers with reasons why your choices cannot or should not be done. All that does is lead you full circle and will end up making you dizzy. You are trying to dream, not find reasons why you shouldn't.

What about those dreams that have slowly been building? The ones that have been taking root in our minds and hearts for quite some time now. The ones we initially become passionate about. Those we pursued with endless energy, until we tripped over some obstacle that life put in our way.

Oh, sure. The first couple of times we hit that boulder, we pulled ourselves up and kept moving. But when the obstacles became bigger and bigger, until they were larger than life itself, we slowed our pursuit, and wondered if it was even worth it. Face it, we failed, and the dream just wasn't meant to happen. Right? Maybe not.

Do you have a dream like that? One that was once so important, but now seems to have withered to the point where you don't have enough water or fertilizer left to bring it back to life? You are just ready to yank up the remaining roots and toss them on the compost pile, if not in the burn barrel. Well, don't give up just yet. Go ahead and put it on your list.

If it helps, do a bit of free flow writing. It doesn't matter if your dreams are realistic. The important part is knowing what you really want to do with your life. We will deal with reality later.

Let me say this for those of you who think you have forgotten how to dream. On your first attempt, it may be difficult. It was for me. By nature, I am a dreamer. But my life

had gotten so complicated and busy, that I had almost forgotten how to do it. I kept telling myself I didn't have time. The exercise was stupid. I was a grown woman, for Pete's sake. I needed to be responsible, get up, and start working on my list of chores!

But I made myself stay in that swing. It took a while, but the first bubble of a dream floated by. I studied it for a moment, then wrote it down. The next one came more in my peripheral vision, but I caught enough of it to write down just the essence of it. Before long, they started to come more easily.

Let me tell you a bit about dreams. Most of them stem from our natural talents. It is a way our hearts communicate with us about our deepest desires. They have a tendency to tell us Who we are meant to be, what direction we should be traveling in, when we should get started pursuing them, and where they can potentially take us.

Use this first day of dreaming to really dig deep. And again, don't worry about the details – you will be covering those in Dream Day Two.

Why are we splitting our Dream days into multiple times? That's easy. Between each step, you need an opportunity to let it sit. Any time we are on the threshold of making big decisions or changes in our lives, we need an opportunity to let our thoughts settle.

Think of a bottle of fresh milk. By spacing your Dream Days apart, you give all your dreams a chance to settle. The ones that are richer and stem from your true talents, desires, and heart will rise to the top, just like cream separating from the milk.

On Dream Day Two, you need to take another look at your dream list. You may want to add a pack of different colored highlighters to your supply list, as they will come in handy. And don't forget the refreshments. You will definitely need them.

Now that you have allowed all these dreams to settle a little, you will probably find your list falls into three categories: The ones that make your heart jump, the ones that still sound good, but aren't quite as exciting, and the ones that aren't nearly as appealing as you initially thought. As you look over each dream, highlight them in a color that represents each category.

Next, make two lists – one with the heart-jumping dreams, and one for the Still Sounds Good dreams. Set the rest aside for now.

Let's start with List One. Look over all the dreams on that list. Eventually, you begin to notice that there is one which keeps coming through stronger than the others. It is this the first one that gets the attention.

It's time to ask yourself two questions. To answer these, you need to be completely in touch with your heart, as well as your mind. Get your notebook and pen out and write down your answers.

The first Question to ask yourself is: Using a scale with 1 being the least, and 10 being the most, just how important is this to me? When you ask yourself this question, don't consider the time, money, or the effort it will take to fulfill this dream. This is really a question that your heart needs to answer. It doesn't mean you will fulfill the dream; it just helps you to determine desire.

If your answer was between 1 and 5, you may want to consider this a beautiful daydream, but not worth pursuing. Go ahead and give yourself permission to move this dream to List 2 or 3.

If your answer is between 6 and 10, then it's time you answered Question 2.

Realistically, what is it going to take to make this dream come true? Break this question down into short, one- or two-word answers: money, time, design, supplies, assistance, taking a class, etc. Don't try to list the details of each category, such as how much time or money it will take. Don't run off on a mental tangent of where you can find free or inexpensive design plans or the cheapest route of supplies.

Just have a fixed idea of what it will take. Keep in mind, this list probably won't be complete. If this is a dream you are going to pursue, there may be other considerations when you start digging even deeper. But for now, you just need an idea of what you will need to move forward.

Take a look at your answer: Did any of these categories give the dream the Quit Disease? Take that category first and examine it. Was it money? Money is usually the biggest dream killer out there.

Regardless of the reason, don't give up yet. There can be ways around the obstacle – but if the dream is still a passion, it is worth the wait. In truth, none of these issues is truly a game changer. There are things we can do to break down any of these boulders

into nothing more than pebbles. But first you need to determine if the dream is still worth pursuing when it approaches these boulders. If the passion begins to wane fast when faced with them, then set the dream aside for a month or two. If it begins to fade altogether, then let it go. If it continues to niggle in the recesses of your mind or invades your dreams, then you will have an opportunity to look at it again later.

Wait! Didn't I mention a third list? This is the list of dreams you find aren't appealing any longer. You still don't want to get rid of them. They may only be resting for now, but you never know if they are something that truly needs to go by the wayside. More than likely, they will be discarded in the future, but for now, just let them sit.

Now that your lists are completed, you will have a better and more realistic idea of what direction you want to go in your new Simple Life journey. While you are letting them sit for a while, there are a few other considerations to think about.

But before we do that, have you noticed a little hairy beast which has been lurking in the shadows? This beast just happened to show up the second you decided that changing lifestyles might be a good thing. His main goal is to sabotage those dreams. His name is FEAR. Somedays he goes by his aliases – DOUBT and UNCERTAINTY.

Before we can get to the planning stage, we need to learn how to deal with him. Get prepared to do just that in the next episode, Dealing with Fear and Mistakes.

So, for right now, just ignore his pokes and whispers. Or offer him a cookie and tell him to go sit in the corner. You will deal with him next week.

If you want to learn more about the topic at hand, or get a transcript of this Episode, just visit my website at www.thefarmwife.com/podcast. That is the Resource page for this podcast and I have it set up by episodes to make things easier to find. For this one, just look for Episode 4. And if you have questions or need some help with getting your dreams started, you can stop by for an email visit at thevirtualporch@gmail.com. And be sure to hit that Subscribe button, so you don't miss a single visit!

Join me each Monday for more episodes on Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View. And while you are waiting on the next one, grab that glass of refreshment, pull up a rocker, and sit back for a while. It's time to

Relax and Enjoy!

julie