

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 5 - Dealing with Fear and Mistakes

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!

I don't know about you, but I have a deep and abiding fear of snakes. I hate them. I can scream like a girl when I see them. And a simple shotgun isn't enough for me to get rid of them, I want to alert our nearby Air Force base to come drop a missile on them.

Then why, you may ask, am I living on a farm – in the South – where rattlesnakes, water moccasins, and copperheads just love to hang out?

Because my passion for living a Simple Life is bigger than my fear.

I love this farm. Out back we have a pond that is surrounded by a thick grove of trees. From yellow Pine to Oak, a few Beech trees and a couple of Cypress trees the Country Boy planted several years ago, it is like being in an embrace with nature.

It is where our Prayer Bench sits, and I go to get a few moments of peace and quiet. There is no better place to just sit and think. And I love watching the fish jump. It's fun to keep track of the path of a turtle. All you can see is the tip of its head as it meanders through the water, headed for a sunny spot on the edge.

I enjoy it that is, until I realize I made a mistake. That isn't a turtle. It is a snake, and it has decided to change course and head straight for my own little sunny spot.

In the beginning, I would become paralyzed with fear. A fear that kept me rooted to the spot. When I could finally break the grip of fear, I would slowly stand up and then as quickly as possible start walking away – before the fear showed up again and I would break into an all-out run.

And then the Country Boy just had to inform me that if it was a water moccasin, they are aggressive and would chase me if they felt threatened. Yes – I did have a fleeting thought about whether I could find a divorce attorney at 8:00 on a Sunday morning.

But that is the way it goes with fear. It is all too easy to see them coming, and then start running in the other direction. We head for safe ground and wrap ourselves in what we think of as our safe little world. However, when we do that, we isolate ourselves from the beauty, excitement, and fun of the outside world.

One of your biggest fears right now is whether you can truly shift your hectic lifestyle to a Simple Life. There is a lot of work involved, and even more room for failure and mistakes. But by allowing those two bullies to keep you from a life you love, the outcome can be even harder to face.

To help you move forward and get past the fears and mistakes, let's tackle these bullies one at a time, starting with fear.

The most common fear people have is a fear of failure. All our lives we have struggled to please other people – parents, teachers, friends, and bosses. Being afraid can prevent us from trying new things. It stifles our curiosity and keeps us from learning and growing.

Mistakes are an equally large problem for some. Making them subjects us to embarrassment, a feeling of failure, and if we make too many of them, we can quickly give up, and possibly lower our feelings of self-worth.

But when you add fear and mistakes together, the combination can be all too similar to a snake. It can be paralyzing. We can no longer move forward. Our opportunity to grow ceases. It robs us of any joy and contentment we may otherwise feel in life. The very idea of confronting our fear and mistakes feels like falling into a pit with no ladder to climb or people around to throw you a rope.

Learning how to combat fear and mistakes requires you to face them head on. That pit you are in isn't going to get shallower. But by using your wits, you can dig handholds into the soft dirt. You can spread your arms and legs and slowly make your way out. And if there are any rocks in the dirt, you can dig them out and stack them up like a staircase.

By facing your fears and mistakes, you can overcome them. It may take work. It may take accepting the fact that you cannot change what has been done. But you can use them to your advantage.

Instead of cowering away, you can redesign it into a challenge. By analyzing your mistakes, you can make corrections and learn to do it right. And as far as failure goes, you can simply use it as a steppingstone to future success.

Let's shift the analogy here from snakes and pits to something less frightening. Let's look at them as a person you dread being around. The bully that has been harassing you. No matter where you go, or what you do, a look over your shoulder says he is still there – mocking, threatening, discouraging.

It's time to get rid of him once and for all. But how do you do it? Let's start by dealing with your fears and see if some of these tips will help.

First, invite it over for a visit. That may seem strange to you, but by getting to know your fear, you will have the advantage of observing it objectively, similar to studying a dead bug under a microscope. Just like people, it has a name. It also has a history. That history will tell you where it originated and how it became a fear in the first place.

By knowing what your fear is, you have taken the first step towards reducing the power it has over you. You do become more objective about it. And when that happens, you can gain a little more control over it, and remove some of the control it has over you.

Next, it may be time to design a Laws, Rules, & Regulations document for your fears. Another strange suggestion? Maybe. But let's go with it for a moment. I am willing to bet that within your home, you have a document just like this. Oh, it may not be a written document that you can refer to by page, section and paragraph, but it is there all the same.

Your Home document states clearly what behaviors you will and will not accept from those who visit, much less those who live in the house. This would be rules such as No foul language. No criticisms or put downs. Play Nice. Be Kind. Do Your Chores. No temper tantrums.

Giving your fears the same rules will help you to gain even more control over them. For instance, let's say your fear is trying something new. The very idea of putting yourself out there, and risking failure is more than you can handle.

But the first rule in the document should be ‘no foul language. No criticism, no put downs.’ The ‘foul’ language would be ‘What are you thinking?’. No, there aren’t any curse words in that sentence, but it is still derogatory.

What about, ‘You can’t do that. Your skill set for it is pitiful. That’s for smarter, faster, prettier, better, people than you.’ How many criticisms and put downs can you count in just that one sentence? Worse yet, they probably aren’t the only ones you are telling yourself.

When your fear starts telling you these things, it’s time to turn yourself into a two-year-old. You know, that annoying habit they have of always asking ‘Why?’. Ask yourself WHY you believe you can’t do it? Why do I think my skill set is pitiful? After all, I have done this, this, and this with fewer tools.’

And then ask the harder questions – ‘Why am I not smart enough, fast enough, pretty enough?’ And WHO exactly are these ‘people’ that seem to be superheroes and have what I don’t have? What? This project requires a cape?’

What this does it to help minimize the fear and begins to make it sound preposterous. Almost comical. And when that happens, you are close enough to over-coming that fear that you are ready to show it to the door.

Let’s get a bit more serious and literal now. Another tip to help you over come fear is to get moving. Run. Walk. Go to the gym. Exerting energy through exercise helps you to refocus, release tension and stress, and can help you feel more in control of your emotions.

Set your fear aside and allow your courage to step up to the plate. Give yourself a pep talk. Acknowledge your courage to face your fear and use that courage as momentum to overcome it. It may take a few tries, but each time you do, give yourself points, credit, and a healthy pat on the back.

Now that we have our fear tucking tail and running away, use that newfound courage to face your second fear – Mistakes.

The first thing you need to realize about mistakes is that they are nothing more than a life lesson. With each one you make, look for ways you can learn from it. Consider each one nothing more than a pop quiz. When the final exam is given, you will be sure to ace it!

When we make a mistake, we often over-think how others see us. Sorry for bringing in yet another analogy, but those thoughts are nothing more than a runaway dog. By using a secure mental harness, you can keep them from getting loose in the first place.

Remember - most other people may not have even noticed your mistake. If they did, they will have forgotten it long before you do. Instead of losing the entire war, use your mistakes to plan for victory. Break them down. Look closely to help you determine where the problem lies. From there, you can change tactics and move forward.

How do you move forward? Easy. First - go back to school. You don't literally have to enroll in college, but you do have to do your homework. Decide what you want to do and read the instructions - whether literally or figuratively. Know what the final product is and do the research. Set out action steps. And take your time.

Next, put a harness on those thoughts. A mistake isn't the end of the world. It is the part of the process of learning. Even if it is something you do on a regular basis, the cause of the mistake could be any number of things - getting in too big of a hurry, dealing with distractions, or having your mind on something else, and you aren't paying close attention to the job at hand. Instead of berating yourself, just say 'Whoops!' and go back and fix it.

If you keep making the same mistakes over and over again, or what you are aiming at isn't coming out the way you thought, it may be time to design a Battle Plan. This plan is when you start over from Square One. Look at what you want to accomplish from a different perspective. Study it some more. Re-read the instructions. Just don't give up. Some things take time to learn and get right.

More than anything, you need to learn to accept that You Aren't Perfect. Don't sweat making mistakes. No one is perfect. Give yourself credit for trying. Then go back to the drawing board to find a better way.

If it gets too bad, put it all on paper. Having a visual of the steps you made can help you see the overall attempt more clearly and assist you in finding the faulty piece. From there, you make corrections and try again.

Let me share a personal experience with you on my own fears and mistakes. I love my blog. I love the writing, sharing my thoughts and ideas, and the great visits I have with some of my readers. Writing in general was one of the categories in my Passions Priority column. I wanted to write books, and I have. But I wanted to take it even further. That's where my blog comes in.

When I first decided to start my blog, I just knew it was going to be easy. Yes, I read a few articles on it, but instead of truly researching what it took to be a blogger, I just dove in. I wrote. I posted. I shared a little on Facebook. I even set goals on how many viewers I wanted in the first three months, and how much money I wanted to make.

Um. Yeah. Let me just say that my learning curve was scarier than any snake I have ever encountered. At least with them, I could call the Air Force. Nowhere in my plans did I account for things like marketing, SEO, keywords, or anything else that was required to have a successful blog. I not only went back to the drawing board, I had to stop and wipe the board down, clean the erasers, and get fresh chalk. Ugh!

But not once did I assume I couldn't do this. Yes – that fear did poke its nasty head around a corner, and even dared to tap on my shoulder once or twice. There were days I got frustrated and shook my head at myself for the mistakes I was making.

But I always picked myself up and kept moving forward. Some things were harder to understand and grasp than others. I kept plowing forward. Other things set me back to Square One, after days and weeks of doing the same thing over and over. A lot of corrections had to be made, but I fixed every single one of them.

And guess what? You would think I had mastered the art of blogging by now. After all, I have been doing it for seven years now. But in reality? Blogging is a never-ending endeavor. Each time you get the hang of one thing, the rules change. You continually have to come up with fresh ideas, newer, better, stronger keywords. And next week? It will all change again, and I have to go back to class all over again.

But I love blogging and podcasting enough to keep trying. And living a Simple Life is more than worth learning to overcome my fears and correcting the mistakes I make.

And each day that passes, I learn a little bit more, and can go to sleep at night with a pat on the back for a job well done. Yes, I still make mistakes, and I still have to push fear away. But I can still look at myself in a mirror, tell myself I am trying, and know that tomorrow is just another opportunity to get it right.

And as for those snakes? Not to worry. The Air Force did refuse my request, so I chose another snake eradication program. Can anyone say, 'Annie Oakley'?

If you want to learn more about the topic at hand or get a transcript for 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. To help you out, this is Episode 5.

And by the way – there is a Freebie waiting there for you as well. It is Volume 1 in the Learning to Live a Simple Life Mini-Workbook Series and is called ‘Overcoming Fear and Mistakes’. It may just put you on the path to overcoming your own fears, dealing with mistakes, and take you a step further towards living your own Simple Life.

If you have questions or need some help with dealing with fear and mistakes, you can stop by for an email visit at thevirtualporch@gmail.com. And be sure to subscribe – you don’t want to miss a single conversation. I’ll be sitting on the porch every Monday morning waiting for your visit!

Thanks again for stopping in. I will see you next week on Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View. And while you are waiting on the next episode, grab that glass of refreshment, pull up a rocker, and sit back for a while. It’s time to

Relax and Enjoy!

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