

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 8 - Setting Goals for your Simple Life

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!

If you have gotten this far in the Living a Simple Life podcast, then it is a good indication you are seriously considering shifting your hectic lifestyle to one that has the slow even pace of a rocking chair on a back porch.

And that's a good thing. We all need a chance to slow down, enjoy our lives, interact more with the people in it, and be the person we are meant to be.

Everyone has goals. Some can be as simple as plans to spend time with friends this weekend, and some can be big goals like climbing Mount Everest.

But no matter the lifestyle you choose, goals are still necessary. Their purpose is to give us direction - to get us from our starting place to the end of our journey. Each goal set and met moves you one step closer. Without goals, there is no direction.

If you tell me you want to travel, I may ask you where you want to go. When you tell me Montana, England, or the North Pole, it means you have a set goal in mind. Instead, if your response is, 'Just someplace different', it tells me you have no real plan to leave and fulfill your dream of seeing new places.

When you begin to shift from your current lifestyle to a Simple Life, having set goals in place can not only help you advance quicker, but it also makes sure you cover all your bases in the process.

But knowing you want to Live a Simple Life and actually taking the steps to do it are two different things. That's where this Episode comes into play. We are going to be talking about how to set the goals you will need to move forward with your new lifestyle.

First, you need to know that setting goals is the easy part. It isn't difficult to say you are going to set a goal to travel. But when you start adding descriptions, action steps and more to those goals, then the work begins.

Let's play around with a goal to Travel. Get your Simple Life Notebook and turn to a clean sheet of paper. At the top, write this down:

Goal 1 - Travel

Now, take a moment to think about what that means to you. Be specific. Your definition will probably look something like this:

I want to explore one new place each year that focuses on my love of history. The activities would include museums, living history, re-enactments, etc. A bonus activity would be hands-on learning.

This gets you closer to the why, but it is still a bit too broad. To make it even more specific, add additional information:

My list would include Vermillionville, in Lafayette, Louisiana; Genesee Country Village and Museum in Mumford, New York; Conner Prairie in Fishers, Indiana; Colonial Williamsburg in Williamsburg, Virginia; Old Sturbridge Village in Sturbridge, MA.

Now you have a clearer idea of what your goal is and why you want to achieve it. Once you know what this goal means, it is time to break it down even further. This break down is called Action Steps.

Action steps are a list of each thing you will do in order to reach your goal. Underneath your Goal heading, write Action Steps as a sub-heading.

Now, how are you going to get to all these places? How much money will it cost? When is the best time to go?

The answers to your questions would be considered Action Steps. For a travel goal, your first Action Steps should be: Research costs / Set up a Budget. After all, if you don't have the funds to travel, you won't be able to go. By setting a budget, you will know how much money you need available for airfare or gasoline, meals, admission, and all the other expenses traveling takes. It will also help you with your next Action Step, which would be Set a Date.

In order to Set a Date, you need to know how much this activity would cost. If it is something you have to save for, setting a date will give you an idea of how much money you would have to save each month. If you know the trip will cost you \$3,000, and you only have \$100 to save a month, you know it would take you 30 months to get there, which negates the original goal of 'One place each year'.

By breaking it down to this level, it helps you to understand that you either have to a) set aside more money each month, or b) find a cheaper way to travel or a less expensive destination.

Don't just toss out the more expensive option, though. If it is a place you really want to go, there are other ways of earning extra money in order to go. I will cover this type of savings in more detail on a later Episode, but for right now, you can do things such as searching your budget for ways to cut back, live a bit more frugally, or find a part time position that will allow you to reach your goal quicker.

With a broad goal such as travel, you may need to break it down into Sub-Goals and list each destination separately. For the sub-goals, your action steps will be the same, the only thing that would change are the specifics, such as the budget and specific expenses.

Some goals won't be as broad. One of my first goals on the farm was to own a milk cow. I broke the main goal down into action steps. I had to do my research, determine the cost of the cow, make a list of supplies and equipment I would need, consider special feed and nutrition, and build a milking stanchion in the barn. The last Action Step on the list was my budget. Until I had all the expenses in place, there was no way I could know how much it would cost.

There are some goals that won't require a budget, or at least, much of one. Let's use a Goal to Learn to Make Crawfish Ravioli. (Can you guess I am hungry while working on this Episode?) Let's break it down into Action Steps.

We are going to assume your current knowledge of making homemade pasta is zero. So, your first Action Step is to Research recipes and ingredients for making basic pasta. For this one, your budget will be relatively low, as you mainly need flour, eggs, oil, and salt. Sounds reasonable, right?

For the most part, it is. But you still have to make a decision - the best oil for pasta is Olive Oil. And Olive Oil comes in five different grades - extra virgin, virgin, refined, pure, and olive pomace oil. Each grade has a different flavor, and the costs vary. (Here's a hint: I like extra-virgin for mine.)

You also need to know what equipment and supplies you will need. The least expensive way to go would be a mixing bowl, a spoon, a rolling pin, a knife or pastry cutter, and a handmade drying rack.

And for a beginner, you may want to experiment first with just these items, as making pasta is easy, but it can be time consuming. Why spend the money on fancy supplies or a pasta attachment for your Kitchen Aid, only to find out you don't like making pasta?

The next Action Step would be to set a date for the learning process. With most any craft, it takes time to perfect. There is a learning curve. Even if your pasta comes out perfect the first time, the next time you may encounter problems. Find time at least once a week to dedicate a couple of hours in the kitchen.

Here's a quick tip: Anytime you get in the kitchen to cook, keep a notebook handy. Make notes on what you tried, so you will know what you did the next time, what worked and what didn't.

With each date you set aside for pasta making, make a notation beside the date of what type of pasta you want to make. The first few dates would include becoming familiar with the basics. Then progressively, you would add a different pasta, until you reach the Ravioli level.

And once you have reached a basic ravioli level, you would make notations to experiment with the crawfish fillings and a rich, hearty, crawfish sauce, filled with sauteed bell pepper, onions, a perfect blend of Cajun spices.... Oh. Sorry. I got a bit carried away. Not only do I love crawfish, but I have to confess – I used this example because learning how to make Crawfish Ravioli is one of my personal goals.

Your next Action Step would be to find ways to use that pasta. When you are just starting out, you might make something simple like Fettuccini. Fettuccini only requires some type of sauce – Pesto, Alfredo, or others. The long wide pasta used in Lasagna, is easy to make – just cut wider pieces of dough. But the Lasagna itself calls for layering, which means creating the sauce, and buying at least three cheeses.

If making homemade Pasta is one of your goals, it is now pretty much ready for you to copy and paste to your list. But you may not have any interest in making Pasta. And that's okay. This same thing applies to any goal you want to set.

Start by writing down your top 5 goals. You may have more than five - most people do. But the trick is to start with five, so you have a starting place. Use some that will be easy to achieve, and at least one that would be considered a long-term goal. For each goal, write down the Action Steps you need to make. Then begin working on your goals.

Now here's the fun part. For each Action Step you complete, take a moment to reward yourself. Rewards should come in stages. For an Action Step, pat yourself on the back, or add an extra five minutes to your Afternoon Tea Break. (You are taking those, aren't you?)

When the entire Goal has been met, up the ante. It can be something simple like scheduling coffee with a friend or putting an extra \$5 in a jar or piggy bank for one of those goals that will cost more than you currently have. No matter what you do, be sure to give yourself a reward. Self-affirmation is an important step in living a Simple Life. It is what keeps us uplifted and moving forward in our journey.

As you complete a goal, add another one to the list. And be sure to hang your Goal Sheet in a place where you will see it every day. Read it each morning. Choose one and start working on it. Give yourself plenty of time to complete each one. In some cases, you may be able to accomplish an Action Step or two from different goals. Check each one off as you complete it.

And remember, living a Simple Life takes time, patience, and dedication when changing old habits into new ones. Don't sweat the setbacks or mistakes. Learn from them and move forward.

Are you ready to set some goals? Then add that to your Afternoon Tea agenda. Get your notebook out, your pen ready, and start putting your goals in place. Then get started moving forward on your Simple Life journey.

And don't miss next week's Episode - it will be all about learning how to keep a Journal. This will be the last one in the How to Start Living a Simple Life series, but it is still just as important. And from there, we'll start talking about all the different things you can apply to your Simple Life - from homemaking, finances, frugal living, life lessons and more. Just think: You now have a built-in excuse to sit out on the porch a little bit more. Just tell folks you are doing research!

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 8.

If you have questions or need some help setting your goals, 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!

If you are still at a crossroads and need a little extra help with all the information you learned today, I have a helpful 25-page eBook that filled with this same information and worksheets that you can use. If you sign up for my newsletter, it is free! Just head on over to the Resource page at www.thefarmwife.com/podcast. Scroll down to the bottom and click the Subscribe button!

And always remember, if you need any help, have any questions, or just need me as a support person for your pit crew, you can always stop by for a visit at thevirtualporch@gmail.com. I am more than willing to help in any way I can!

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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!

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