

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 9 - Your Simple Life Journal

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!

We all know what a journal is. It is a daily record of what took place, our thoughts, and our experiences. We use them to show our progress in life.

For some, a journal entry is more for free flow writing. Others keep specific details. Either way, keeping a journal is a great way to look back on our lives.

Using a journal is older than papyrus and reed brushes. Initially, it is believed they were used for record keeping and accounting purposes. In the 15th century, they started the shift from public to private, and were called Diaries. Even Leonardo DaVinci kept a diary filled with ideas for his inventions.

As a kid, you probably had one that was secured by a flimsy lock. We did our best to hide it to keep our nosy siblings from reading it. As teenagers, we found better hiding places so our parents wouldn't find out what we were up to.

As an adult, you now call your personal diaries Journals. And you have advanced somewhat, as your entries no longer include who you have a crush on, or how much you hate your teacher for giving you weekend homework.

No – now you can write about the crush you have on a new art medium, and how much you hate me for giving you so much homework for living a Simple Life.

I'll give you that. I know I have talked a lot about what it takes to shift your lifestyle to one that is simple. But I stand by my words.

And I also stand by the importance of keeping a Simple Life Journal. As you move forward, it will help you to be able to look back for a moment and see how far you have come.

This look back helps you in many ways. If you try something new, you need to have a record of what it is, how you approached it, what worked and what didn't.

For my own Simple Life Journal, I do things a bit different than most. I do keep a daily record, but I also have a separate page called Plans for the Week. On Saturday evening, I make a copy of this page and begin to make notes of the Goals I have for the week, what Action Steps I need to take to accomplish them, and any supplies I might need – if it is that type of goal.

There is also a section for Appointments I have and errands I need to run. This list acts as a reminder for my regularly scheduled errand day, which I try to only do twice a month.

You already know I am a huge advocate of taking an Afternoon Tea break. But throughout the day, while I am trying to get things accomplished, I often have ideas for a craft project or find something I want to reflect on further. Rather than forget about it, I make a quick note in the section I have earmarked as Things to Ponder During Afternoon Tea. Once I have done that, I can keep doing the work at hand, and not worry about forgetting something.

The second page of my Journal I have titled Thoughts for Today. This is where I keep track of several different things. First, I like to make a notation about what the weather was doing that day.

Weather affects more than what you can do outside. It can also affect your mood. Seasonal Affective Disorder is probably the most well-known, but just a rainy day can make us feel down, lonely, or a bit depressed. A beautiful Spring Day, on the other hand, can make us feel positive and uplifted.

When you read over your journal and notice you seemed down or even happy on a particular day, check to see what the weather was doing. It may be an indication of why you felt the way you did.

The next section is the goals I have set for that particular day followed closely by the Action Steps needed. I know this sounds like repetition, but it isn't – exactly. First, your goals for the week are things that need to be scheduled throughout the week. Your daily goals would be where you put down which one you are working on, and any extra things you want to accomplish.

For instance, you may have a weekly goal to do a deep cleaning of your kitchen. Your weekly action steps would be: Clean out the Refrigerator; Clean out the Cabinets; Rearrange the pantry.

For your daily goals, you would take one of the action steps and turn it into the daily goal. In this case, it would be Clean out the refrigerator. Your action steps would be toss out any old food, wash the containers, update the grocery list. Doing it this way helps to break down each goal and action step even further, and into tasks you can work into your daily schedule.

Another entry I make is called Mental Wanderings. This is where I can do a bit of free flow writing, what my attitude was, make notes of observations I want to remember, or just a rogue thought or two. When I look back on my entries, this section helps me to better understand my frame of mind on that day.

There are also spaces for me to make notes of The Best and Most Difficult things about that particular day. If something special happened, I want to remember it. If I faced a challenge, I want to know what it was and how I managed to overcome it. Having this information at hand works well when I am faced with a new obstacle. I can look back, see what I have done and determine if it will work for the challenge at hand.

From there, I add some type of daily affirmation. Affirmations act as a form of support and encouragement for the tough days ahead. It is a way to tell yourself you are strong, and more than capable of doing anything you set your mind to.

The last page for my Daily Thoughts is optional. It is simply a Notes page that I can add to each day, or just on an as needed basis. This is where I do some serious free flow writing, get detailed about my thoughts, observations, and more. For me, it helps to get my thoughts down on paper so I can see where I am coming from and where I need to go.

Overall, a Journal is a personal diary which helps you keep track of what took place. It acts as a record of what works and what doesn't. You can see at a glance what your strengths and weaknesses are. And it gives you an opportunity to applaud yourself, keep a positive attitude, and on occasion, even get a chuckle at the innovative ways you overcome a challenge.

As for the Journal itself, you can easily order one that will fit the type of information you want to write down. There are prayer journals, mindfulness journals, and more. But for me, I haven't found one with the type of entries that work for me, so I created my own. I simply use a 3-ring Binder, print out the pages as I need them, and start writing.

If you haven't already done so, go ahead and start your own Simple Life Journal. You can buy one that works for you, create your own, or download the free pages on my Resource Page at www.thefarmwife.com/podcast. This will end up being one of the best and most helpful tools you have for your Simple Life Journey.

I hope you have enjoyed these podcasts on how to get started on your Simple Life Journey. With the information you now have, and a Journal ready to go, it's time to move forward to other things. Be sure to stay tuned – in upcoming Episodes we will be getting down to a few specifics – from homemaking, and finances, frugal living, gardening, and some that are just general reflections on living a Simple Life. So don't forget to stop by for a visit. There is always room for you on the porch!

If you want to learn more about the topic at hand, get a transcript for this episode, or find the download link for the free Journal Pages – 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 9.

If you have questions or need some help getting your Journal started, you can stop by for an email visit at thevirtualporch@gmail.com. And be sure to hit that Subscribe button – 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 & Enjoy!

julie