

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 30- Spread Your Wings - Keep Growing

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!

The Country Boy has a favorite saying, "If you aren't learning something new every day, then you aren't paying attention."

The first time I ever heard him say this was before we were married. The words resonated with me, and I wondered just what I may be missing in my life. So, I took them to heart and began paying closer attention.

Since then, I realize I have learned quite a few life lessons. Some were harder to deal with. Others I almost missed because I was too busy looking in other directions. And when that happened, I learned the very first lesson which I have tried to teach others more times than I can count. That lesson is to Relax and Enjoy your life. It's the only one we get, and it is filled with so much beauty, you don't want to miss a single thing.

It's often been called the School of Life, and we attend class every day, whether we want to or not. But if you will sit back in your chair, open your books, and pay attention to the teacher – instead of shooting spit wads, passing notes, or sleeping through class – you may find out you enjoy it more than you ever thought.

Throughout your life education, you will have many teachers. Some may be human, some may be animals, and others may be named Mother Nature or 'Professor Solitude'. All of them have lessons to impart.

Some of these lessons may be verbal, but in most cases, we are taught by demonstration and hands on learning. No matter the manner in which your particular class is being taught, it will help to pay close attention to the wisdom they are trying to impart.

Some of my greatest life lessons were taught by three women – my aunts Dot, Emily, and Evelyn. They weren't physically demonstrative people, but they all knew how to say 'I love you' without saying the words.

One of the greatest observation lessons I learned was from these three women. The lesson was to refrain from ever having Idle Hands. I am not sure I ever saw a time when Dot, Emily and Evelyn weren't working on something.

Dot and Emily were secretaries, and Evelyn was a hairdresser. At home, they were always either cleaning, cooking, or doing laundry. In their quiet time, Dot would decorate cakes, or work on an embroidery or cross-stitch piece, Emily would quilt or sew, and Evelyn had a crochet hook flying, or she would be creating a rag doll.

If we were there to visit, Emily would often help us work on our own sewing project. Other times we would climb up on a stool in the kitchen and 'help' Dot make divinity roses for a cake she was decorating.

At Evelyn's she was teaching me how to cook or crochet. We also spent a lot of time at her kitchen table just talking about life. To this day I can still hear the gentle squeak of that old metal table and feel the gently worn plastic of the tablecloth underneath my arms.

I have also learned quite a few lessons from the animals on the farm. The chickens are particularly eager to teach me a thing or two. These are a few of my favorite lessons:

Lesson #1 - The early bird doesn't necessarily get the worm when there is a lot of competition. But at least you have a better chance than if you had stayed in bed all day.

Lesson #2 - Just because you are the smallest chicken in the yard doesn't mean you can't be powerful. You just have to use your size to the best of your ability. If you do, you can take down the biggest Rooster in the coop.

Lesson #3 - If you search hard enough, there is always a way to escape confinement. You may have to learn to climb or fly, or you may have to keep digging until the hole is big enough for you to fit under the fence, but where there is a will, there is definitely a way.

Lesson #4 - Feathers are a thing of beauty, but if you lose a few, just scratch around them and move on. Feathers usually grow back even more splendid than the ones you lose. They are usually stronger and more resilient as well.

Lesson #5 - A Mama Hen is a fierce beast to reckon with. The last thing you want to do is try and take one of her chicks. If you do, you will definitely pay the price. And when a storm come rolling in, she will spread those wings wide to provide protection for her little ones. Watching a Mama Hen in action reminds me I also have a safe place to run. It's under His wings, which are made of the toughest feathers you will ever find.

There are also other Life lessons I have learned while sitting in class. These are a few of what I would consider the most fun – but also important ones. If you were studying these things in class, think about how they would apply to you:

- 1) Never give up. You have to slog through the storm and a lot of mud to get to the other side of the rainbow.
- 2) The best writing ideas come when you are in the car, an hour from your destination, with no pen, paper, or recorder in sight.
- 3) The best medicine for a stressful life is a cow. The best medicine for a cow is a stressed-out farmer. Both get a lot of love and attention when things seem the worse.
- 4) Chickens should be allowed at the dinner table. They would never complain about anything you eat and would always ask for seconds.
- 5) No matter how hard you try, you cannot outrun an angry Mama cow when you mess with her baby.
- 6) When you see a cow laying down in the pasture, it doesn't mean it's going to rain. They are either chewing their cud, resting from their 3 a.m. jail break, or plotting the next escape.
- 7) The words "We need to talk" coming from your spouse doesn't always mean there is a problem in the marriage. It usually means a problem with the checkbook – like, there is nowhere near enough money in it to fix the tractor. Again.
- 8) Dryer sheets cannot equal the smell of clothes dried outside on a clothesline.
- 9) A long day of hard labor and an evening curled up with a cup of hot tea is the best prescription for a good night's sleep.
- 10) All the material goods in the world are not the source of happiness.

Life can be one of the greatest teachers in the world. Every day is chock full of seat-of-the-pants lessons. As in any classroom, how much we learn and retain is completely up to us. We can sit still and pay attention to the teacher, or we can sit in the back of the room to see how far our spitballs will fly. We can complain that the lesson is too hard, or we can dig in and keep trying until we finally understand how it works.

Life can get complicated. Living on a farm teaches its own class. I know how it feels to get up hours before the sun does and drag in well past the time the moon is shining from the top of the world. My muscles can attest to a day's labor. I know the sound of the last thought of the day as it echoes through a mind that is empty from sheer exhaustion.

And Life is a school I look forward to attending every day. The best part of a Life Education is the constant surprises, the joys it brings and that sacred moment when you can sit back and whisper, "Yes! Now I understand!"

Are you fully enrolled in the school of Life? Then give yourself a Gold Star! If not, then it may be time to listen to the Country Boy. He speaks from a life of listening, learning, and paying attention.

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 31.

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If you have questions or want to share a few of your own life lessons, stop by for an email visit at thevirtualporch@gmail.com. I would love to visit with you more!

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 & Enjoy!

julie