

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 37- Finding Quiet Time During the Holidays

Welcome back to the Porch! I'm Julie, and I teach folks just like you how to live a Simple Life. And with Christmas just a few weeks away, you are probably craving all the 'simple' you can find.

Let me guess. You are hearing jingle bells in your sleep – and they aren't Santa arriving early. Your mind is whirling faster than snowflakes in a blizzard. That Things to Do list is tattered, torn, and possibly tear stained. And time? There doesn't seem to be any left.

During the holidays we are required to up our game. Not only do we have our normal everyday schedules to maintain, we also strive to make each Christmas a fun, memorable occasion. And it is so much more than just shopping, baking, and wrapping gifts.

All of our skills kick into overdrive. We have to think harder, organize better, budget tighter and move faster. It's no wonder we hit a mid-holiday slump. Our minds and bodies just need a rest.

Keep in mind - the biggest problem with finding quiet time during the holidays comes from ourselves. We feel we need to keep moving, finish shopping, do the baking, clean the house, and so much more.

If you feel like the holidays are a speeding train and you are tied to the tracks, then it may be time for you to undo the knots in the rope and get out of the way. No, I am not giving you permission to run away to a deserted island.

But I am telling you it is okay to step away from the madness and find some quiet time. Better yet, give yourself permission to just stop for a bit and enjoy the holidays. It really is okay to say 'No' – even if it is for only 30 minutes a day.

Our bodies are not designed to be fully functional 24/7. It needs fuel to work, water to move, and rest to regroup. If we don't give it those three things, then it will start to fight back through exhaustion, depression, stress, and illness.

There is also a strong likelihood that our reactions can slow down, which can cause harm to ourselves or someone else. No one wants to have the flu or a broken leg during the Christmas Holidays.

To help prevent this from happening, we definitely need to find some quiet time. But one look at our calendars tells us finding it can be difficult.

However, if we want to stay ahead of that train, we need to carve out some time each and every day to rest. The act of resting – even for just 15 minutes a day, will give our minds, bodies, and emotions a chance to recharge.

It will give us the stamina we need to move forward. Resting gives us an opportunity to clear our minds of the clutter and focus better. And it can also rejuvenate our spirits and allow the joy of the season to return to our hearts.

In order to have some quiet time during the holidays, we first need to find somewhere to go. This needs to be a place which is quiet, and as still as possible. Depending on the weather, you may have a favorite place outside, such as a swing, where you can just sit still.

A slow stroll around the neighborhood, at a park, or along your favorite trail in the woods is also a great way to find quiet time. This not only helps you to exercise – which is one of the best ways to relieve stress – but also gives you a chance to breathe some fresh air.

If the weather isn't conducive to being outside, find a quiet spot inside. If you are at home, choose a room where you can close the door. Some folks find it comforting to just go sit in a church pew when there are no services. Another great escape is your local library.

Surprisingly, some people are energized by the hustle and bustle of the holidays. A relaxing place for them may be a local coffee shop. Tucked into a corner table, you can forget about everything you have to do and just indulge in a special treat of coffee or hot chocolate and do a bit of people watching.

And if you still can't find a place to relax, maybe it is time to ask for an adult version of a tree house for Christmas. Who wouldn't want to escape to such a fun place to relax. And if you do, make it even easier on yourself. Ask that a dumbwaiter be installed as well, to get that mug of hot chocolate or cup of hot tea up to the treetop without spilling!

No matter where you choose to go, the key to quiet time is to forget about your To Do list. Don't think about what hasn't been done – instead, allow your mind to be distracted by something you enjoy.

If you are curled up in your favorite chair, read a book or engage in a craft project. If you head to the coffee shop, bring a notebook and doodle, or sketch the scene outside the window or even a calming mental image, such as a stream running through a forest.

If you choose to take a walk in the park or along your favorite trail, take a break midway and just sit on a bench or lean against a tree. No matter where your quiet time takes place, breathe slowly, and allow your body and mind to relax. Enjoy the beauty around you.

One important aspect of your quiet time is to prevent any unnecessary interruptions. You may have to set a few ground rules. Let your family know that you need a certain amount of quiet time, and during this time you do not want to be disturbed.

Set your own rules that states you will not update your To Do list, won't pay bills, and will not make a shopping list. This time is strictly for you – not an opportunity to play catch up on holiday chores.

If you have children or family home at for Christmas vacation, now may be a great opportunity to encourage a moment of quiet for them, as well. Older kids may not appreciate nap time any longer, but they can still read a book, or engage in a favorite – quiet – activity.

In order to make your quiet time something to look forward to and to insure you take it, make it a special moment. Indulge. Break out the good China teacup and saucer. Add an extra helping of whipped cream to your hot chocolate and top it with sprinkles. Have one piece of your favorite chocolate and eat it slowly. Savor the flavor and the moment.

Or use it for devotional time. There is nothing that soothes my soul more than reading God's Word. Psalm 23, I Corinthians 13, and Luke 2 – which is the story of Christ's birth, are perfect for this time of year. Read them slowly and absorb the words, as well as the meaning behind them. You will feel rested before you even realized it!

This truly is a season for fun, laughter, and family. Don't let the busyness of the holidays steal even one second of your joy. Instead, find a quiet place to relax and breathe. It just may make your holiday that much better.

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 37.

If you have questions or just want to stop in for a visit, you can do that through email 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 & Enjoy!

julie