

# *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 39- Take a Look Back**

Welcome back to the Porch! I am so glad you joined me. I'm Julie, and I teach folks just like you how to live a Simple Life. And although it is fun to think about the future, sometimes, we need to stop and take a look back.

The New Year is just a few days away. We may already be looking at ways to make this one even better than the last. This is the year we want to shift our lifestyle – shed the busyness and learn to relax and enjoy living a Simple Life.

But before you start making grand plans, you need to stop and look back at what has already taken place. Consider it a review before stepping into something new and different.

First, before you even turn your head to look at your past, there are some ground rules here. Rule #1 is to understand this is strictly to help you see where you have come from, and to use it as a guide to help you create a better future. Rule #2 is you are not allowed to sink down into depression, be judgmental, or see it as an excuse to host a personal pity party. Those balloons have already been popped, and the cupcake crumbs wiped up. And Rule #3 is to not linger in the past any longer than is absolutely necessary to complete this assignment.

If you promise to follow these rules, then we can move forward – or, rather, backward.

When we take a look back at our life, we first gain encouragement to move forward. We see the things we have accomplished and how far we have come. It also gives us a sense of accomplishment, knowing how hard we have worked to get where we are now.

Looking back also means we can assess the wrong turns we have made – what some folks would call 'mistakes'. But instead of thinking of them as mistakes, we are going to view them as learning curves. We now know what doesn't work, so we search for a better path.

It also helps us to be reminded of what mistakes we made so we don't repeat them. In doing so, it saves us time, energy, and even possibly money.

Life also has showered us from time to time with a flood of distractions. By looking back, we can revisit our initial purpose for moving this direction and will help us to avoid those distractions in the future.

One thing we want to look for are the things that worked well for us – and the things that flopped. Part of living a Simple Life is trying new things, but also understanding that those very things may not be something we want to pursue.

And the last benefit to looking back on our life is to gain courage and encouragement for moving forward. We can see the hardships, trials, and difficulties we have gone through. But we can also see our accomplishments, relive the joys and celebrate our successes.

Let's look at some of examples of each benefit.

Think back to when you first decided to live a Simple Life. You had no idea what that was, much less how to live it. Your first accomplishment was learning more about what it entailed – learning how to dream, having more time to spend with family and friends, resurrecting old passions and possibly discovering a few new ones.

From there, you were able to create a definition of what a Simple Life means to you. Plans were made, goals were set, and you took your first step on your new journey.

There may have been some goals that were harder to reach than others. I know my most difficult goal was to gain control of my finances and live as debt-free as possible. My budget was amended more times than I care to admit. There were times it took all I had to walk away from something I thought I really wanted.

But by doing my homework, we now only have our mortgage, and it won't take long to pay that one off, too. Still, looking back, I realize I never had to go without the necessities, and by cutting out unnecessary expenses, I was able to do more of the things I wanted to do.

You may have diligently worked your way towards other goals. You may have been successful at going back to school, changing jobs, or leaving the workforce altogether. You may not have a degree, the position you are aiming for, or gotten everything in order in your home yet, but it's still a huge accomplishment, and you are well on your way to a successful outcome.

Now let's look at the mistakes you made. Like I said before, we are going to look at them as 'learning curves'.

First, the curve you took may have been trying to do too much at once. One thing you need to remember is that living a Simple Life is a lifetime journey – not something that can be implemented and completed in a year or less. You have now learned your lesson, and can settle in to enjoy the journey, instead of trying to get to the end of it too fast. Remember, most of the fun is found along the journey – not reaching your destination.

Another curve you may have taken is clearing your calendar to have more time, only to discover you have filled it back up again. Rest assured this too takes practice. Saying 'No' may be one of the shortest words in the dictionary, but it is also one of the most difficult to say. If necessary, start practicing the word in the mirror. The more you say it, the better you will become at meaning it.

Some curves we take are just part of the learning process. Any time we try something new, we are bound to make mistakes. It isn't the end of the world. Instead, pat yourself on the back for trying, and then pull the directions out and try again.

And with any curves you take, cut yourself some slack, and be willing to start over again. Remember, no one is perfect. Just look at it as part of the growing process.

As far as distractions go, some may be harder than others to resolve. It never fails – right as we are in the middle of something that requires our focus, a visitor stops by, the school calls, or you suddenly remember you are supposed to be baking a dessert for a luncheon tomorrow.

Another serious distraction is the Shiny Object Syndrome, or S.O.S., as I call it. This happens when you have so many things you want to do or try, you can't seem to stay focused on just one thing. S.O.S.'s will get me every time – and it is a battle I am constantly waging.

If you want to know more about how to fight that battle, be sure to listen to Episode 25. It may help you with your own war against them.

And then there are times we go looking for distractions. We are exhausted, nothing seems to be going right, so instead of trying to figure out what we need to do, we grab a pint of ice cream and give in to the lure of soap operas.

Hopefully, most distractions are just few and far between. But if they keep happening, it may be time to look at them more closely to help you find a way around them in the future.

Now that you have taken the time to really look at where you have been, it's time to take those accomplishments, learning curves, and distractions and celebrate and embrace them. You have lived through another year and can now look forward to the future. These are the very things that will boost your confidence, offer support, and give you the encouragement to dig in deeper and accomplish your first goal of the New Year – to make this one even better than the ones in your past.

And get ready – we will be talking more about digging deeper into a Simple Life as soon as we turn the page on the calendar.

I wish for you a bright, happy, successful, New Year. May it bring you the Simple Life you dream of living.

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](http://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 39.

If you have questions or just want to stop in for a visit, you can do that through email at [thevirtualporch@gmail.com](mailto: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*