

# *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 40 - The Struggle to Engage**

Everyone of us is different. We either have different likes, dislikes, or styles. We approach things with our distinct viewpoint. And for the most part, we need to celebrate those differences. Who wants to be a carbon copy of the next person? There is no fun in that!

But there is one way we are all just exactly alike – we all struggle from time to time. Sure, the specific struggle may be different, but we all still have them. You may struggle with balancing a schedule, budget, or a family. I struggle finding writing ideas, avoiding the Shiny Object Syndrome, or holding my tongue when I really want to speak my mind.

Delving into the unknown can be one of the biggest struggles we have. An opportunity is presented. It looks intriguing. You and I are inexplicably drawn to it. But then, we start to question it. We call it playing Devil's Advocate – which is a way we can express the negative side of it in order to test the viability and strength of the opportunity. Unfortunately, we all too often allow the negative side to win.

One way delving into the unknown happens is when we consider making significant changes in our lifestyle. The one we have now may not fit well, and can be scratchy, too big, too small, and often downright uncomfortable – but it is also known. We have grown comfortable with it – even if it is too tight, too strenuous, too hectic. On occasion, in one of the small quiet moments you have, you may realize the life you have isn't the one you signed up for. It's gotten out of control, and you can see where you are missing out on things that were at one time important to you. But then again, you know this life. You know what to expect.

The Devil's Advocate is telling you that trying to change at this point in life is going to be too difficult. You have to give up too much. You won't stick with it. And before you know it, you've talked yourself out of a better lifestyle and go right back into that hectic, strenuous life that doesn't really fit – but at least you are used to the discomfort.

Shifting to a Simple Life may be the struggle you are having. When listening to these podcasts, reading the posts, and seeing others who seem so happy and at peace with this type of life seems so appealing. You begin to think harder about it. You find yourself leaning in and yearning for just a taste of it.

And you may have actually been dipping your toe in the water. One of the first things you may have done is to eliminate at least one thing from your calendar. You may have also started cooking a meal or two at home. Or, you may have picked up a crochet hook and a skein of yarn. And it feels good. It fits better. You are actually enjoying it!

But just when you started believing it is possible, that old Devil's Advocate clears its throat. When you heard that sound, did you also feel a twinge of disappointment? Did you take one more look over your shoulder before you slipped back into that uncomfortable life?

Don't feel alone. We all do it. Making changes – especially with a lifestyle – can be scary. I know. I did it. And when I look back, I can't even tell you the depths of the relief I feel now for making the changes I needed to make. And I can also tell you I hung on to a few aspects of my 'other' lifestyle for several years. That reluctance to let it go completely was born out of a certain degree of fear and uncertainty. I was so afraid I was letting go of who I thought I was, that I couldn't see the person I was supposed to be.

If you are struggling to fully engage in a Simple Life, it may be time to ask yourself a few questions. This week, schedule at least an hour for an Afternoon Tea, and bring a notebook and pen. Ask yourself each of these questions and write down your answers. And I'm going to make it easier for you – you will find a free Download of the questions on the Podcast Resource Page and in the Show Notes.

**Question #1:** What appeals to you most about living a Simple Life?

Living a Simple Life may sound good to you in general, but to fully engage you need to get specific. What exactly is it that has you leaning in for a better look? Is it a long-forgotten dream? A passion you want to pursue? Or are you just exhausted with the hectic pace you are currently living? Whatever it is about a Simple Life that looks so appealing, write it down.

**Question #2:** What fears are rooting you to the spot?

Take some time to really think about what fears you have that are preventing you from moving forward. One thing about fear – it loves to hide in the dark. When you bring them out into the light, they usually lose their power, and aren't as frightening as they seem.

**Question #3:** What would you do with an extra hour in your day?

If you were truly granted just one more hour, would you spend it trying to finish up a project? Would you just find more busyness to cram into your day? Or – would you spend it with a friend or family member, having a bit of quiet time, or just using it to fully enjoy life? When you answer this question, you may just discover quite a bit about the lifestyle you truly want to have.

**Question #4:** How do you envision your home? Schedule? Life?

Think about what your lifestyle currently looks like, and then compare it to a Simple Life. Which one appeals to you the most?

**Question #5:** What realistic challenge has become a roadblock?

Answering this question may be difficult. For most of us, there is more than one roadblock that prevents us from moving forward. But before we can tackle all of them, we need to identify what they are. Once you do that, you can address the first one. Once you have found a way to get around the first roadblock or eliminate it altogether, you may find it easier to break through the rest of them.

**Question #6:** What are the top 3 most important things in your life right now?

The answer to this question isn't as easy as it seems. My guess is that you listed three things you WANT to have importance in your life. However, the correct answer will be what is CURRENTLY the most important things. These will be things you spend the most time on. For example – you may WANT your family to make the list. But in reality, you spend very little time with them, and instead spend more time at work, in committee meetings, or running the roads trying to get from one place to the next.

When you look at what you have made the most important things in your life right now, and then compare it to those things that should take precedence, it can be rather eye-opening.

Now that you have asked yourself these questions, you want to truly think about the answers, and whether they sit comfortably with you. With some, you may be okay with the status quo. But others may make you squirm a bit.

Now it's time to do a bit more homework. Using your answers, think about ways you can relieve the discomfort. For instance, if the 3 most important things in your life right now don't fit with what you deem should be important, it's time to start thinking of ways to get back on the right track.

Here are a few other things you can do to help take the necessary steps to shift from your current uncomfortable life and engage more fully in living a Simple Life:

1. Write out a conversation you have with yourself – that one that tells you it's not a good idea or one that makes living a Simple Life seem futile.

This may seem like a silly idea, but it actually helps to see exactly what you keep telling yourself. Once you have the conversation on paper, highlight the negative words and ideas. Then play the opposite of Devil's Advocate. Tell yourself why it WILL work. Change the negative words to positive words. Allow those positive words and statements to offer encouragement and support.

2. Make a list of the Benefits living a Simple Life will offer.

This goes hand-in-hand with writing down your negative conversation. Seeing all the benefits on paper will help you to see more clearly why living a Simple Life can be a good, positive, and better fit for you.

3. List the activities of a typical week. What one activity can you eliminate?

If an overwhelming calendar is one of your roadblocks – take a look at everything you do over the course of a month. Is there something that really isn't as necessary as you think? Do you engage in activities you no longer enjoy? Begin the process of extracting yourself from those activities. By doing so, you may just find that extra hour in your day to do what you love to do.

4. Get started: A well-known Chinese proverb states, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

Here's the thing. There is quite a bit of thought, preparation, and adjustments that go into shifting a lifestyle. As much as we would really like to miraculously make it an overnight success, that just won't happen.

It takes time. Before you can start your journey, you have to take the first step. And with each step you take, it means having a period of adjustment. One of the worst things you can do is to try and do it all right this second. Instead, make this journey one of Simplicity. Take the first step. Work on it until you are comfortable. Then take the next one.

Make this a journey of enjoyment. Swap the fear for excitement. See the roadblocks as challenges, rather than the end of the road. And keep the truly important things in your life in the forefront of your mind. This will give you the encouragement you need to take the next step. And be sure to ponder the wonder, awe, and contentment you feel as you reach each mile marker.

That alone will keep you moving forward, just waiting to see and enjoy what is waiting for you around the next curve in the road.

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). To help you out, this is Episode 40.

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*