

# *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 42 - If It Doesn't Have a Heartbeat...**

I am about to share with you a side of me not many people know. Many years ago, I had a dream of becoming a pilot. The daredevil side of me was enthralled with the risk. My sense of wonder loved the idea of a wide-open sky. My creative nature clamored for a bird's eye view of the land below me. My faith wanted to experience a broader view of the world God created.

And I did try to pursue that dream. A friend and co-worker who was a pilot took me up for a 'practice' run. He had a Skipper, which is a small aircraft used for training. During a flight to New Orleans for meetings, he allowed me to sit in the co-pilot seat and 'help' fly the plane. I had fallen head over heels in love.

Ed was also a flight instructor. At that time, my budget was tight, and I couldn't afford to sign up for a formal class. Instead, Ed offered a trade – he would provide the lessons, and I would provide a home-cooked meal once a week. He was single at the time, and a homecooked meal was a special treat for him. It sounded like a win/win, so I agreed.

However, shortly into the lessons, I ran into some obstacles that just couldn't be overcome. First, there was math involved, which just happens to be my most seriously weakest subject. And second, it still cost money to fly the plane. And third, time, or rather the lack of it, was the biggest deterrent for both of us.

As much as I tried to resuscitate my dream, I finally had to face up to the fact – it just didn't have a heartbeat, and I needed to let it go.

That may be one of the hardest decisions we have to make in life. And even if you live a Simple Life, you still have to face the fact that some dreams, passions, and goals just aren't meant to be.

I'm going to be harsh here. When something no longer has a heartbeat, it is dead. We can try to get it moving. We can perform CPR. We can wish, and hope, and keep pushing and trying, but the truth of the matter is – it just can't be revived.

But before you give up all hope, not all dreams and passions no longer have a heartbeat. Some of them are just sitting on a shelf waiting for a chance for revival. These are the dreams that are breathing shallowly, but still have enough fight in them to hang on.

The key is to understand the difference. Those dreams and passions that no longer have a heartbeat are the ones that weren't truly meant to be. The obstacles are too high, too wide, and too deep to find a way around. This may mean it's too costly. It may be physical or medical limitations apply. You can't fly an aircraft with poor eyesight, and claustrophobia and scuba diving don't always mix.

We may be hanging on to the dream simply out of habit, or because it has emotional attachments. This often happens when a parent or loved one deeply wants us to do something – usually as a profession or to marry a person they think is best for us. We try. We try really hard to accommodate them. But deep down, we know what they want isn't what we were meant to do. Or - It may just mean something as simple as it isn't as important to us as we first think.

One of my goals for our farm was to combine my love of animals and fiber. This meant getting wool sheep, alpacas, or even Angora goats. The problem with reaching this goal was multi-faceted. First, our climate isn't suited for wool sheep or Angora goats. We live in a hot, humid climate, and these animals need it to be cold and dry. I could have built a barn with air conditioning to overcome the heat issues, but that would create a financial problem - it would be too expensive to operate for no less than 10 months out of the year.

Alpacas could have been a possibility. However, we only have 60 acres, and we have cows. That is not enough land to properly graze and house both. Since cattle had always been a primary goal, they won the coin toss.

When push came to shove, I realized that this was a dream that didn't truly have any weight. I love having cows, and even enjoy having a milk cow. She provides fresh milk, and with it, dairy products. This is something that is in keeping with our other goals for the farm.

With alpacas, the work involved was more of a hobby, rather than a necessity or even an income-producing prospect. And the surprising thing was, it didn't hurt one bit to let the dream of fiber animals go. That alone spoke louder than anything else.

When we let go of those dreams and passions that no longer have a heartbeat, we can turn our attention to those that do. We have not only freed up the time we need to pursue them but have also cleared out the mental space we need to make them work.

In order to determine if your dreams and passions still have a heartbeat, it's time to sit down and examine each one individually. Ask yourself some questions. First, is it something you are still interested in? The answer to this may be yes – but if it is, you need to determine to what degree.

Next, think about what it will take to pursue it. Consider what you have to give up in order to obtain it. Is it cost-prohibitive? Does it take more time than you have to give? In life we often have to live with a give or take attitude. We may want it all, but the cost of having it and the time it takes to care for it may be more than we are willing to invest.

There is also the idea that having it may mean giving up something else that is important to us. The question then becomes, how willing are we to let that something important go?

The third thing you want to look at is how it will benefit you either now, or in the future. Not every dream or passion has to have a monetary benefit. Some benefits include skills that can help you maintain or strengthen your Simple Life, such as learning how to cook, or how to use tools. These skills may help you save money, but unless you become a professional chef or carpenter, they may not result in a full-time income.

I love working with fiber – whether that is through weaving, knitting, crochet, or spinning the yarn. There's not much of a monetary benefit for me in pursuing this passion. In fact, it usually ends up costing me. However, the very act of simply placing a skein of yarn in my hands will settle my mind, heart, and soul in ways nothing else can.

Baking bread not only feeds my family, but also feeds my creative nature. From the mixing, kneading, shaping, baking – right down to slathering it with butter – it is a process that actually helps me relax.

To some degree, creating a loaf of bread is a physical activity, and helps to relieve stress. It calls for focus, which is a great way to clear my mind, which in turn helps me to work out solutions to other problems I may be having. And then, of course, is the sheer enjoyment of eating a slice of it before it's really cool enough to handle.

Both of these pursuits may not have a financial benefit, but the physical, mental, and emotional benefits sometimes far outweigh the costs. Being creative keeps me grounded. Staying grounded helps me to focus and make wise decisions. And making wise decisions helps me to continue to live the lifestyle I love.

Hanging on to dreams and passions that no longer have a heartbeat can actually be detrimental. Trying to find the time to pursue them may cause you to end up pushing aside things that are more important. The cost involved may be more than you can afford. My dad always called this tossing your dollars into a bottomless pit, with no hope of reclaiming it. And it can create stress with striving so hard to have it, yet never being able to reach it.

These are all things I stop and consider before I choose to pursue a dream or passion, or before I lay it to rest. Some are more difficult than others to let go of, but in the end, I know it is for the best, and by saying goodbye to some, I can say hello to others, and maintain my desire for a less cluttered and stressful life.

If you have looked at your dreams and passions from all angles, and determined there is still life left in them, maybe it's time to dust them off and spend some time with them. But if they don't have a heartbeat, maybe it's time to let them go. It's okay to grieve them for a moment or two, but the best thing you can do for yourself and the dream, is to release it.

Once you have, you will find more time to spend building the dreams that still have life. And you may be surprised – those may be the very ones that end up giving you more fulfillment, joy, and contentment than you can imagine.

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 42.

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!

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*