

# *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 44 - The Benefits of Coffee with Friends**

'The coffee break' is one of those phrases where the meaning has shifted over time. In today's world, it means escaping from your desk long enough to grab a cup of bitter brew from the breakroom. Or it means filling a to-go cup to take with you while you run errands.

In the past, it wasn't referred to as a 'Coffee Break', but as having Coffee with Friends. It was a time for a group of friends to sit down at the table together and have a good visit. In my opinion, we have come way too far from the social-oriented coffee breaks of yesterday.

In the past, having coffee was often a weekly, if not daily, occurrence. It consisted of a group of friends, a pot of coffee, and chairs around a table. It was a much-needed break from normal chores and the busyness of life.

In some cases, a different woman would host each week. There would be a pot of coffee waiting, along with a plate of cookies, or maybe even a freshly baked cake.

There were also occasions where the women played cards while they visited. Again, iced tea or coffee would be served, along with a cake, pie, or tray of cookies. This allowed them a weekly break from their routines, as well as giving them much a needed interaction with friends.

These coffee gatherings were also a place to swap recipes, sewing patterns and offer handwork advice, such as how to repair a dropped knitting stitch, or learn a complicated crochet method.

Many women quilted, and it was a normal site to see a quilt frame set up somewhere in the house. If this was the case, often the women would finish their coffee, and pull a chair up to the frame to help with the quilting.

These breaks were used for several other purposes, as well. First, and foremost, it gave the women a chance to visit with their friends. They caught up on each other's lives, probably did a little gossiping, and if it was a one-on-one situation, they may have discussed personal issues they didn't feel comfortable talking about with anyone else.

It also acted as a local 'newspaper', of sorts. This is the place they learned of any illnesses, troubles another neighbor might be having, new babies, or any other news of the day. It kept them in the community loop.

There were also health benefits to having coffee with friends. Social interaction is a necessity for a healthy mind and body. Through even the simplest visit, our emotions get a workout – from laughter and joy, to understanding, compassion and kindness. We leave the visit feeling refreshed and even invigorated.

Having coffee with friends also helps to relieve stress and depression and prevents feelings of isolation. Isolation, or feelings of loneliness, may cause some serious health issues, including high blood pressure, stress, anxiety, depression, and more. And some reports state it may lead to cognitive dysfunction, including Dementia.

In today's society, our 'social interaction' usually isn't done without technology. Instead of truly sitting down to have coffee with a friend, we type out a quick email, 'Like' a post on social media, or simply text our thoughts using emojis, instead of words.

We live at the office; spend every free minute in the car; or just crash on the couch from sheer exhaustion. Most of us don't even have a clue as to how to chisel time out of our busy schedules to meet for coffee with a friend.

Maybe it is time to get out of our isolated ruts and reinstate the true meaning of the coffee break. It may mean doing it on a Saturday afternoon but gathering together with friends is a wonderful thing to do. It gives us a break from our normal routine. Having coffee with friends forces us to slow down and gives us time to breathe.

And it doesn't literally have to be 'coffee'. You can go have lunch together. If you love to exercise, find a buddy who loves it too and go to the gym, walk, or jog. Have a Girl's Day Out with a group of friends. Or you can invite them over for a sit and stitch session, where you visit while working on a favorite craft project.

It also doesn't have to be the same friends each time. My friend Kathleen and I do 'drop ins', which are unscheduled visits. We have coffee and catch up on each other's life, and have fun discussions about books, chickens, gardening, and more.

In order to have 'Girl Time', my friend Lorea and I schedule a day we can run errands in Shreveport, have lunch, and still find time to catch up.

Roughly every few months, I join my friends Beth and Patti for lunch. It may be at each other's home, or at a restaurant. We call these our 'Therapy Sessions'. When these are scheduled, I already know to block out most of the day. It isn't unheard of for these sessions to last two or three hours. And they are worth every single second we spend together.

Let's face it. Life really can be busy. But if we are too busy to find time to visit with our friends, then we really are 'too' busy.

If this is how you describe your life, then I have a challenge for you, which I hope you will accept. Grab your calendar. Find out just exactly what it is that has you running all over the world without leaving any time for yourself. See if you can intentionally carve out an hour at least once a month to have coffee with a friend. Twice a month or more often would be even better.

And I am going to up the Challenge. Find another hour in your month to have a Girls Day Out with a single friend or a group of friends. Even if you all have to combine the day with running errands, you can still sit down at a table for lunch and a good visit. Catch up with each other. Enjoy the break. Celebrate with laughter. It will not only relieve stress, but it can also free you from feelings of isolation.

And if it's a beautiful day, coordinate ahead of time. Ask each person to contribute to a picnic-style lunch. Stop at a park, and enjoy the fresh air, as well as the fun conversation. It will save you all a bit of money but could also give the day a feeling of celebration. And that is exactly what you are doing - celebrating the friendships you have with each other.

Life is tough and can get very lonely. But it doesn't have to be that way. Instead, find the time in your schedule to reinstate having Coffee with Friends. Enjoy a moment with a friend, or group of friends. Learn how to celebrate each other. By doing so, you will quickly find that having others close by to share time with can make life a bit easier, and definitely a lot more fun.

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 44.

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*