

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 58 - The Written Word for Homemakers

Writing anything is quickly becoming a lost art. So much of what we do is kept on computers, phones, tablets or other technological products. With a few taps, our whole world is sent into cyberspace.

But what happens if the computer crashes? Where is that list you desperately need when your phone slips out of your pocket and into a puddle? Or the iPad drops on the floor and is stepped on?

All of your information may be retrievable, but that takes time, and in some cases a trip to the store or a few phone calls. But that means those carefully laid plans for today, the medication list needed for a trip to the doctor, or your grocery list is suspended in space indefinitely.

It may be time to bring back the art of the Written Word. For the homemaker – or anyone else for that matter – having the information you need written down and at your fingertips may just save you a lot of time.

Writing with pen and paper takes many shapes. On a daily basis, it may mean lists – from grocery shopping and things to do, to medications or emergency contacts.

On a weekly basis, writing may be in the form of a letter to a pen pal or a response to a business letter. It may mean writing checks to pay the bills or jotting down a recipe for a friend. Invitations, birthday, condolence cards and the annual Family Christmas letter are all reasons we may pick up a pen and start writing.

I admit I love the idea of keeping all my written information in a device that can go with me anywhere. But at the same time, there may be information that is better suited to pen and paper. With the convenience of cyberspace comes the dangers of cyber hackers.

The last thing a homemaker wants is for all of her valuable information be stolen and create more harm than good, no matter how convenient it is.

There are also times when a personal note takes on more value than an email. You would never send a condolence card or message through email. Instead, you pick up your pen and write a message from the heart to the bereaved.

It is a given that a hand-written note is more appreciated by the recipient. But it can also be a chore actually sit down and write it. As with most chores, it helps to find simple ways to make it more enjoyable.

Albeit a bit old fashioned, one of the first things you need in your desk is a selection of stationery. This can be as elaborate as personalized paper and cards, or as simple as a lovely, but still generic variety.

An assortment of cards for all occasions is also helpful. Blank cards can be used for any occasion, just to say Hi or that you are thinking of them. Keeping a box of 'Thank You' cards is the most beneficial of all. These will probably be used more than any others, so having a box within reach is helpful.

The next thing you need is a good pen. A regular Bic or Pilot will work. But to help make writing something more fun for you, consider investing in a beautiful pen. To select a pen, be sure it feels good in your hand. Make certain the ink flow is smooth, and the nib moves easily across the paper.

The last thing you need is a place to keep all of your supplies organized. This can be a basket, a drawer or a desk organizer. Make sure it has plenty of room to store your cards, stationery, pen and a roll of stamps. When you need to write a note or letter, all you have to do is go straight to your 'stationery station' and get started.

For most of us, it has been a long time since we wrote anything other than our signature on a piece of paper. There is an art to it, and each thing we write should be handled in different ways.

Somewhere along the line we lost sight of the personal touch of handwritten notes. Take the Thank You note for example. We began to believe that a quick or simple 'thanks' would suffice. I mean, at least we acknowledged the kindness, right?

Not completely. If you are truly thankful for something, it needs to be shown in a bit more personal fashion. The idea of a thank you note is not only a way to show appreciation, but it also tells the recipient that their contribution – whether a gift, time or a casserole – is more than a fleeting thought.

A thank you note can be short and simple. Not so short that all it says is, 'Thanks' with a signature. Instead, tell the person how much you appreciate their thoughtfulness with (fill in the blank). Be sure to fill in that blank, too.

Revive the beautiful tradition of the thank you note. And don't forget to take it a step further and teach your children to do the same!

It breaks our hearts to hear of a loved one passing away, or to know a friend of ours has lost someone they deeply care about. If we see them face to face, our facial expressions and body language can express our sadness. But putting it in writing can be a bit more difficult.

These notes can still be short, but need to be from the heart. If it is a friend who has lost another friend, you will express your condolences in a different way than if they lost a spouse or parent. But either way, you have addressed the relationship the bereaved had with the loved one and have offered love and support.

When it comes to writing letters, there are different approaches. For a business letter, you really need to type these in a business format. But for others, you don't need to be so formal. Think about writing a letter to a pen pal, which can be some of the most fun to write. I have a pen pal who always sends her letter tucked into a greeting card. These cards offer encouragement, a laugh, or a simple prayer. But they are as special as the letter itself.

Always add a date to the top of your letter. In many cases, people who receive letters from a pen pal tend to keep them so they can revisit them over the course of years. Adding a date helps to keep them organized.

Writing out a pen pal letter takes time and gives yourself a chance to pause and think about what you want to say. They are perfect for sharing thoughts, daily activities, recipes, craft patterns and so much more. Pen pal letters are designed to keep your friends and close family members up to date with what is taking place in your world.

The beauty of sending and receiving pen pal letters is the enjoyment of the recipient. It gives them a chance to settle in for time to themselves and enjoy a great 'visit' with a friend.

Think about it. All we seem to receive in the mail these days is bills, political notices and sales circulars. Wouldn't you love to get a personal letter from a friend instead?

Some of us prefer to send a Holiday letter, rather than a card. If this is the case, duplicates may need to be made. This doesn't mean it has to be boring. But it also means a lot of writing. This is one of the few times you can get away with typing your letter, but it helps to write it out in advance.

Add some fun and personality to your holiday letters. Create a 'newsletter' in a computer program such as Canva. This is a design program with templates already set up with a newspaper theme. You can add photos, images or even reproductions of a child's drawing.

When writing a holiday letter, add some funny incidents, a joke, or quotes in certain places. If some (or all) of the newsletter recipients are expected to join you for the holidays, include a Holiday Calendar. Another fun touch is to add a recipe – or even a craft pattern if some of the recipients love to create handmade items.

A homemaker's writing skills go far beyond a grocery list. Writing helps you keep your home organized, keeps you in touch with others, and brings a sense of peace to an otherwise busy life. Learn to depend on technology less, and bring back the old-fashioned ritual of the written word. It may just bring a touch of beauty, love and joy to your world.

If you want to learn more about the topic at hand just visit my website at www.thefarmwife.com.

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