

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 61 - Life Lessons from the Chickens

It's a given routine – every morning, I head outside first thing to let the chickens out of the coop. They get fed; the water gets changed and I check for any eggs that may have been laid overnight. Once all that is done, I often sit on the step and just watch them as they eat, drink, scratch, eat some more and crow a little.

Several years ago, we got a call from our friend, Ron. He had a Delaware Roo and was tired of hearing him crow at all hours of the day and night. It was either me take him, or the feathered guy was going to end up as dumplings. I decided quickly to turn this into a bartering session, since I wanted something from Ron I would take the Roo off his hands if Ron would come lead singing at our small country church. He agreed, so I went home with a rooster.

We named him Don Juan, as he was a huge, very handsome guy with white feathers trimmed in black. His red comb was highlighted by this coloring. All the girls seem to love him, which is how he got his name.

Then we noticed that Jack and Smooch, two of the tiniest Bantams we have in the yard, were able to intimidate the spurs off of Don. I put it down to the Pecking Order Ritual and figured it would stop after a few days.

But it didn't. A couple of months later, I realized that Jack continued to prevent Don from eating.

Now, I really don't take kindly to bullying, and the Pecking Order should have been established within a week or two. So, I started hand-feeding Don. I would sit down on the steps with the bucket of scratch grain, dip out a scoop of feed and hold it out to him. He dove in with gusto.

The upside is that Don was finally getting his share to eat. The downside is that all the other chickens decided they wanted in on it. And then Jack spotted the action. It took all of two seconds for that tiny brat to make his way across the yard and chase Don away from my hand. Some of the girls would jump up on my knees, both to avoid the confrontation and to get as much as they could before the boys came back.

And then, Jack made the mistake of jumping up onto the side of the bucket and down into it to eat his fill. His attention was diverted, and Don carefully, with one watchful eye on the bucket, came back and started eating again.

This became a morning ritual. I worked hard to keep Jack separated from Don. And once feeding time was over, Jack moseyed off and seemed to leave Don alone.

As I sat there watching, it occurred to me that I was getting a life lesson from these crazy birds. I was amazed at all they have taught me over the years and find myself even more eager to get to 'school' in the mornings. Here are a few things I've learned:

1) Bullying is wrong, regardless of the species. Life is so much more pleasant when we learn to get along, and we won't lose as many feathers.

I don't bully, and I don't stand for it in anyone else. I do my best to applaud the differences in each and every person I meet. I always try to remember that God made all of us for His pleasure. If He finds pleasure in someone, then it is my goal to do so as well.

2) Fresh feed from the hand is better than having to scratch in the dirt to get it.

By watching my chickens, I realized that I am just as eager to be fed from my Father's hand, rather than having to scratch around and find my own food. And I love sitting on His knee and being able to enjoy His gifts and have the protection from the meanness taking place on the ground.

3) Regardless of any passing storms, if you have a place to go, there is nothing to worry about. We can have a brutal night of thunder, lightning and heavy rains blow through, and the chickens seem to barely notice. If it's during the day, they just head for protection in the coop or under the brooder. If it's at night, they just blink their eyes and go back to sleep, knowing they are protected. I have that same peace with my Protector, when life throws storms my way.

4) The early bird doesn't necessarily get the worm when there is a lot of competition. But at least you have a better chance than if you had stayed in bed all day.

I get up early, and am often surprised at how much more I accomplish, and how much more energy I have, than the days that I oversleep.

5) Just because you are the smallest chicken in the yard doesn't mean you can't be powerful. You just have to use your size to the best of your ability. If you do, you can take down the biggest Roo in the coop.

I may be small, but I don't let fear overtake me. I stand my ground, aim, and shoot to kill, so to speak. I have learned to never back down.

6) I have several chickens who don't seem to like the confinement of the chicken yard. Instead, they half fly, half climb the fence to get out. They repeat the process in the evenings to get back to the coop.

If you search hard enough, there is always a way to escape confinement. You may have to learn to climb or fly, or you may have to keep digging until the hole is big enough for you to fit under the fence, but where there is a will, there is definitely a way.

7) Feathers are a thing of beauty, but if you lose a few, just scratch around them and move on. Feathers usually grow back even more splendid than the ones you lose. They are usually stronger and more resilient as well.

I am forever spreading my wings when I start something new. I lose a lot of feathers, too, in the process. But it always amazes me when, as I am finally able to succeed, that those feathers have grown back, thicker, lusher, and stronger than the ones I lost.

Life Lessons come from some of the strangest places. It is up to us to go to 'school' and learn everything we can. The Country Boy has a favorite saying: "If you aren't paying attention, then you aren't learning." For me, this farm is a daily dose of education, and I try my best to learn all I can. And there is always something new every day. Even in the daily routine.

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