

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 74 - Check your Work with a Yearly Review

Welcome back to the porch. Come on up and join me. I made a batch of Snickerdoodles this week – help yourself to a few while we visit.

I don't know about you, but I can't believe August is almost over. This year is flying by. I'm afraid to blink, because if I do, I might miss Christmas!

It's still miserably hot outside, so I've been looking for things I can do inside. I see it as the perfect opportunity to stop and look back over what I've done so far this year. I want to check and see if I'm still on track for my goals. So far, it's looking good, but I can see some room for improvement. Did you know that setting goals is similar to a doctor's appointment? Yep. Just as you would get a yearly checkup, you need to make an appointment with yourself to take a look at what goals you've set and how they are coming along.

Before we go too much further, let me add in this little piece of food for thought, just in case you really don't like setting goals. I read an article not too long ago that said setting new year's resolutions, making goals, and planning ahead shouldn't be done. Their reasoning behind it was that it was stifling, no one can predict the future, and too many people get frustrated and feel like a failure if they don't meet all those expectations.

In all honesty, I could only agree with about 10% of what was said. I get it. Setting goals does sometimes seem fruitless. But my biggest concern with not setting any type of goal is that you become like a rudderless boat. It's a big ocean out there – do you really want to try and reach your destination without having any idea of how to get there? Probably not. If you're like me, you don't care much for sunburn, you prefer to have plenty of food, water, and supplies on hand, and at the very least, have some idea of how you can weather any storm that blows up.

What I do agree with is that some goals are so detailed and intense, there is no room for error or adjustments. As the article stated, you don't really know what the future will bring, so setting goals that are too big or strenuous can flip you off that rocker you're sitting on in the blink of an eye.

I learned this lesson the hard way a couple of years back. In June of 2021, not only were we having to deal with the pandemic and my mom's health issues, but the Country Boy was also diagnosed with cancer. Needless to say, every goal I had set for that year went straight out the window.

Robert Burns, in his poem 'To a Mouse' says it best: "the best-laid schemes of Mice and Men often go awry." And just like that little mouse who faced losing its house and provisions to wind, weather and seasons, our lives were turned upside down. Every goal I made for that year had to be either readdressed or discarded altogether.

Did I get frustrated? Did I feel like a failure because there was no way I could reach those goals? Nope. Not in the least. Why, you ask? Because when I first started living a simple life, I determined what my priorities would be. Since my first two priorities are faith and family, I knew that even if I couldn't meet my yearly goals, I could pivot and set new ones fairly easily. Which is what I did. And none of my goals were so deeply detailed that they couldn't be either deleted completely or set aside for another time.

Okay – now let's get back to the topic at hand, which would be taking time to review the goals you set in January.

Now y'all already know how much I love keeping all my stuff in notebooks. And this check-up is a perfect reason why. I can simply grab it, see what I've been doing, and think through all the things that still need to be done. It also tells me if I've gotten off track. If I have, I can easily make adjustments, or determine if the goals not met need to be moved to next year or discarded altogether.

And yes. I do occasionally discard a few goals I've made. There are times when life just happens. Finances shift. Priorities change. Or elements outside of my control interfere with a goal. When that occurs, I weigh my options. If it doesn't weigh in my favor or doesn't look like it will in the near future, I just draw a line through that goal.

For the ones that stay on my list, I usually start with my finances. As frustrating as it can be some days, money is one of the things that keeps us moving forward. I pull out my budget and look to see how close I'm coming. I look to see if I am overspending in some areas and try to determine why. It also helps to see if there are areas where I didn't spend quite as much and look to see if those funds can be better used in a different category.

From there, I jump over to my Income and Expense Spreadsheet to make sure it's up to date. This is a great tool to show me the specifics of where my money is going.

Next, I look over all the goals I set for this year. Now that the year is almost over, I have a better idea of what has taken place and can make changes where necessary. There are some goals I've made that are coming along nicely. A few require setting aside until we save enough for the next step. And by looking back over the past months and where we are spending our time, I can better judge the goals that haven't been met. This is when I determine if they can still be done, and how I can work them into my schedule, or if I need to move them to next year.

Once all of that is done, I look over my pantry, and start working on my meal plans for the rest of the year, and any holiday goals I need to work on. Since I always have quite a few handmade gifts I'm working on, I make sure I have all the supplies required and that there is plenty of time to get them done.

There will also be quite a bit of baking and cooking that will need to be done in advance, so I do a freezer and pantry inventory to see what I still need to do. Cookies aren't too much of a problem, because I made quite a few batches of dough over the summer. They're just sitting in the freezer ready to be baked.

You may be asking yourself why I do this. The answer is easy. Over the course of time, I have learned just how important living a Simple Life is to me. You could even say I'm addicted to it. Consequently, I choose wisely how I spend my time. Most everything I do has to fit within my priorities of faith, home, farm, profession, and passions.

By taking time closer to the end of the year, I can see just how close I am keeping to my goals and priorities. Adjustments, additions, and deletions can be made to help me stay on track. And once that's done, I know I can just sit back, relax, and enjoy the fact that I am where I need to be.

Have you taken the time to review those goals you set for yourself in January? Or, has life gotten so busy, you don't even remember where you put your notebook? If that's the case, then right now may be a good time for you to take an Afternoon Tea Break. Just because you can't find the goals you set, you can still get a few in place for the next few months.

After all, the holidays will be here before you know it. And the one thing you want to do most of all is enjoy them, instead of rushing around at full tilt when you could be relaxing and spending time with your family and friends. And wouldn't that be better than missing out on all that fun?

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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 for the next episode, grab that glass of refreshment, pull up a rocker, and sit back for a while. It's time to relax and enjoy.

Relax & Enjoy!

julie