

# The Simple Living Network

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Resources, Tools, Examples & Contacts For Conscious, Simple, Healthy & Restorative Living

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## Simple Living News

### Simple Living News -- Issue #60 -- September-October 2007

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(Note: In the PDF edition, links do not work, some graphics n/a.)

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## Welcome! Introduction & Announcements

Dear Friends,

Well, Labor Day has come and gone, vacations have ended, fall is just around the corner... back to work and school. It is time to refocus our energies and continue the exciting adventure of simplifying life.

This edition of our Newsletter is full to overflowing with ideas and resources for simplifying. Immediately following this brief letter of introduction are a number of **Important Announcements**. And, as usual, Newsletter Editor Fred Ecks has put together an impressive collection of articles. (See [Table Of Contents](#).)

Enjoy our free, on-line Newsletter and remember to "simplify, simplify,"

Dave Wampler  
 Founder  
 The Simple Living Network

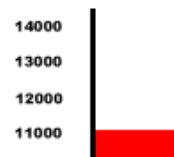


## Important Announcements

### CyberAngel Update

Here is a great big **THANK YOU** to all of our CyberAngels. Your contributions keep this user-supported web site alive and growing. The Simple Living Network is a small, home based business with only one full time employee and a number of greatly appreciated, dedicated volunteers. It costs a fair amount to keep this web site running and

### How Are We Doing?



- **Do It Yourself**
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**OnLine Study Groups**

Join Our On-Line Classroom.  
Simplify Your Life. Transform Your  
Relationship With Money.



Registration In Progress  
Next Class: September 25

**Featured Resources**

**Live Simply That Others  
May Simply Live**



11" x 3" Bumpersticker. All-  
Weather Vinyl. Free Shipping &  
Handling!

[Purchase](#) [More Info](#)

**\$3.00**

**How To Build Community  
(Poster)**



12" x 36" full color poster with

Dave Wampler fed. Our modest book sales only cover a small portion of the costs. As such, this Newsletter, the Discussion Forums, and the other free services you find here would not exist without your generous financial support.

As of this writing, we are still \$3,000 away from our 2007 goal of \$14,000. If you enjoy this Newsletter or use the Discussion Forums, we encourage you to help us reach our target by making a financial gift, anything large or small, to keep things going well into 2008.

[Click Here To Make A CyberAngel Contribution](#)

**The Simple Living Newsletter Discussion Forum**

In July we introduced **The Simple Living Newsletter Discussion Forum** -- a place where you can provide direct feedback and input on this Newsletter. We want to thank everyone who has participated to help make this publication all that it can be, and we want to encourage you to keep up the good work. Your thoughts and ideas are greatly appreciated. (If you are new to the Discussion Forums, [CLICK HERE](#) for an introduction.)

**Discussion Forum Maintenance Closure**

Speaking of the Discussion Forums, they will be closed for routine maintenance and upgrade September 21 - October 1. Thank you for your patience during this time.

**Your Money Or Your Life OnLine Study Groups**

It is hard to believe that the beginning of a new year is not too far away. Time to start planning ahead. Now is the perfect time to sign-up for an **OnLine Your Money Or Your Life Study Group**. The next course begins **September 25th** and registration is limited. [Click here to learn more](#).

**Your Money Or Your Life Study Guide Volunteers Needed**

The New Road Map Foundation is seeking volunteers to help rework the study guides for *Your Money Or Your Life*. If you have hosted a Study Group at least twice and would like to contribute to the new guide, or if you would like to host a group to test the updated guides, please e-mail Ann Haebig at: [ahaebig@pobox.com](mailto:ahaebig@pobox.com).

**Center For A New American Dream - A New Partner**

We are pleased to welcome a new Simple Living Partner: **The Center For A New American Dream**. New American Dream helps individuals and institutions consume responsibly for a better world. Climate change is a serious problem, but you can live well and have fun being part of the solution. Start lowering your carbon emissions today with six easy steps over six months with **New American Dream** -- because big changes start with small steps.



[carbonconsciousconsumer](http://carbonconsciousconsumer.com)

**Carbon Conscious Consumer (C3)** is a national climate campaign sponsored by the **Center for a New American Dream** that challenges individuals to establish climate-friendly daily habits and inspire their friends to do the same. Participants who most creatively and effectively spread the word will win prizes.

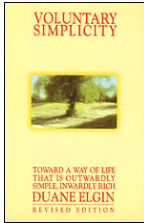
Pledge to make a change and become a **Carbon Conscious Consumer**. There's no better time to stand up to the challenge and live consciously for a safer planet! Visit the **New American Dream C3 Web Site** for additional information.

many ideas for building community.

[Purchase](#) [More Info](#)

**\$14.00**

### Voluntary Simplicity

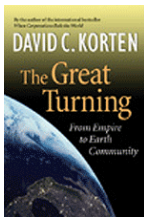


The classic book about living with balance. . . illuminating the pattern of changes an increasing number of Americans are making in their lives -- adjustments in day-to-day living that are an active, positive response to the complex dilemmas of our time.

[Purchase](#) [More Info](#)

**\$12.95**

### The Great Turning



We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future.... To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family with a common destiny.

[Purchase](#) [More Info](#)

~~\$27.95~~

**\$17.95**

## Simple Living America - Partner Update

Simple Living America is the first national, nonprofit membership organization for the general public centered on simplicity. What is simple living? It means many things to many people, but we are broadly defining it in lay terms as The Satisfaction of Enough. The academic definition and rationale upon which this is based can be found at "[Science of Simple Living](#)", including numerous SLA projects.



By providing mainstream America with a means to The Satisfaction of Enough through its new **Get Satisfied** book, campaign and website, **Simple Living America** is helping to launch a satisfaction movement in this country. House parties, community events, the member newsletter, and on-line postings are building the momentum. SLA calls for balance in a complex world, in partnership with the popular **Simple Living with Wanda Urbanska** national public television series. [Click here for additional information.](#)

## Take Back Your Time - Partner Update

Register now for the big **What's The Economy For, Anyway?** conference, October 5-7, 2007, Washington DC Convention Center (part of the annual Green Festival).

**What's the economy for, anyway?** Is it just about having the biggest GDP or the highest Dow Jones Average? Or is it about providing for a healthy, happy, fair and sustainable society?

If you think quality of life matters, and wonder how the United States compares to other countries when it comes to providing for its people, then the **WHAT'S THE ECONOMY FOR, ANYWAY?** Conference is for you! Dozens of prominent experts and activists will offers parts of the answer to the big question and offer out-of-the-box ideas about what we can do to make our economy serve us instead of vice-versa. Three tracks include QUALITY OF LIFE, SOCIAL JUSTICE and SUSTAINABILITY. [See the full schedule and register NOW at: \*\*www.timeday.org/economyconference\*\*](#)



## America At Home - Photo Invitation

I'm writing to invite you to be part of America at Home, a nationwide photo project being shot the week of September 17-23, 2007, enlisting the creative talents of 100 of America's leading photojournalists. The focus of the project is to depict in pictures and words what home means to Americans. I'm interested in some stories about families that have chosen a life in line with their beliefs by living simply. Interested families willing to invite a photographer into their home for a few hours can contact [jonathan.ohara@myamericaathome.com](mailto:jonathan.ohara@myamericaathome.com). Thank you. -- Jon O'Hara

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## New Resources

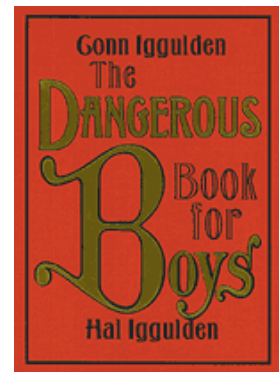
### Highlights Of The Latest Additions To Our Resource Directory

[Click here to visit the "New Resources" page](#), or scroll down and click individual titles for specific details....

- **Get Satisfied:** How Twenty People Like You Found The Satisfaction Of Enough  
**Special Pre-Publication Offer!**
- **September Body, Mind & Spirit Special!**  
**Save 20% On All Body, Mind & Spirit Products!**



- **Ecotopia**  
A Novel & Environmental Classic by Ernest Callenbach
- **Following Raven, Finding Ground:**  
A Road Trip In Search Of Home  
A new PDF E-Book by Claire Josephine, author of **The Spiritual Art Of Being Organized**
- **Deep Economy:** The Wealth Of Communities & The Durable Future
- **I Want It Now:** Navigating Childhood In A Materialistic World
- **Living Green:** A Practical Guide To Simple Sustainability
- **My Job Sucks & I Can't Take It Any More! Help!**
- **Our Day To End Poverty:** 24 Ways You Can Make A Difference
- **The Dangerous Book For Boys:**  
Recapture Sunday Afternoons & Long Summer Days  
**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!**
- **The Flip:** Turn Your World Around!
- **The Not So Big House:** A Blueprint For The Way We Really Live
- **The Not So Big Life:** Making Room For What Really Matters
- **All New Square Foot Gardening:** Grow More In Less Space!
- **Values Sell:** Transforming Purpose Into Profit Through Creative Sales & Distribution Strategies



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**The Simple Living News -- A User-Supported Service -- Please Do Your Part**

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## The Accidental House-Sitters

### Discovering Simple Living

By Deb Calderon

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Sometimes a change in life creates a new and wonderful opportunity. At the age of 51, my husband Paul had just had his job outsourced to India and real estate was booming in Vancouver, British Columbia. On a camping trip to a small coastal town, we discussed just leaving the city and seeing where life would take us.

We sold our nice 900 square foot condo in September and moved out in December with no firm plan in mind. We thought we would house-sit in the town where we been camping for two months and then find a small house there to live simply. Ten months later we are still living in other people's homes, caring for other people's pets and calling ourselves "The Accidental House-Sitters."

Tonight we are sitting in the garden after watering the vegetables, looking over the Strait of Georgia and eating fresh blackberries. People ask us all the time how we set up this Accidental House-Sitting, so I thought I would share a little of our experience.



We have lived in nine places so far this year. All of them are wonderful and different, and have given us ideas of what we like and what we don't like for our future. We are finding out what suits us in the

simplest, most economical way. So far this year, we have lived in the following places:

- A wonderful little vintage rose-covered cottage on the waterfront,
- An architectural wonder in the woods of Roberts Creek,
- A geodesic dome on five acres,
- And two gorgeous homes with big decks and wonderful sea views.

Right now we are more or less booked until Christmas.

By house- and pet-sitting we create a wonderful exchange: we look after your home and your pets and you give us your home temporarily. We settle into a new environment of usually a month or so and learn about a new community.

We don't ask for any money, but usually our homeowners (many now friends) throw in lots of freebies. We have been given homemade wine, homemade bread, freshly made mint jelly, handmade chocolates, a bag of prawns, and access to refrigerators all over the coast.

Every house we have stayed in has been incredible and special, and we have come to have a first hand look at what life is like in each community with an eye toward living there in the future. We have explored local political issues, traffic patterns, what kinds of clubs you can join, and a lot more. This information is invaluable as we choose where we next want to buy a home.

Our costs are low, very low. We pay no house taxes, no hydro or electricity, no strata fees, no Internet cost and no heat or fuel. We buy really nothing for these homes as they come fully equipped. We are never tempted to buy little household trinkets, as everything we pick up we end up carrying around in the car, and it becomes quite a hassle.

Some of these homes even come with the use of a car, should we need to take the animals out for a drive and walk.

Many people ask us how we get all these opportunities, so here are some thoughts:

- Don't charge. Many pet-sitters do this as a business, but because we see this as a swap and we need your home temporarily we don't need to charge. That means that our schedule is nearly always full. It is a win/win for the homeowner, the pets and for us.
- Tell everyone you meet that this is what you do, and give an email address where people can reach you. Tell people you meet at coffee shops, in the mall, at parties and everywhere. Some of our best house-sits have been arranged months after meeting the homeowners. A chance meeting on a beach might turn into a month in a seafront cottage.
- Gather your list of references as you go. For years we had been house-sitting for a week here, a week there, just to get away from the city. We would look after dogs, cats, donkeys, what have you. We started with a list of four people who could act as past references. Now we have over 12.
- Keep in touch with everyone. Every 6 weeks I send out a general "Where are Paul and Deb NOW!" bulletin on the Internet to friends, family and past homeowners. People we know are beginning to realize that we do this for a service and might mention it to people they know, and so on. Now and then when we might have a gap and don't have a place to stay, we contact all our past homeowners and let them know we are free for particular dates. They may well have friends who need house-sitters. As I write this, we have a three-week gap in the late fall. I am confident that this will be filled long before we get to November.
- Say YES! Take the house-sit for every type of home offered. We have said yes to house-sitting in a mobile home in a park and the possibility of a fifth wheel that will be parked on the beach. Why not try it to see how you like it?
- Do a little extra. My husband mostly wants to play banjo. But from time to time he has been known to mow lawns, paint a little woodwork, chop wood, and even wash people's cars when it is sunny outside. He has an incredible tan this summer from all his time outdoors.
- Soon it will be one complete year that we have been house- and pet-sitting on the coast. What started out as a few months of fun has turned into an incredible opportunity. Many of the homeowners are now our friends, and that is the biggest payoff of all.

But tons of other exciting things came along the way too. In house- and pet-sitting we have:

- Learned to play killer canasta
- Explored all kinds of new kitchen machines
- With permission, read a lot of new books (including cookbooks) in people's homes
- Listened to a lot of new music
- Joined a few musical groups so Paul can play banjo
- Learned to bake bread
- Walked hundreds of miles around the new towns
- Visited farmer's markets we never knew existed

We have also learned that we really don't need all that "stuff" that is indeed "stuffed" into 2 storage lockers in Vancouver. One of the only costs of this lifestyle is the \$150 a month we pay to keep all our possessions under lock and key. I know when we open those storage containers half of it will go directly to **Freecycle** or thrift shops. We have learned to live lightly and have fun doing it.

Life has become a pleasure in so many ways. We take time to do the things that we had been putting off. We certainly don't have the money to retire full-time, but this way we are easing into the next stage of life. The money from the sale of our home makes money while we travel around and, because our costs are low, this year we will come out ahead financially.

We have also fallen in love with so many of the pets we got to look after: Naughty Bird, Chaos, Jo-Jo, Jack, Samson and Delilah, Larry and Linus, Piggelet and many more. For people who were never allowed pets in the condominium, it is like having foster animals all over the coast.



"Don't you miss your own place?" people ask. Well sometimes we do, but not often. When I think of the great people we have met and the fun we have had at the lakes and beaches, not to mention summer festivals, the music we have heard and the joy of discovering a new community, I don't miss it much. Soon we will probably buy another home, but for now, we are free to move around, come and go and pick up and change places. And, when we do own our next home, we will know a whole network of people who might return the favor and house-sit for us.

Could this experience be for you? It could if you have no children to look after and no pets of your own, can get away for a while and are, above all, flexible. My husband Paul has never been known for his flexibility. In the first month he wanted to find a place, buy it, capture it and seal the deal. Now he feels quite differently. He has become more open and is more comfortable meeting new people. He has played for the first time really in public and has jammed with some fine musicians.

If you want to try something like this, put the word out to friends and relatives in your area, or as far as you are willing travel, that you are available for short house- and pet-sitting stints for weekends and vacations. Then, if you discover you like it, take on longer engagements.

I still have to go by ferry every month to work in Vancouver doing workshops for a few days to keep the piggybank from emptying, but apart from that our life is truly wonderful.

We don't need a lot of money to do this. We spend our money on food, ferries and fun. So that's our story, I might call it "Sleeping Around," "The Accidental House-Sitters," or whatever; we're always open to new ideas.

You can reach Deb and Paul at their email address as they have no other fixed address and no real telephone number. They are always happy to chat. [deb@wizbangers.ca](mailto:deb@wizbangers.ca)

#### About The Author

Deb Calderon, of no fixed address, travels with her husband and banjo player Paul and is the head of Calderon Consulting: [www.wizbangers.ca](http://www.wizbangers.ca) Contact Deb at [deb@wizbangers.ca](mailto:deb@wizbangers.ca)



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**The Simple Living News -- A User-Supported Service -- Please Do Your Part**

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## The Green Triangle

## Living Cheaply With Style

By Ernest Callenbach

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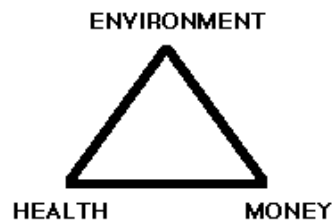
*Editor's Note: The following article is an excerpt from **Living Cheaply With Style**. One of our Newsletter readers recommended we include this well-written article in this edition. We agree this article is indeed timeless!*

Living a sane and ecologically responsible life doesn't mean self-sacrifice and austerity; on the contrary, it should mean a richer, more interesting, fuller, longer, and healthier life. But so far nobody has been able to dramatize this on a national level in the folksy, convincing way that Ronald Reagan and Ivan Boesky made greed respectable. Jimmy Carter may have been our only recent president to understand that an equation has two sides, but his wan demeanor on TV in a sweater, urging us to save energy, did not exactly inspire the American people. (I know, he looks better and better now, doesn't he?)

Is it possible to talk *attractive* sense about a new lifestyle for Americans? It had better be, or we can start preparing a suitable tombstone for our nation. And what we say needs to have both human verve and internal logical coherence to be memorable - more than a cafeteria menu of 50 or 750 ecological things we ought to choose among. Luckily, although we may sometimes lose the faith, on the whole it works to assume that the universe displays many reassuring regularities that we can rely on. This goes for science almost without saying, since without prediction of regularities it is impossible to devise experiments. But it is also reassuringly true of our daily lives. However chaotic they sometimes seem, they have patterns; we can actually make sense of the ways things work, and react accordingly.

One way I've devised of talking about some critical everyday regularities is what I call the Green Triangle. It's a handy means of generating for ourselves ideas for personal and community and national change.

The three points of the triangle are:

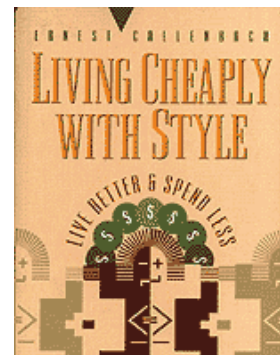


The principle that relates these three points is: *Any time you do something beneficial for one of them, you will almost inevitably also do something beneficial for the other two* - whether you're hoping to or not.

For example, let's suppose you decide to take a step to improve your health, like eating less fatty meat and dairy products. This will of course decrease your chance of circulatory disease; it may even make you stronger and give you greater endurance. But, since meat and dairy products are relatively expensive, you will save quite a bit of money; moreover, you will also help the environment - since meat production is a very land-intensive and damaging use of our farm resources.

But the interesting thing is that you can start at any point of the triangle. Thus, let's assume you do something beneficial for the environment, like walking or bicycling instead of driving your car. You cut down pollution emissions, you reduce smog and lung damage, you decrease acid rain, and you may postpone the greenhouse effect. But you'll help your health because you get more regular exercise, and you'll also save money on gas, oil, and car depreciation.

Some people are skeptical about good things stemming from thrift, which is an American virtue that has gone out of style temporarily in the well-to-do layers of our society, but the third point of the triangle is actually just as potent. Anytime you do something beneficial for your pocketbook, like not buying an expensive gizmo whose manufacturing expends a lot of energy and uses a lot of raw materials, or taking an expensive trip that turns a lot of petroleum into atmospheric pollution and noise, you're also helping the Earth. But you're probably also doing your health a favor since you're less stressed out to earn the money to pay off the gizmo or trip; and not pouring a lot of emotional energy into interacting with the gizmo leaves time and attention for other human beings and the kind of spontaneous improvisation and fooling around that our species evolved to be good at.



If you apply the Green Triangle to your everyday life, examples of delightful synergistic effects can be found everywhere; you come out with many delightful new perceptions. Some cases: Low- or no-cost fun with other people is almost always more ecologically and financially benign than hard work and heavy consumption; evidently evolution did not commit an ecological error in making us playful. (Making us willing to live by clocks is another story.) Exchanges outside the cash economy - trading massages, for instance - don't have monetary ramifications you have to worry about, whereas if you pay for a massage, the money may go into a bank, and you know what they do with it. Growing or making your own is usually cheaper and healthier, as well as more ecologically benign. Fun, isn't it? So go triangulate!

But one last word: even using the Green Triangle, we must still remember that there is no such thing as innocent purchasing, even in countries with eco-labeling programs that guide consumers to "less damaging" products. Of course it's good to buy things that do less damage, and we ought to have an eco-labeling program in this country as soon as possible. But best of all is to buy less in general. Hard though it may be for moderns to admit, Jesus was totally correct in saying "Blessed are the poor" - because they do less ecological damage. There are a few things that we, the rich people of the North, can buy that really do positive good for the earth: photovoltaic cells and solar hot-water heaters, for instance, which move us toward a solar economy. But learning to live happily with less consumption of goods vastly outranks all the other things we might choose to do to save the earth. That's why, in my book *Ecotopia*, people are appreciated for what they produce - in human relationships, in art, in community life, in science, in politics - and to call somebody a "consumer" is an insult.

#### About The Author

Ernest Callenbach is a writer and editor best known for his visionary novel *Ecotopia* - an environmental classic that has sold almost a million copies. He has also written the novels *Ecotopia Emerging* and *Publisher's Lunch*, and a half dozen nonfiction books on ecological issues, including *Living Cheaply With Style*, from which this article is excerpted.



#### Related Resources

- [Living Cheaply With Style](#)

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**The Simple Living News -- A User-Supported Service -- Please Do Your Part**

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## Simplifying A Personal Experience

By **Stephen R. Bock**  
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For me the journey to simplicity began several years ago. At that time, I did not have a name for it or realize that there were other people who felt like me. It began in my life as a rebellion against consumerism. I came to a realization that holidays were being created by the retail establishment for one purpose: to line their pockets with my money. When I was a kid we had Valentine's Day, but then somewhere along the way **Sweetest Day** was also added. My wife and I decided not to participate in any of these days. If I wanted to do something for my wife, I did it on another day other than those specified by the retailers.

One day I realized from grocery shopping with my wife that our grocery bill would be an average of \$30 more when she came with me (we shop every two weeks). We talked about it and agreed that she was apparently more susceptible to impulse buying than I am. From that time forward, she made me a list and I did the shopping. If I realized that something was not on the list that we really needed I would get it, but that might be at most a couple of items. It is her job to put away the groceries once I have brought them into the house.

Several years ago when our three daughters had all completed their schooling and I no longer had to drive them to school, I started riding the bus. I love riding the bus. I have made a lot of friends among my fellow bus riders, and have saved a ton of money on gas, parking, and wear and tear on my car. For an additional benefit, I also get much needed exercise since my bus stop is a half-mile from my workplace.



Ironically the first Simplicity book I read was a book of essays by Henry David Thoreau that included *Walden's Pond*. I really was not interested in going to the extreme that Henry went to, but I did love his saying, "the masses of men live lives of quiet desperation." That saying struck a chord with me when I read it in his book before I even realized that it was his most famous quote.

After reading this book, I wanted to read more material like it. I did a search on the Internet on the word "simplicity". As a result, I discovered the Simplicity Movement. Since then I have read quite a few books on the subject; some I got from the library and some I purchased. I read *Your Money Or Your Life* and started keeping track of all my spending in a little spiral notebook and charting our income, expenses and investment income on my graph paper chart. So now I know exactly what I am spending for what. I bought a copy of this book for all three of my daughters, and one of my daughters told me the other day that she is doing the program. My oldest daughter lives in another state, so I have not given her copy to her yet.

Because of lack of trust in my employer as a result of a half-dozen RIFs (Reductions In Force), I have been debt-free except for my mortgage for several years. I was afraid to make any major purchases for fear of losing my job. We use a credit card which we pay off each month that gives a lot of reward points, and have earned a lot of free dinners at Olive Garden Restaurant. I pay extra on my mortgage when I can, and have knocked it down after five years to only 15 years left to pay from a 30 year loan. My wife drew the line on our house since we built the house and it really is our dream home. Being debt-free and able to save, and as a result of a small inheritance, I now have a savings cushion that gives me peace of mind. I have told my boss, if you get rid of me today, I will be okay financially. It bothers him when I tell him that, because he knows that if he lost his job he would not be okay.

I was going to trade my car in a few years ago for a newer used car, but after reading something in one of the books, I decided to drive my present car until it is used up. So far I have gotten two more years out of it with a reasonable amount of repairs being done to it. Who knows how long it will last, since I now drive it so little!

My wife has gotten into the spirit of simplicity and she has been working for the past year on decluttering our house. I took out our one can of garbage last week and our little recycle bin and noticed my neighbor had five cans of garbage to my one. It makes me feel good beating the Joneses in an area that counts.

Here's one final success I will share with you: I received my property insurance bill last month, and it was \$760 for a year of coverage. I called my agent and found out my policy had a \$250 deductible. I ask her how much I would save if I raised the deductible to \$2500. She told me that for my policy the maximum deductible is \$1000, but that they do allow \$2500 deductible on the new policies. I asked her "why can't I have a new policy then?" Her answer was that I could. She would draw it up and give me a call. I have not submitted a claim on my homeowner's policy in the 28 years that we have owned our two homes. The bottom line is that my new premium is \$325 and I have \$100,000 more coverage on the structure and few other additional items covered. So because I am now scrutinizing my expenses, I saved \$435. In six years my deductible will be in my pocket from savings. My only regret is that I did not think to do this ten years ago.

Simplicity is compatible with the Bible. I recently preached a sermon on simplicity to my congregation with the text scripture being the words of the Apostle Paul in I Timothy 6:8, "And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content."

Simplicity is a journey; my wife and I have begun that journey. We are learning and discovering as we go that we really do not need a lot of "things" in order to be happy. We try to share our successes with those who will listen and have grown tired of the rat race. Remember, even if you win the rat race, when you are finished you are still a rat. Happy simplifying!

#### About The Author

Stephen R. Bock works as a computer programmer for money to pay the bills. He has been Christian for 27 years and pastors a small church. Stephen has been married to his wife Deborah for 36 years and has three grown, married daughters, and four grandchildren. He has self-published 14 doctrinal booklets, and has signed a contract with a publisher for his new book, *The Symbols of Revelation* which should appear in the bookstores in the fall of 2007. **Related Resources**

- [Walden](#)
- [Your Money Or Your Life](#)



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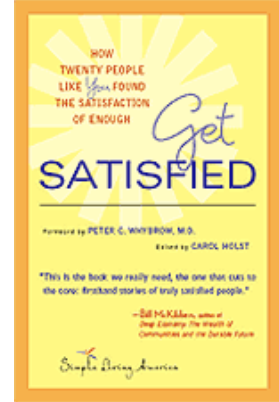
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## New Book, Campaign & Website Help America "Get Satisfied" Simple Living America

What do Americans need that most eludes them? It's not a tank of cheap gas (as astonishing as that would be) or ever earlier pre-holiday sales. What Americans need most -- and most of them know it -- is satisfaction, especially the satisfaction of enough. Never before have so many people who balance so much faced the gnawing, gamut-stretching craving for more. Now Simple Living America has launched the "Get Satisfied" campaign, with a brand-new website at [www.GetSatisfied.org](http://www.GetSatisfied.org) and an October book entitled, *Get Satisfied: How Twenty People Like You Found The Satisfaction Of Enough*.



**Simple Living America** is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization affiliated with the CRESP Center for Transformative Action at Cornell University. Hollywood spokespeople include Alexandra Paul and Ed Begley, Jr., who calls the campaign the start of a "satisfaction movement" in America. The book *Get Satisfied* will be published on October 1, 2007, and features a Foreword by Peter C. Whybrow, M.D., director of the Semel Institute for Neuroscience & Human Behavior at UCLA and author of *American Mania: When More Is Not Enough*.

:::: Special Pre-Publication Offer ::::

**CLICK HERE to learn more about the book  
and pre-order your copy of *Get Satisfied***  
Pre-publication orders will ship as soon as  
the book comes off the press in October, 2007

### Advanced Praise For *Get Satisfied*

*"Judging from the flood of public responses to Simple Living America's call for satisfying stories, people want fulfillment and sufficiency. What a relief for our maxed-out lives and for our maxed-out planet! Everybody finds the satisfaction of enough in different ways and this book shines a light forward on many of them. I'm glad I'm satisfied. You will be too."*

-- ED BEGLEY, JR., Actor and Activist

*"This book is a watershed in America's quest for national and planetary sanity."*

-- WANDA URBANSKA, Host and Coproducer  
**Simple Living with Wanda Urbanska** PBS series

*"Recycle all those other self-help books -- this is the only one you will need."*

-- ALEXANDRA PAUL, Actor and Activist

*"Get Satisfied is a wonderful antidote to our over-stuffed and over-rushed world... we are given insight after insight into what really makes life satisfying and complete. It may not be a simpler life, though sometimes it is, but it is certainly a life in which the delight of being fully alive permeates every day and every breath."*

-- SARAH SUSANKA, Author,  
**The Not So Big Life: Making Room for What Really Matters**

*This is the book we really need, the one that cuts to the core: firsthand stories of truly satisfied people.*

-- BILL MCKIBBEN, Author,  
**Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future**

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## Gems Of The Discussion Forums

### Recurring Topics

By Ann Haebig  
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There are several discussions which readers keep active long-term on the forums. They're re-started at the beginning of each month. These topics support readers in their own efforts to live in closer alignment with their values. It's fall and a good time for a fresh start, so I'll relate these threads to help newsletter readers find support in whatever changes they wish to make.



The first recurring topic that I learned of was the **Two Frugal Choices of the Day**. This discussion has continued since October of 2006 at least, and possibly earlier. The name varies slightly each month, but the idea is the same. This is the place to share two choices you made that saved you money. Not only does this motivate participants to keep up their frugal habits, it also lets everyone use others' ideas.

A related topic is the **Tightwad Gazette discussion**. A reader suggested that participants reread Amy Dacyzyn's **Tightwad Gazette** together, reading 20 pages at a time. Readers are sharing their reactions, questions, and comments.

Over in the **Organizing Your Life** forum, another continuing topic is the **Decluttering** discussion. Readers make public commitments of how they'll declutter and follow up with reports on their efforts. I'll be participating on this thread myself once the weather turns and indoor projects become more appealing than outdoor ones.

Also in the Organizing Your Life forum, **The Two New Habits a Month** discussion invites readers to pick one or two new habits they'd like to start, and support each other in building their new routine.

Finally, in **Environmental Issues**, **The Two Environmental Decisions a Day** discussion invites readers to share their ways of treading more lightly on the Earth.

There's a lag in publishing anything, which means the discussions I've linked to may be out of date by the time readers receive this Newsletter. If you look for one of these topics and find it missing - then start it up again! We can all learn from each other.

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**If you've never been to the Discussion Forums before,  
CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THE INTRODUCTION  
to our on-line community. Then join in the fun!**

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#### About The Author

Ann Haebig is a part-time geek, part-time bicycle advocate, and dedicated follower and promoter of the **Your Money Or Your Life** program. She lives in the San Francisco Bay area with her partner, cat and recently adopted banjo. Ann can be reached at [ahaebig@pobox.com](mailto:ahaebig@pobox.com).



#### Related Resources

- [The Tightwad Gazette](#)
- [Organizing For The Creative Person](#)
- [Organizing Plain & Simple](#)
- [The 12 Principles Of Being Organized](#)
- [The Spiritual Art Of Being Organized](#)
- [Unclutter Your Home](#)

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## **Money/Life Balance in the New Millennium**

### **Step 5: Making Life Energy Visible**

**By Fred Ecks**

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This is the fifth article in a series discussing *Your Money Or Your Life* from a modern, personal perspective. The most recent article in the **July-August edition** of this Newsletter reviewed Step 4: How Much Is Enough - The Nature of Fulfillment. That step took us to the core of the program, asking three basic questions about our monthly expenses in each of our categories. Rather than the usual episodes of self-blame and guilt involved in budgeting, we simply inquired of ourselves whether we felt fulfilled in proportion to our expenses, whether the level of expense was in alignment with our values and life purpose, and how our expenses might change if we didn't have to work for a living. We only answered the questions and moved on. We're working on a change of lifestyle; to do that, we need the feedback to direct that change. Step 5 is also about giving ourselves the feedback we need on a longer-term basis. In this step, we'll create a chart to show our progress over the months and years.

As I write this article, the big news headlines are proclaiming the collapse of the mortgage and housing markets. In recent years, millions of people borrowed money against their homes to finance remodeling, swimming pools, RVs, new cars and furniture, and to repay credit card debt (which they then started running up again). The thing is, as home prices started to level off and fall just a little bit, these same people have found themselves owing more than their homes are worth. The homeowners and lenders are suffering from record levels of foreclosure as a result. It was destined to happen; we can only keep borrowing money and spending more than we earn for so long. This is what Step 5 is all about. What matters isn't what we do in any one particular month. It's the trend that's important. As we embark upon our change of lifestyle, seeing our personal trends becomes rewarding and fun. We hold focus, and continue the trend.

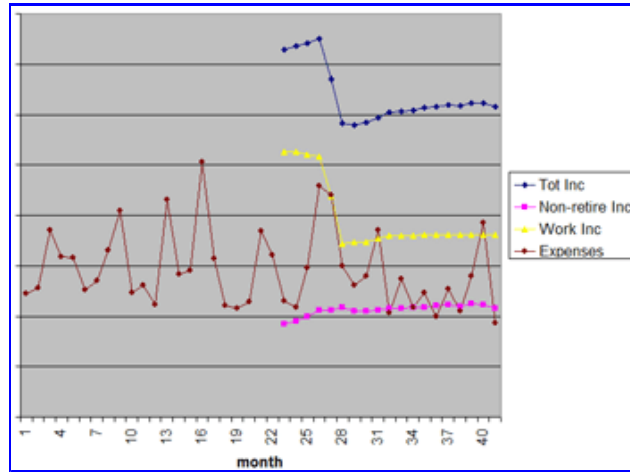


#### **What Would Enron Do?**

Would you invest in Enron? Of course not, if you knew the true picture. The company was spending far more than it earned, month after month, year after year. The only way Enron was able to pull that off without its investors pulling the plug was to hide the financial facts. All public corporations are required to disclose their financial cash flow to investors. Enron misled its investors and collapsed spectacularly. In the same way, many of us in the past have done our own "off-books accounting" just like Enron. In Step 5, all that is in the past. We create a wall chart of our cash flow, indicating our income and expenses month after month. Nothing is hidden; it's clear how we're doing financially.

The book claims that our wall chart should be exactly that: a chart of our cash flow which we proudly display on our wall. One reason the authors give for putting it on the wall is that friends and relatives will cheer us on and be supportive as they watch us progress down the path to financial integrity and independence. While that's a beautiful idea in a perfect world, many of us don't live in that world. Our society isn't exactly comprised of people who value financial integrity. Some of us following this program have encountered hostility to our shift to a more conscious, frugal lifestyle. Likewise, we aren't all as outgoing as the authors. The wall chart invites conversation about our personal finances, when sometimes we're more interested in discussing other aspects of life. For these reasons, many participants in this program keep their wall charts in their bedrooms, in a notebook, on the computer, or somewhere else private. What matters isn't that the chart is public; what matters is that we have a chart and look at it regularly!

There are as many ways of making a chart as there are people following the Your Money Or Your Life program. Folks who like tinkering around with computers often enjoy feeding their financial data into personal finance programs or spreadsheets, and generating charts electronically. Others who aren't so into technology use paper and pens. Even though I have a computer background, I prefer my paper chart. I don't have to turn on the computer, and it's as simple as it gets. Ann likes to enter her finances into the computer, using a spreadsheet to give her a monthly chart like this:

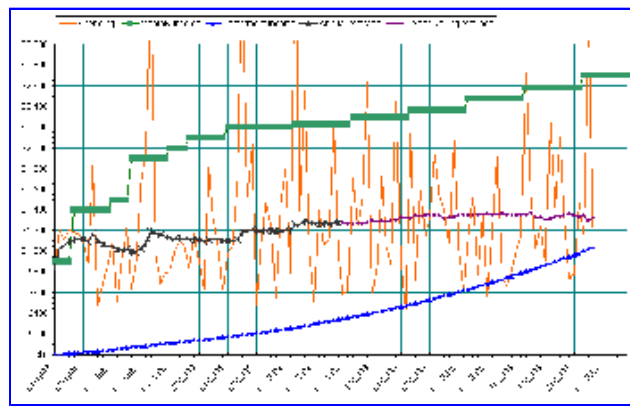


(click the chart for a larger view)

At the far end of the spectrum is Jonathan, who not only makes his chart electronically, but he puts it on the Internet for the world to see. It's not just a wall chart, it's a world wide web chart!

### Oh, But This Month Is Unusual...

When I was in high school, I ate a lot of candy. I mean a lot of candy! As a result, I have quite a few old fillings in my teeth. One day a few weeks ago, one of those fillings failed as I ate my breakfast. My dentist hit me with a \$1200 bill for a crown on that tooth. Ouch! Because I've followed this program for a long time, I was able to pay the \$1200 cash. Last month's expenses took a big jump as a result. Oh well, it's just another unusual month. Some months are unusually high in expenses, while others are unusually low. The book makes a very good point, that every month is an unusual month.



(click the chart for a larger view)

Looking at Jonathan's wall chart, I can't figure out what a "usual" month would be. His expenses appear to bounce wildly from month to month, even exceeding his income on nine occasions. But when we look at the line he drew showing his average expenses, it's clear that he's saving about half of his income, on average! The idea is to use the wall chart to look beyond the unusual months, reminding ourselves that we're on a path to financial integrity and freedom.

### Seeing Progress, In Two Easy Steps

The two keys to the wall chart, as given in the book, are simple:

1. Start.
2. Keep going.

For many of us, the wall chart is the easiest part of the whole Your Money Or Your Life program. It's also the most visible and rewarding step! It's not much trouble to put together that first chart. I just used some graph paper from the school supplies aisle of my local grocery store, and labeled it. Afterward,

updating it takes no time at all. The rewards are huge. Try it! You'll be hooked after just a few months.

### What's Next

Next time we'll dive into Step 6, with some practical ideas for living more frugally. After all the personal effort we've put into the first five steps, this step is refreshing as it gives a bunch of pointers to get us thinking about how we might embark upon our lifestyle change to Financial Integrity. The ideas range from the practical "bring your own shopping bags" to the deeper "stop trying to impress other people". We'll talk about those ideas and many more from other sources. Until then, put together that chart and plot a few months' expenses!

### About The Author

Fred Ecks is the volunteer Newsletter Editor for The Simple Living Network. He's a dedicated follower of the 9-step program detailed in ***Your Money Or Your Life***. He uses the time freed up in his life for writing, volunteering, sailing, and trail running. He can be reached at [fredx@pobox.com](mailto:fredx@pobox.com).



### Related Resources

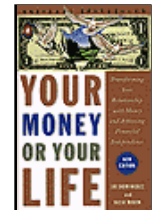
- ***Your Money Or Your Life***
- ***Transforming Your Relationship With Money*** -- Audio CD/Workbook Course
- **On-Line Study Groups For *Your Money Or Your Life* Registration In Progress.**

### What Is An On-Line Study Group?

**OnLine Study Groups** were created by **The Simple Living Network (SLN)** in cooperation with **The New Road Map Foundation (NRM)**. Our purpose is to provide hosted, interactive, on-line classes for those following the nine-step program in the best selling book ***Your Money Or Your Life*** by Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin.



***Your Money Or Your Life*** presents a simple, nine-step plan that will transform the way you think about, earn and spend money. This plan, a whole systems approach based on simple record keeping and your own unique life situation, works for anyone who earns or spends money. Singles and couples (with and without children), retirees and students, big earners and those below the poverty line have all been successful in doing the program.



We have created this OnLine Study Group venue because we recognize that group study is very helpful for those following the nine-steps. **However**, we also recognize that there are many folks out there who...

- do not have access to a local Study Group,
- find it difficult to attend face-to-face meetings on a regular basis, or
- wish to maintain the anonymity provided by the Internet.

### Curious? Click Here To Take A Tour

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## No Impact Man An Urban Experiment

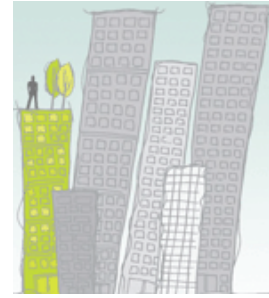
By Colin Beavan

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*Editor's Note: This article is an excerpt from Colin Beavan's weblog at [noimpactman.typepad.com](http://noimpactman.typepad.com).*

### The Year-Long Plan

You hear of one study saying that the energy used washing ceramic coffee cups is as damaging to the environment as the use of disposable plastic cups that won't biodegrade for thousands of years. You hear of another that says destroying trees to make paper towels is no worse than using hot water and toxic detergent to wash cloth rags.



Everything, if you listen to conventional wisdom, is as bad as everything else. The spin merchants have got us believing that to try to make any difference is futile. You might as well give up. Throw away another plastic coffee cup. Don't bother with the hybrid car. Go on, guzzle.

Meanwhile, I mention to a very liberal friend, a guy who used to be spokesman for a Democratic senator, that I'm trying to figure out how to live no impact here in New York. "Forget it. It's impossible," he says. It's one thing to try it in the countryside, maybe in the woods, like Henry David Thoreau, or on a farm, where you grow your own food. But in New York City? No way.

The fact is that if city dwellers can't learn to live without reducing their ecological footprint then we're in deep trouble because most of the world's population now lives in cities. Saving the world can't be left to the country bumpkins. It's an urban problem.

True, a city like New York does have the environmental advantage of economy of scale -- people share transport, buildings and resources -- but cities are also responsible for the production and concentration of pollutants in massive amounts. Thanks to car and truck exhaust alone, which makes for 90 percent of Manhattan's air pollution, the island's residents face the highest risk in the country of developing cancer from chemicals in the air.

Add to that the annual 9 billion pounds of carbon dioxide emissions resulting from New York's electricity use, our 8 billion pounds of garbage and half a trillion gallons of sewage and you have a supersized serving of world-killing poisons. Energy efficient city though New York might be, we remain an ecological nightmare, which is why -- in addition to the feeling that we just have to do *something* -- my wife Michelle and I began talking about going off the grid for a year, unplugging from the matrix.

In specific terms, the challenge is to take a year to develop and live a no impact lifestyle. Our approach will be to research our ecological options and run down our damage in one area at a time -- solid waste, transportation, energy, for example. Our aim, over the course of the year, is to do no net harm to the environment. We'll wind down in stages.

But to cause no net impact is impossible to do merely by restricting consumption and waste output. Just participating in society makes us responsible for the negative environmental impacts of society's functioning, even if our personal lifestyle does no harm. To offset our societal ecological debt, we also plan to take actions that will have positive environmental impact. For example, we'll volunteer with the Nature Conservancy to clean up garbage off the beach. To help sop up our share of the year's CO<sub>2</sub>, we will take part in a reforestation project to help plant trees.

Meanwhile, I'll research and answer many of the niggling questions that have had us and everyone we know throwing our hands in the air when trying to do less harm to the environment. Do you do more harm by living in the country or the city? Is it better to drive a thousand miles or take an airplane? Is it really true that the tiniest moped, because of its lack of a catalytic converter, causes more pollution than an SUV? Could we all, by video conferencing, virtual collaboration and tele-commuting, cut down our travel enough to cause a worthwhile reduction in carbon emissions? What, exactly, comprises sufficient individual effort that, if taken by each of us, would save the planet?

During the course of the year, Michelle, Isabella and I will traverse the range of lifestyles from making a limited number of concessions to the environment to becoming eco-extremists. This means that when we're done, we can reenter the world of normal consumerdom equipped to decide which parts of our no impact lifestyle we're willing to keep and which ones we're not. In other words, in addition to the no impact year, we'll have figured out our way forward.

#### About The Author

Colin Beavan is 43 years old. Michelle is 39. Both of them are writers. Colin's current project is the *No Impact Man* weblog. Colin can be reached at [noimpactman@gmail.com](mailto:noimpactman@gmail.com).



#### Related Resources

- [Not Buying It: My Year Without Shopping](#)
- [Our Ecological Footprint](#)

- **Radical Simplicity**

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## "Green" Shopping

### The Compact

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*Editor's Note: This article is an excerpt from The SF Compact weblog at [sfcompact.blogspot.com](http://sfcompact.blogspot.com).*

I did this radio show on Monday that actually pitted "green" shopping advocates against the anti-consumerist / simple lifer mindset. It was not a positive experience for me in the moment, but it's meant that folks are pressing me to talk about this so here's a bit of how I approach this.

**The Compact** was a challenge to not buy new products for one year. We made a few exceptions, but the point was to reduce our personal landfill contributions among other things.

We advocate reducing consumption because it is evident that the American standard of living is not tenable on a global scale: there are not enough resources available for all of the 6.7 billion people on earth to have the average American lifestyle. Even if we made all products environmentally friendly, there would still be inequity in their distribution because there is not enough to go around. Thus, as the "green" products market explodes, I do not feel that I now have license to buy the unnecessary junk that's being marketed.

This problem is pronounced for my household as we cannot afford to buy into this market of "ethical" goods. We couldn't buy a new refrigerator, even if our landlord said it was okay. If we can't, as Americans in their twenties with college degrees, then it seems like a fallacy to think this is what will preserve rare species, slow climate change, and create sustainable communities across the planet.

Rather the "green" market seems like a continuation of over-consumption that's designed to eliminate the responsibility one may feel about the realistic footprint and lifespan of a product. It's the same market approach that brought us to the threshold upon which we now stand. If I have to buy new, then sure, I'll buy the "green" product. But I won't fool myself into thinking I need a personal espresso machine just because I can get one that barely draws any watts.

My framework with respect to over-consumption reflects a need for community based solutions. Rather than everyone having a personal espresso machine, I think we're much better off walking to the local coffee shop with our cups in hand. "Green" shopping is a continuation of the individualist paradigm that has led so many of us to think each home needs its own steam cleaner and chainsaw, even if those items are only used every six months.

Once we have all of these products, we've long forgotten that their materials were extracted, they were assembled, shipped, marketed, and then used. Each of these steps has an impact, and I sincerely doubt that each one is being made "green".

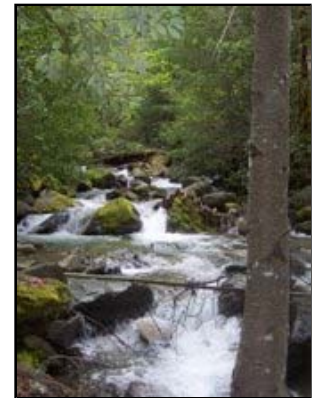
So for me, if I want something, I'll first decide whether I really need it. If I have to shop, I'll try used first. (And you might be shocked at even the "green" products you can find used. Just look at [Craig's List](#) for an energy star refrigerator.)

*Posted by Rachel, August 1, 2007*

#### About The Compact

**The San Francisco Compact** is a group of individuals who have committed to not buy anything new for a period of one year. Instead, they borrow, barter, or buy used to satisfy their needs. This original Compact has spawned a multitude of other similar Compacts among other individuals in many regions of the world, from Halifax to Hong Kong.

#### Related Resources



- [Not Buying It: My Year Without Shopping](#)
- [Our Ecological Footprint](#)
- [Radical Simplicity](#)

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## Won't You Be My Neighbor? The Smart Simple Woman

By **Gretchen Roberts**

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*Editor's Note: This article is an excerpt from the Smart Simple Woman weblog at [blog.smartsimplewoman.com](http://blog.smartsimplewoman.com).*

Moving to the South has given me a new appreciation for an old piece of American architecture: the front porch. Unfortunately, the porch isn't status quo in new developments, but if you're lucky enough to have one you know how integral the porch is to building community. A porch is more than simply a place to sit; it's the transition between the public neighborhood and your private home, where you can people-watch, make friends, or hang out in peace. It's a great way to force yourself out of the isolation that the house and private backyard encourage.



Last week a huge, old tree fell on our neighbor's house. Despite living across the street from her for a year and a half, we hadn't had the opportunity to meet until I saw her the next morning sitting on her stoop, waiting for someone to help her get back inside the house (the tree fell just as she came out to investigate the noise, and she was hurt slightly and sent to the hospital). She told me that she hadn't felt comfortable calling friends on the other side of town to help her in the middle of the night, and I was profoundly sorry that she wasn't comfortable enough to call on us, either. I hope our new acquaintance will change that.

A 2006 study called "**Social Isolation in America**" delves into the problem of lack of friendships - a full 25 percent of Americans have no one with whom they can discuss personal problems, and the average number of close confidantes has dropped from 3 to 2 since 1985. The researchers explain the phenomenon by saying there has been a sizable shift away from ties formed in neighborhood or community contexts.

In other words, we don't know our neighbors. We commute to work straight out of the garage, work a long day, drive home, park in the garage, walk in the garage door, and park ourselves in front of the TV, having seen or talked to no one. Even the McMansion is big enough to keep us separated from our own families (though to be fair, the study notes that spouses have gotten closer even as we've lost our friends).

Toward the end, the social isolation study notes that not knowing your neighbors may simply be a shift toward communicating with different, not fewer, people, via cell phones, the Internet, and other technologies. It's nice to have hundreds of friends on **Facebook**, but if a tree falls on your house, do you have a door to knock on?



A simple question: Do you know your neighbors?

### About The Author

Gretchen Roberts is a freelance magazine writer, mom, and wife with a modern, balanced life. She writes regularly on her weblog at [blog.smartsimplewoman.com](http://blog.smartsimplewoman.com). She can be reached by email at [gr@smartsimplewoman.com](mailto:gr@smartsimplewoman.com).

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