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Simple Living News

Simple Living News — Issue #72 — September-October 2009

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OnLine Study Groups

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



Registration In Progress
Next Course: September 22, 2009

Introduction & Announcements

Could There Be A Positive Side To The Recession?

During the past few months I've had the opportunity to speak with other practitioners of simple living about the impact of the recession in their lives. One theme which has emerged over and over again is a feeling of gratitude that *already knowing* how to live within one's means has helped to lessen the impact of these challenging times.

No doubt. Times are tough. There are plenty of folks who have had to adjust their lifestyle out of necessity. This time of transition has been difficult if not downright painful for many. Forced or *involuntary* simplicity is seldom fun. Our thoughts are with those who *are* suffering through what is shaping up to be a very long recovery. At this early stage, it is even difficult to say what a recovery will look like and how radically different our world may be a few years down the road.

Is it possible this recession can be turned into an opportunity to make permanent changes in our collective habits of consumption? Could we be headed for an entirely new way of doing things? If so, can we collectively see this as a positive thing for ourselves and our planet?

From an environmental perspective, the changes being made — large or small, voluntary or involuntary — may ultimately be good for the planet. In my community here are some of the positive signs I've begun to see...

- reduced consumption of consumer goods simply for the sake of consumption
- increases in personal savings rates
- the paying down of debt
- less travel = reduced gas consumption



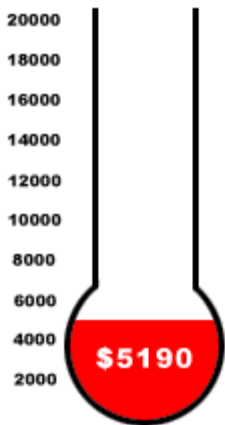
Be A CyberAngel

Support The Community Services On This Web Site



+ Why We Need Your Help
+ Make A Contribution
+ View The Hall Of Fame

How Are We Doing?



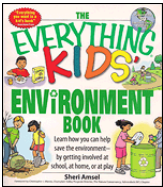
As Of: 09/02/09

"How you spend your money is how you vote on what exists in the world."

Featured Resources

Our most popular resources.

[The Everything Kids' Environment Book](#)



Find out what you can do every day to help protect our planet. Whether you are in the classroom, surfing the Internet, or just hanging out with your friends, you can make a difference.

[Purchase More Info](#)

Item #EEKEB
\$7.95

[The Ultimate Cheapskate's Road](#)

- more community gardens and local eating
- more bartering, borrowing and sharing
- more community events and celebrations

The list is much longer; I could expound upon each item more than the space here allows. I imagine most of you can point to similar examples in your own neighborhood. I hope you will be inspired and take whatever action you can to participate and, as Gandhi said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

— Dave Wampler
Founder

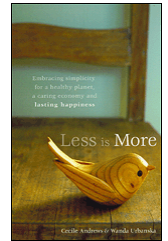
Thanks to Newsletter Editor Fred Ecks who pointed out that my observations appear to mimic the recent macroeconomic behavior of the nation as a whole. See [The New York Times](#).

Two New Resources Of Note

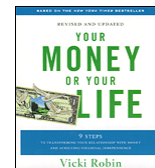
For practitioners of simple living and voluntary simplicity, September 1st saw the release of two new resources that might be of particular interest...

- [Less Is More: Embracing Simplicity For A Healthy Planet, A Caring Economy & Lasting Happiness](#) — edited and compiled by Cecile Andrews and Wanda Urbanska.

This is an impressive collection of essays from wise authors... authors who have known for years that the path to economic stability, environmental restoration and creating vibrant, healthy communities can be found by learning to do more with less. A must read in these challenging times.



- [Your Money Or Your Life: 9 Steps To Transforming Your Relationship With Money & Achieving Financial Independence](#) — Audio CD with Vicki Robin.



Author Vicki Robin shares the nine-step program originally created with her teaching partner Joe Dominguez, which has helped nearly three quarters of a million people worldwide reach new levels of comfort, competence, and consciousness around their personal finances.

Alternatives For Simple Living 2009 Resource Guide

Introducing the [2009 Alternatives Resource Guide](#) featuring over 100 new books and tools for simple living — both faith-based and secular. This [2009 Guide](#) is available in a PDF format for printing and a web-based version for on-line ordering.



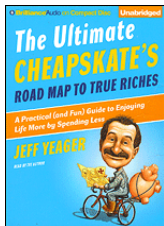
Organized in 1973 as a protest against the commercialization of Christmas, [Alternatives for Simple Living](#) encourages people of faith to examine and challenge our consumer society. Their most popular resource, [Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?](#) has also been updated for 2009 and is now available for individual or bulk, congregational purchases.

The Simple Living Network began a partnership with [Alternatives for Simple Living](#) in 2008 to provide this like-minded, faith-based organization on-line order fulfillment assistance.

Thank You CyberAngels!

As always, thank you to all of the [CyberAngels](#) out there who, even in these tough economic times, have found a few extra dollars here and there to help support this web site and keep it commercial free. We're still behind on reaching our 2009 goal. So, if you are able, [please help by making a](#)

[Map To True Riches](#)



It used to be that "stuff" made you cool. That is so twentieth century. This book lays out the practices and principles that have made cheap the new cool.

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\$12.95

[The Tree](#)



An 800-year-old Douglas fir ponders the many things it has seen in the natural world as it hears the bulldozers coming, and then some people arrive to save it from destruction.

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

Item #ETREE
\$16.95

[Whole Green Catalog](#)



The 1,000 best things for you and the earth -- in the style of the "Whole Earth Catalog."

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

Item #EWGC
\$29.99

contribution you feel is appropriate. Without your voluntary support this web site would not exist.

Your Money or Your Life Study Group Update

We are excited to announce that the **Study Guide for Groups or Individuals** and our On-Line Study Groups for following the nine-step program in **Your Money or Your Life** have now been updated to coincide with both the 2nd and new 3rd edition of **Your Money or Your Life**.



The On-Line Study Group process is perfect for folks who do not have access to a local Study Group, find it difficult to attend face-to-face meetings on a regular basis, or for those who wish to maintain the anonymity provided by the Internet. If you are unfamiliar with this great on-line course for transforming the way you think about, earn and spend money, **we invite you to take a free tour**.

The next class begins September 22nd!

Enjoy & Thanks Again!

We hope you enjoy the Newsletter. Again, thank you CyberAngels. Thank you Fred Ecks and Ann Haebig who have once again assembled an impressive, wide-ranging collection of articles. Thank you to all of the authors who have contributed.

Dave Wampler
Founder
The Simple Living Network

Simple Living News is produced by Dave Wampler and The Simple Living Network, edited by Fred Ecks and Ann Haebig. Copyright © The Simple Living Network. All Rights Reserved.

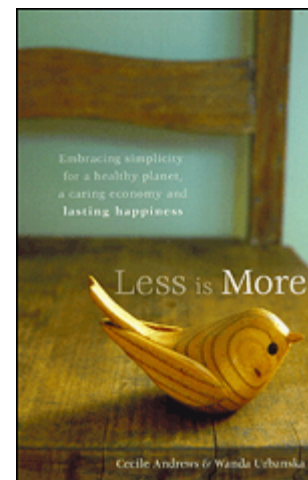
The Simple Living News — A User-Supported Service — Please Do Your Part

New Resources

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

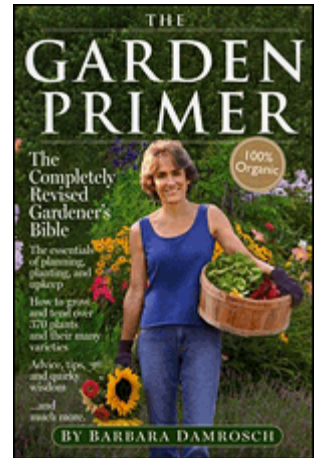
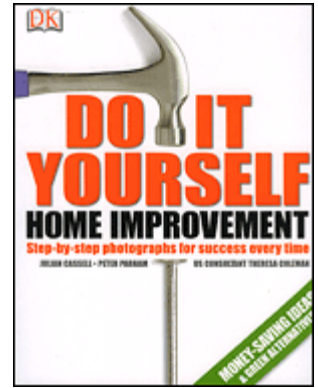
New Resources For Simple Living, Money, Investing, Financial Planning & Sustainability

- **The Happy Minimalist: Financial Independence, Good Health & A Better Planet For Us All — Now Available As A Paperback!**
- **Less Is More: Embracing Simplicity For A Healthy Planet, A Caring Economy & Lasting Happiness — Highly Recommended!**
- **Mortgage Free! Innovative Strategies For Debt-Free Home Ownership (New, Revised 2nd Edition) — Highly Recommended!**
- **Shop Class As Soulcraft: An Inquiry Into The Value Of Work**
- **Treehouse Perspectives: Living High On Little**
- **Your Money Or Your Life — New Audio CD by author Vicki Robin explaining 9 steps to transforming your relationship with money and achieving financial independence.**



New Resources For Green Living, Cooking, Gardening & Country Living

- [Do It Yourself Home Improvement: Step-By-Step Photographs For Success Every Time](#)
- [The Everything Kids Environment Book: Learn How You Can Help The Environment By Getting Involved At School, At Home, Or At Play](#)
- [Future Scenarios: How Communities Can Adapt To Peak Oil & Climate Change](#)
- [Gaia's Garden: A Guide To Home-Scale Permaculture — 2nd Edition](#)
- [The Garden Primer: The Completely Revised Gardener's Bible — Highly Recommended!](#)
- [Give Peace A Deadline: What Ordinary People Can Do To Cause World Peace In Five Years — Highly Recommended!](#)
- [Green, Greener, Greenest: A Practical Guide To Making Eco-Smart Choices A Part Of Your Life](#)
- [Herbal Recipes For Vibrant Health: 175 Teas, Tonics, Oils, Salves, Tinctures & Other Natural Remedies For The Entire Family](#)
- [Recycle: A Handbook For Kids](#)
- [Secrets Of Feeding A Healthy Family: How To Eat, How To Raise Good Eaters, How To Cook](#)
- [The Transition Handbook: From Oil Dependency To Local Resilience](#)
- [The Tree: A Children's Story](#)
- [Turn Me On: 100 Easy Ways To Use Solar Energy](#)
- [Whole Green Catalog: 1,000 Best Things For You & The Earth](#)
- [You Are Here: Exposing The Vital Link Between What We Do & What That Does To Our Planet](#)



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

Letting Go Treehouse Perspectives

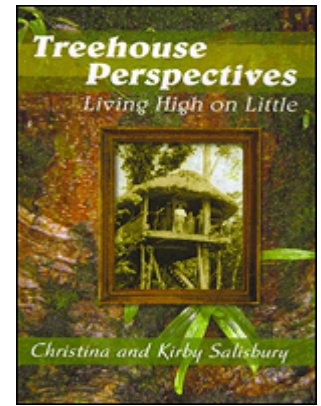
By Christina Salisbury
Copyright © 2009

When I was small I was pressed by my grandmother to eat the last bites of cereal in my bowl because there were starving children in the world — a mixed message if there ever was one. Essentially she was telling me to be grateful, but I ended up with a lot of guilt.

When I came into my late twenties I began to feel restless and discontented, a rumbling in my soul. My world was pressing in on me,

a jumble of urban noise and extravagance, one in which I didn't know how to raise my children — one in which I felt I was "eating" more than my share.

Subconsciously and then consciously, I began to prepare a way out. It was a process of learning to understand what my gut reactions were telling me. With time I began to realize I was dying mentally, emotionally and even physically, but especially spiritually from the "American Dream" and its demand to over-consume. Luckily, in sharing my growing uneasiness with my husband, he came to similar conclusions of his own. We began to look for alternatives together.



We looked for land out in the country but couldn't afford the high real estate prices. We tried to fit into various churches, joined discussion groups, and read extensively about the issues of the times: the Viet Nam war, the Hippy Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement, and the first whisperings of environmental crisis. Meanwhile, we tried to improve our quality of life by escaping Los Angeles on the weekends — not such an easy task.

Then an opportunity came our way that was so out of context from our life's pattern that we couldn't ignore it. We ended up on a quick trek into Central America, and immediately knew that this was just the experience we needed — an opportunity to gain a fresh perspective. We took a leap of faith, sold our house, quit our jobs, took the children out of school, packed up what we thought were essentials, and... left.

We didn't expect the "experience" to become a way of life, but now thirty-six years later, I do not regret that "impulsive move" in the least. What I do realize is that it was not necessary for us to leave, but only to have found the courage to seek a more simple life, one honed down to basics, one that respects each life force (animal or plant) for its necessary role in the larger scheme. We found that such a life gave us all the challenge and satisfaction we could ever need or want. To live simply, within nature's rules, not only makes our life more meaningful but may leave resources for our grandchildren. Just as important, it may allow each child on the earth to count on having at least one bowl of cereal every day. My Grandmother would be proud.

About The Author

Christina Salisbury was born in California and met Kirby at college in Billings, Montana. They married and went west for graduate school where Kirby received a Masters in Organic Chemistry. Meanwhile they had two children. After graduation they moved to the Los Angeles area and after seven years, to Belize, Central America where they still live. They built and lived in a treehouse for several years, operated a small woodworking business for 25 years, and built a schooner and lived aboard for 15 years. They spend most of their summers on the family farm in Montana, where their children and grandchildren have migrated. In April they published a memoir of their first decade in British Honduras (Belize), entitled *Treehouse Perspectives*. Christina and Kirby maintain a website at www.TreehousePerspectives.com.



Related Resources

- [Treehouse Perspectives](#)
- [Bringing Nature Home](#)
- [Siesta Lane](#)
- [The Happy Minimalist - Book](#)
- [The Happy Minimalist - PDF eBook](#)
- [Loving & Leaving The Good Life](#)

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Get Small Dream. Invest. Live.

By Tom Trimbath
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Editor's Note: This article is an excerpt from Tom Trimbath's "Dream. Invest. Live." weblog at <http://www.trimbathcreative.com/dreaminvestlive/Blog/Blog.html>, reprinted with permission.

The view from one end of my house to the other is uninterrupted. Is it a trick, or an example of exemplary architecture? Nope. It's a tiny house that was built decades ago to fit on a tiny lot. As I type this, with my feet up in my living room sitting near the south wall, the only wall between me and the north end of the house is the backside of the kitchen cabinets. I'm thinking of removing them as part of a kitchen remodel.

My house is 840 square feet. The lot is 7,000 square feet. It is only one story because my neighborhood has a 14 foot height restriction (which many violate).

It is, without a doubt, home. I've never lived anywhere more comfortable or appealing.

[Zillow.com](http://www.zillow.com) is a real estate web site with an interesting feature called, "Make Me Move". That feature lets a home owner set whatever outlandish price would be required to get them to sell, even if they aren't thinking of moving. I hesitate to put in a price as low as \$750,000 because I'm afraid someone would take it.

Two and a half years ago I bought the house for about \$295,000. The appraisal agrees.

Living in a small house has its ideological advocates. Small houses require fewer resources to build and maintain. They use up less land. They cost less to build. The dollars per square foot are higher, but there are fewer square feet. [Sarah Susanka](#) has written a sweet set of books extolling their virtues.

Those intellectual arguments are fine, but I don't think I could appreciate those reasons without having lived in a series of 2,500 square foot chunks of suburbia.

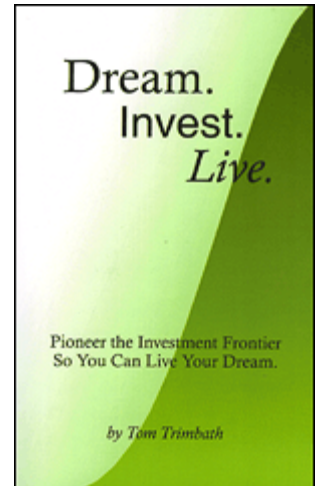
I've come to realize that a small house is more like the warm hug of a friend, than the polite embrace of an acquaintance.

Pragmatically, a small house has lower maintenance. Sweeping, dusting, window washing, painting, are all proportionally reduced. For me, that means I spend a third as much time doing chores. Even the cleaning supplies are simpler and cheaper. I have hardwood floors. A dust mop does the job quickly and is much cheaper and almost infinitely quieter than a vacuum cleaner. It takes up less room and is much less likely to break. Two-thirds of the time spent cleaning is now freed up to do other things. Also, because the chore is one-third the size, it isn't as onerous, and is more likely to get done, which results in a nicer house.

Heating costs are lower, and they are so much lower than I found that it didn't cost much or use much energy to raise the temperature a couple of degrees. So, instead of my heating costs shrinking 66% to maintain the same temperature, my heating costs are reduced about 60% and I end up with a more comfortable life. A smaller house also has fewer opportunities for gaps in the insulation, so there are fewer drafts. (But not in this house. Single pane windows and a permanently open damper make sure I have ventilation, even in winter. There're always chores to do, eh?)

Silly, handy things: lost keys can't go as far, the dust bunnies have fewer places to hide, candles or flowers in every room don't cost a fortune, everything is close at hand, a whole house sound system can be one boombox in the living room.

I've [written](#) about my small house before, on the eve of a party. A smaller house makes it easier to have parties. They are easier to get ready for, and if nothing else, the obligatory house tour takes



about 90 seconds at most. By standing in the right place in the hallway, I can show a guest every room except the kitchen, and they probably walked through that when they came in. There's less confusion about where to hang coats, where to put the food, where to find the drinks. That day of that previous weblog post ended with 30 people here, three dance floors (living room = swing, office = slow, carport = latin, with waltz thrown in randomly). That never happened in any of my bigger houses.

Living in a small house has inspired me to consider other small aspects of my life. I keep less stuff, and rarely miss anything that I gave away. I find that small gifts are more appreciated than large ones. I even appreciate my small SUV because it can go places the big ones can't. Certain mountain roads get very narrow as they cut along thousand foot cliffs.

Similar advantages sprout from having a small yard. I won't write about them today, but you may be able to imagine less time weeding while still having enough room for flowers, herbs, vegetables, and small fruit trees. (Yields are low because of my gardening skills, not because there isn't enough room.)

Buying small has also had some large implications. I live in a neighborhood that has million dollar houses, saltwater waterfront, a marina, and views of mountains and the Puget Sound. My house cost \$1,500,000 less than the most expensive house that's for sale. I saved a million and a half dollars and all it cost me is a half mile walk if I want to improve my already pleasant view, or to launch my kayak.

Each anecdotal bit of evidence can be quaint and cute, but living in a small house delivers all of them at once. Each homeowner finds their own. It is a dramatic change, and one that some find difficult to experience, but it is worth the reward. A person who gives up the big house that they live in can gain a home that allows more time for living.

(Thanks to a [friend](#) who inspired this article. I'll write more about this, particularly my guess of the impact this trend may have on buying habits, real estate, lifestyles, etc. But first, there are a few chores to tackle. The number of dishes to wash hasn't changed.)

About The Author

Tom Trimbath is the author of "[Dream. Invest. Live.](#)", and maintains a website at www.TrimbathCreative.com. Tom can be reached by email at tetrimbath@whidbey.com.



Related Resources

- [Dream. Invest. Live.](#)
- [The Not So Big House](#)
- [The Not So Big Life](#)
- [Little House On A Small Planet](#)
- [Get Satisfied!](#)
- [The Ultimate Cheapskate's Road Map To True Riches](#)
- [The Ultimate Cheapskate's Road Map To True Riches \(Audio CDs\)](#)

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

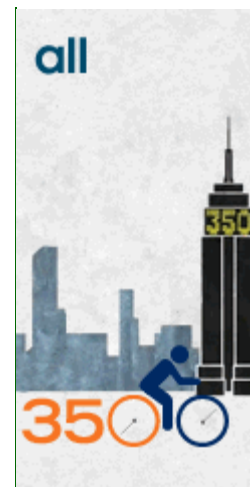
October 24th Day Of Climate Action 350.org

By Bill McKibben
Copyright © 2009

350.org is an international campaign dedicated to building a movement to unite the world around solutions to the climate crisis — the solutions that justice demands.

Our mission is to inspire the world to rise to the challenge of the climate crisis — to create a new sense of urgency and of possibility for our planet.

In order to unite the public, media, and our political leaders behind the 350 goal, we're harnessing the power of the Internet to coordinate a planetary



day of action on October 24, 2009. We hope to have actions at hundreds of iconic places around the world — from the Taj Mahal, to the Great Barrier Reef, to your community. We will send a clear message to world leaders: the solutions to climate change must be equitable, they must be grounded in science, and they must meet the scale of the crisis.

If an international grassroots movement holds our leaders accountable to the latest climate science, we can start the global transformation we so desperately need.

[Click here to join us at 350.org.](http://350.org)

Related Resources

- [How To Reduce Your Carbon Footprint](#)
- [The Carbon Buster's Home Energy Handbook](#)
- [Winning Our Energy Independence](#)
- [Low Carbon Diet](#)
- [The Carbon-Free Home](#)
- [The Human-Powered Home](#)

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

The Seven P's Of Simplicity Less Is More

By Cecile Andrews
Copyright © 2009

With our ongoing recession, people are being forced to cut back on their spending, and some are finding that they like it. They sense that there is another way to live rather than as a desperate consumer "getting and spending." We Simplicity advocates need to take this time to help people understand what Voluntary Simplicity is. We need to introduce people to a new way of thinking, or they'll just go back to their habits of consumerism.

But how do we talk about Voluntary Simplicity? People tend to think that Simplicity is simple — that it means easy — and they complain if something seems to take longer than the "normal" way. ("How can it be simple to cook your own food rather than buy a TV dinner?" they ask.) But Simplicity isn't simple — it's a complex idea, and we need to find clear ways to explain it. I've come up with some ideas that help me: I see Simplicity as having seven levels: Practical, Philosophical, People, Planet, Process, Policies, and Perspective.

First, the practical level — the one we're all familiar with. Here people focus on cutting back on consumption. They shop less, turn their heat down, drive less, and are careful with the energy they use around the house.

When people do this, they often find they have more time. This brings in the philosophical level — time for what? I like to think of it as "time for the things that matter." But what are the "things that matter"? Each person must decide this for themselves by spending time in reflection and contemplation. Thus, Voluntary Simplicity becomes "the examined life," and we learn to make conscious choices instead of being manipulated.



In particular, we need to think about what brings us happiness and well being. The research is clear. Happiness doesn't come from being rich, as most Americans believe. After a certain point, more money doesn't bring us happiness. The essential core of happiness is our relationship with other people. To lure people away from the malls, we need to focus on creating community. Around the world, people are building local and neighborhood community. An example of this can be found at <http://www.transitiontowns.org/>

Next, the focus is on the planet — it's clear that consumerism is bad for the planet: most importantly, it contributes greatly to climate change. Perhaps if we learn to first care about other people, we'll learn to care about the earth. (Maybe "caring" is an under-utilized ability that we've let get rusty.) As we learn to care for our own species, we'll learn how to care for other species.

Next, it's important to see that Voluntary Simplicity involves a very effective process of change. Too often social activists focus on the bad news, telling people the dire stories of gloom and doom. Information like this helps some people change. But there's some evidence in a new book by Tim Kasser and Tome Crompton, called *Meeting Environmental Challenges: The Role of Human Identity*, (<http://www.identitycampaigning.org/identity-campaigning-the-book/>) that giving people information that makes them anxious can cause them to go to the malls to cope with their anxiety. George Lakoff maintains that facts don't change people. He says that progressives must evoke empathy in others instead of fear as the right wing does. In fact, this is what we have always done in the Simplicity movement, for one of our central methods of change is *stories*. Most of us changed because we heard someone's story that inspired us. Many of us have been in simplicity circles where we told our stories and listened to others and learned to make changes. Most people don't change if someone lectures or shakes a finger at them; we need to be inspired by others' stories.

The next step is working for new policies. To bring about real change, we need laws that guarantee policies for things like shorter work hours. No one can be totally independent of their culture. For instance, no one can live simply if everyone around them is frantically rushing! (We now have a bill in the House that would grant us one week of paid vacation: <http://www.right2vacation.org/>)

We also need a policy that does something about the growing gap between the rich and the poor. This gap is the biggest predictor of a nation's life expectancy. Americans, who were at the top of the list of industrialized countries in the Fifties, fell to 11th in 1980, and now we're in 50th place. A large gap affects the rich as well as the poor because it creates a cutthroat society and destroys social ties. We need policies that reduce this gap.

Finally, Simplicity is a new perspective. We need a new world view that focuses not on wealth but on caring. We need to create a culture in which we realize that "we're all in this together" and reject the perspective that says it's "every man for himself."

So, Simplicity is not simple, but it is a philosophy that we can begin to clarify for people. These seven P's of Simplicity are helpful to me.

About The Author

Cecile Andrews and Wanda Urbanska recently published the new book, [Less is More: Embracing Simplicity for a Healthy Planet, a Caring Economy and Lasting Happiness](#). Cecile is a community educator, author of [Slow Is Beautiful](#), [The Circle Of Simplicity](#) and contributor to several books on living more simply and taking back our time. She and her husband are founders of Seattle's Phinney Ecovillage, a neighborhood-based sustainable community. Cecile's website is www.CecileAndrews.com.



Related Resources

- [Less Is More](#)
- [Slow Is Beautiful](#)
- [The Circle Of Simplicity](#)
- [Simple Living Season 1 DVD](#)
- [The Sharing Solution](#)
- [Take Back Your Time](#)

- Agenda For A New Economy
- Blessed Unrest
- Community
- Be The Change You Want To See In The World

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

Are We Really Depriving Our Kids?

Living On A Dime

By Jill Cooper

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Editor's Note: This article is an excerpt from the Living On A Dime Newsletter at www.LivingOnADime.com, reprinted with permission.

I often hear ladies complaining that they want to stay at home with their kids but that they "have to work since it is so expensive to raise kids these days." One of the main questions I get asked about Simple Living is, "Won't I be depriving my children if I live the frugal life?" Maybe I can answer that question with a few questions.

Am I depriving my children by having them drink water for every meal instead of juice or soda? Isn't one thing doctors are always complaining about is that we don't drink enough water?

Cutting out just one glass of soda per person per day for a family of four would save \$547.50 a year and make them healthier.

Living On A Dime
Making the most of what you have

Am I depriving my children by having them eat an apple or homemade granola bar for a snack instead of a bag of chips? Obesity is a major problem among children in the United States. If you cut out just one bag of chips a week you would save \$104.00 a year and make them healthier.

Am I depriving my children by having them walk to school or to a friend's house instead of my always driving them there? Lack of exercise is a big problem. You would save time and wear and tear on your car by having them walk, and make them healthier at the same time.

Am I depriving my children when I don't buy them every toy they see and want? We wouldn't dream of giving a baby all the chocolate that he wants because we know it would make him sick. His body can not tolerate that much chocolate even if he desires it.

In the same way, an older child can't emotionally deal with the overload of toys. I as an adult become stressed just from trying to buy a bottle of shampoo. Have you ever noticed how many options you have? Trying to make a decision can be overwhelming. Do I get it for thin, fine, dry and damaged or colored and permed hair? The list goes on and on.

When a young child looks at piles of toys, he can become very stressed over choosing which one to play with. If you watch, you will notice that they tend to play with the same couple of toys over and over. If you didn't give them all the toys they asked for and bought one less brand new toy at \$10 a week, you would save \$520.00 in one year and you would help relieve them of some stress.

It is no wonder our children stay confused. We insist that they should eat healthy, yet we take them out to eat 3-5 times a week at McDonald's. We give them a bag of carrot sticks in their lunch because it's healthy and then give them a bag of chips when they get home from school to get them off our backs.

We want them to have strong character, yet the moment they whine or cry for another toy or some candy at the store we give in out of guilt. We are afraid that if we don't give them what they want, they won't love us; so to rid ourselves of uncomfortable feelings, we say yes. How can we teach them to be strong in character when we are so weak?

How could our thinking have gotten so mixed up that we think a child is deprived if a mom chooses to stay home and not go to work? We have come to believe that moms should work outside the home so that children can have the most expensive clothes, education or material things. (Note I didn't say *best* but rather *most expensive*, since the most expensive doesn't mean the best.) If a mom goes to work so a child can have all those things it's not considered depriving the child of anything but their mom. Which do you think does a child more harm: being deprived expensive things, or their mom?

For you stay-at-home moms: Before you become too puffed up with pride, be aware that too many social, church and school activities can deprive your children of you just as much as working. Do all things in moderation.

It's better to give your kids the values you have than the valuables you can't afford.

About The Author

As a single mother of two, Jill Cooper started her own business without any capital and paid off \$35,000 debt in 5 years on \$1,000 a month income. She then raised two teenagers alone on \$500 a month income after becoming disabled with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Together with Tawra Kellam, she writes about frugal living on the www.LivingOnADime.com website.



Related Resources

- [Living Simply With Children](#)
- [Animal, Vegetable, Miracle](#)
- [Eco-Friendly Families](#)
- [Secrets Of Feeding A Healthy Family](#)
- [Anytime Game](#)
- [50 Simple Things Kids Can Do To Save The Earth](#)

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

Turnoff Week

The Center For Screen-Time Awareness

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TV and Screen Turnoff Week is September 20-26, 2009

Why Turn Off?

Screen time cuts into family time, and is a leading cause of obesity in both adults and children. Excessive use of screens for recreational purposes leads to a more sedentary and solitary lifestyle. That is unhealthy for all of us, both mentally and physically.

In the U.S. and other industrialized nations around the world, screen time continues to increase every year. The average daily usage for all screens, in some countries, has reached 9 hours per day. This is for recreational use of screens and does not include work time.

On average, people watch four hours of television and then spend another four-plus hours with computers, games, video, iPods and cell phones. According to Nielsen, the average World of Warcraft gamer plays for 892 minutes per week! The company that owns Second Life (a virtual world) claims that its users spent over one million hours on line. These statistics hold true for children-directed sites as well, including Webkinz and others.



Former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher said at the Kick Off of Turnoff Week 2001, "We are raising the most overweight generation of youngsters in American history... This week is about saving lives."

Who Participates?

Anyone and everyone. Millions of people around the world participate in Turnoff Week. Children and adults, rich and poor, people from every background and all walks of life take part through schools, churches, or community groups, as families or individuals and even at work.

What's So Great About Turnoff Week?

Turning off the screen gives us time to think, read, create, and do the things we never have time for. This allows us to connect with our families and engage in our communities. We feel good about ourselves as we grow more physically and mentally active.

Turnoff Week Works!

According to hundreds of responses to our Turnoff Week follow-up surveys, 90% of responding participants reduced their screen time as a result of participating.

Join parents, teachers, pediatricians, families, friends and neighbors by celebrating Turnoff Week 2009: September 20-26.

Turnoff Week is supported by national organizations including the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, National Education Association, and President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

To learn more, go to the Center For Screen-Time Awareness website at www.ScreenTime.org.

Related Resources

- [Unplugged](#)
- [Kill Your Television \(sticker\)](#)
- [Culture Jam](#)
- [We Know What You Want](#)

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

Gems Of The Discussion Forums
Kids, Cars, & Health Care

By Ann Haebig
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It's fall and the kids are back in school. This is a good time to point out several threads about children

in the [Family & Relationships](#) forum. People are talking about everything from schools to discipline to what to do with a whiny child.

On the lifestyle side of things, folks are talking about the [balances and compromises](#) struck between simplicity, frugality, and environmentalism. They're also [tracking food waste](#) to help [reduce spoilage at home](#), and discussing how [living on less takes practice](#).



Finances are always of interest. Current topics discuss [where to park investments](#) and debate [stocks versus bonds](#). Folks are also talking about [Warren Buffet's latest article](#) and how [European credit card use differs from use in the US](#) (historically, Europeans pay down the balance monthly, while Americans pay less than 10% of the balance).

Two political issues have been the subject of much debate on the boards lately. First, the cash for clunkers program is being discussed in the [Transportation, Environment, and Public Policy](#) forums. Is it actually good for the environment? Is it an effective incentive or poorly implemented? What about those who'd like to give up a car altogether? Next, the hot topic of the day is health care. There are numerous conversations on the subject in the [Public Policy](#) forum. This debate is critical to US readers. Readers from other countries have contributed their experiences as well. Given its nature this forum requires more moderation than the rest of the forums, and our moderators ask that folks [read the guidelines](#) for this forum before adding their voice. Join in, get informed, and inform others. See you there!

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

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 Boulder, Colorado with her partner, cat and guitar. Ann can be reached at aHaebig@pobox.com.



Related Resources

- [Chef MD's Big Book Of Culinary Medicine](#)
- [Safe Money In Tough Times](#)
- [Your Money Or Your Life](#)
- [Transforming Your Relationship With Money](#)
- [Living Simply With Children](#)
- [Green Living Handbook](#)
- [Take Back Your Time](#)
- [Work Less, Live More](#)
- [Work Less, Live More Workbook & CD](#)

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

Dollars Out The Window The Dollar Stretcher

By Gary Foreman
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Editor's Note: This article is an entry from [The Dollar Stretcher](#), reprinted with permission.

*Dear Gary,
I live in a 24-year-old house that has single-pane windows and separate storm windows. We can feel*

a draft from some of these in the wintertime even with the storms shut. We love our house and plan to stay here at least 10 years. We got an estimate for replacing all the windows upstairs, and to do the 13 windows plus the bay window and the sliding glass door. I am figuring on \$6,000. Ouch! Is it worth it? Is there a reliable way to get the windows more cheaply than Home Depot? We have insulated our attic and re-roofed but really feel that we must be losing lots of dollars "right out the window."
Sheila

Sheila asks a very timely question. Is it time to replace the windows when it's freezing outside and you can feel that cold air seeping in? How much of your money is actually leaking out those windows?

We'll begin by learning a new term: U-value. This is the measure that's used to tell how easy it is for heat to pass through a window. A lower number is better. For instance, a simple single pane of clear glass in an aluminum frame is rated at a U-value of 1.30. A double pane of clear glass in an aluminum frame with thermal break has a U-value of 0.64.

So the second window allows only half as much heat to escape as the first window. U-values all the way down to 0.15 are available if you have windows with coated glass and triple panes.

Please note that the U-value for the single-pane window was for one without a storm window. Part of the reason a storm window helps is that it is a second pane of glass. In fact, according to "Energy Savers," a booklet published by the U.S. Department of Energy, storm windows can reduce your loss of heat through windows by 25% to 50%. So Sheila's already taken the first step toward saving money.

We made a call to the Department of Energy. They have a number of experts to answer your energy questions (1-800-363-3732). Michael Lamb, an energy manager in the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Clearing House, felt that it was "really difficult to estimate savings from changing to more efficient windows." There are far too many conditions that would affect savings: the climate, amount of insulation in the home, type of heating fuel, condition of the existing windows and other factors.

One comparison of windows was provided by the Efficient Windows Collaborative, an industry group that works with the government to foster energy savings. For a typical house in Boston they show that a double pane of clear glass can cut heating cost by 30%, compared with a single pane of clear glass. Something called "Low-E" glazings or panes can reduce the cost by 41%. Again, that's for a "typical" house so don't expect your house to match those savings.

For those readers who want to do their own estimate, there is a way to get a rough idea of your savings. Begin by estimating how much you spend on heating. According to "Energy Savers," windows account for between 10% and 25% of your heating bill. So if your heating bill was \$600 each year, loss of heat through your windows would cost between \$60 and \$150. Even if you could save all of that you'd be hard pressed to recover the \$6,000 you spent on new windows. Using the info above you'd probably only save 30% to 50% of the portion of your bill attributable to your windows.

But even if your entire savings were attributed to the new windows (and that's clearly not the case) it would still take 15 years to pay for them.

Ultimately, you'll probably make your decision on more than just how much energy you'll save. You may have trouble opening and closing your windows. One other thing to remember is that if your windows are more than 25 years old, they weren't designed with energy efficiency in mind.

Suppose your windows are old and you decide to buy new energy-efficient windows. What's the best way to go about it? Obviously you want to find an honest contractor. Take the usual precautions: ask for referrals from satisfied customers and get a minimum of three bids for the job.

When buying new windows look for the National Fenestration Rate Council (NFRC) label. It means that the performance claimed for the window has been certified. In Northern climates a U-value of 0.35 or below is recommended.

There are, however, much less costly ways to cut down on those heating bills. The first is to properly



weather-strip both the storm and regular windows. Your goal is to have a sealed area between the two windows. That pocket of air saves you money.

If proper weatherizing doesn't eliminate the drafts, you might want to consider a tight-fitting insulated window shade that goes on the inside of the window. Even closing your curtains, drapes or shades will help. These options are much cheaper than replacing windows and should provide a better return on your investment.

In most cases, you'll get a bigger bang for your buck by making sure that your windows are properly weatherized and by adding insulated window shades. From a financial view, only if these steps don't solve the problem should you consider new windows. Thanks to Sheila for an interesting question. We hope she stays nice and warm this winter.

About The Author

Gary Foreman is a former financial planner and purchasing manager who currently edits The Dollar [Stretcher.com](#) website and [newsletters](#). You can also [follow Gary](#) on Twitter or on his [weblog](#).



Related Resources

- [Energy: Use Less - Save More](#)
- [Consumer Guide To Home Energy Savings](#)
- [The Carbon Buster's Home Energy Handbook](#)
- [10,001 Ways To Live Large On A Small Budget](#)
- [Green, Greener, Greenest](#)

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[The End](#)