Welcome back to Simple Life Together! On the last episode of the show we had our first Profile in Simplicity where we interviewed a long time listener and simplicity seeker Tania Ginoza of mauishopgirl.com. Profiles in Simplicity is a new segment where we feature people just like you...SLT listeners who’ve decided to simplify their life and are willing to share their story with all of us. If you’d like to share your simple living story with the whole SLT
community, we’ll tell you how later in the show. Or if writing is more your style and you’d rather author a guest post, there’s a Guest Post tab at the top of the website that explains how you can submit a post for consideration.

But on today’s show, we’re going to talk about the maintenance side of simplicity.

**Thesis Statement**
We’ve said all along that simplifying your life isn’t a one time deal...it’s a lifestyle. And as with any lifestyle or major focus area in your life, you have to nurture it and care for it, otherwise your efforts will be in vain.

**Major Takeaway** (Introduced)
So why is maintenance so important? Well, just like a car or the air conditioning unit in your home, if you do regular maintenance and tune ups on them, the less likely you are to be in a situation where you’re facing catastrophic failure...or a colossal bill to repair it! The same goes for simplifying your life. Paying attention to and doing regular simplicity checkups will go a long way in ensuring your efforts to simplify your life will last a lifetime.

First, I have to share our story on how we were inspired to talk about this today. Actually, I was the one who got
inspired to talk about this while pulling dandelions out of our front yard. Yes...dandelions were my inspiration. Just the other day, I was out in our front yard...at 7:30 in the morning...in 41 degree weather (by the way...that’s chilly here in Tejas), and I was pulling weeds. I don’t know how many folks in cars drove by and thought...what in the world is she doing? Our neighbor across the street actually said…”Hey! It’s too early to be doing that!” Now, I don’t know if he meant it’s too early in the morning or too early in the season...after all it is winter and no one is doing yard work. Ha!!!

Anyhoos...I kept digging and pulling away at those weeds and was done in only 15 minutes. Now...a little background on why I was pulling weeds and why it was so cool that it only took 15 minutes. You see...last year our front yard was nearly overrun with dandelions. Yeah, those green plants with those pretty, fuzzy white balls on top...that break apart and float away...even in the slightest and faintest of breezes. Those little white fuzzy balls that no child can resist blowing on. So cute and innocent for them, yes....but complete horror for me because those pretty, fuzzy little things floating in the air, have a way of multiply, multiply, multiply! And the only thing you can do to get rid of them is either completely rip up your yard, or
pluck them out….one...by one...till your hands are numb and callused from digging and digging and digging. So, I decided to dig (actually Dan’s ex-wife started to dig to show me just what had to be done) and well.....12 + hours later I got most of them up. Success! The ones that remained got choked out by the St Augustine grass thanks to a reasonable amount of rain we got in the spring and summer. It was a lot of work but worth the effort!

Well, it’s winter now, and these weeds are considered winter weeds for us here and so, as the grass has turned yellow and gone dormant, the green dandelions are starting to pop up here and there. But not for long because...now the weeds are at a manageable level, where I only need to put forth a little effort every now and again to maintain control. So as I finished plucking those weeds I thought, how cool it is to be able to take care of these little buggers in just a few minutes instead of hours and days. And right there....with that thought...is how I got inspired to talk about the maintenance side of simplicity.

Alright, so you see how excited Vanessa is about yard maintenance....let's talk about how maintenance pertains to living a simple life. So, we all know what maintenance
is... actions, routines or systems you put in place in order to keep things functioning smoothly in your life. Maintenance is like getting a tune up. You might even consider maintenance like getting and an extended warranty, only instead paying a fee up front to cover when systems fall apart, you are paying in terms of your time and effort to hopefully keep the systems running smoothly. And the reality is, if you’re consistent with your maintenance efforts, it really won’t cost you that much time or effort.

Yes...and we talk about maintenance all the time in my line of work. It’s actually the final step in the organizing process. Well it’s not really a final step because the organizing process is cyclical. After editing and organizing a space, I try to set up a maintenance plan to help keep the space organized. Some things I use to help maintain a space are: setting up routines, defining roles and responsibilities, setting up reminders to perform maintenance tasks and even setting up dates for either the client or me to visit and evaluate how a system is working or not. Now, for some of my clients, maintenance means having an organizer visit and reorganize a space on a recurring basis and to shjush (Dan) things up a bit...instead of waiting until the situation is out of control and a major effort to get it back to normal.....and that can
work too. You can outsource the maintenance.

**Maintenance can also be tools or habits.** For example, setting up a desktop Action file to manage your daily mail is a tool to help maintain the influx of papers. That’s what we do in our house and what you do all the time with your clients, right babe? Now, checking the Action File on a daily basis and clearing it out on a weekly basis is a habit and routine.

**Also, practicing the one-in-one out rule** for your clothes, toys or any other item you bring into your life is another tool or habit to help maintain the balance in your home.

So that kind of gives us an understanding of how maintenance is a process and can be used as a tool or habit and routine. **When it comes to living a life of simplicity there are a ton of areas where you can use maintenance as a tool.**

That reminds me...there’s a great book and audiobook you should check out that fits right in here. It’s called “Work the System” by Sam Carpenter and you can find it at WorkTheSystem.com. Sam’s systems mindset fits right in with what we’re saying here and every time we talk about systematizing things when you simplify your life.
So, why don’t we now look at some of those areas now?

Your routines. These are a key part in maintaining your simple lifestyle...they kind of go hand in hand.

- Like your morning routine...this helps you maintain a smooth start to every day
- Or school routines...they ensure your family stays in a rhythm and consistent with completing and turning in homework assignments, projects, etc...with little stress.
- Workout and fitness routines are another example....obviously maintaining a routine will help keep your fitness and health in check.
- And on the job, office routines are important...whatever tasks or responsibilities you have a work, setting up routines to make sure you stay on task can help counter procrastination and stress as well as help you maintain your productivity.
- SOPs and job books. Standard vs Standing.

Now, our routines require maintenance too. I think the natural times to evaluate your routines are:

- When there is a major life event or change to your normal rhythm...like the start of a new school year, a new job, a move, or the desire to start a lifestyle
routine like with your diet or fitness.

- And you may need to do a little maintenance on your routines when....they don’t seem to be working:
  - Like when your fitness and meal planning fall off track
  - Or when your routines may seem like it should work but just doesn’t. (Example of Dan and I switching morning routine again)

Digital Clutter. This is one where if you don’t do regular maintenance, it can catch up to you quick!

We’ve talked about the importance of setting up systems to maintain control of:

- photos. SLT 040 and Vanessa’s video
- your email inbox. SLT 012, Sun Tzu & the Art of Inbox Warfare
- mobile device apps, etc. SLT 026: Spring Cleaning Your Home, Life & Tech

It’s a good idea to maintain control of your digital by either setting up routines to sort and edit them, or resist the temptation to save or upload unnecessary app, documents, photos, etc.

The same thing goes with Paper Clutter. Maintenance of your paper files can be in the form of:
● Making a routine of checking and sorting your mail and papers on a daily basis.
● Using a desktop Action File as a tool to help you sort and get your to-dos done.
● Editing and organizing your permanent files on an annual basis is another form of maintenance.
● Editing kids’ homework, art and keepsakes on a daily basis.
● Or simply resisting the temptation to print out papers that can remain as a digital file, or collecting papers, flyers and other swag at stores and conferences, etc. That mindset will help maintain the influx of stuff you’ll have to deal with later.

And of course, maintenance of your Physical Space is key to simplicity:
● Like spring cleaning...if you actually do it ;o) But think of Spring Cleaning as a mindset...a home detox. Cleaning up, cleaning out your physical spaces and things will not only extend the lifespan of products..but will help maintain a peaceful environment.

● It’s like our Edit and Forget It Challenge, which has been an all year spring cleaning project! We did a
major edit of our garage last year...but we’ll keep revisiting it. Because lifestyles change, things come and go...and it just makes sense to revisit your things and spaces in order to maintain them.

And the last thing to consider when thinking about the maintenance side of simplicity is to...well...do a Life Plan or Lifestyle Review. Matter of fact, we’re doing our annual lifeplan review to make sure we’re still on track with our simplicity goals. Heck, we know our lives have changed quite a bit...even our ideas of simplicity change each year...but it’s that annual review that keeps us on our general path. And it can for you too.

Major Takeaway (Reinforced)
So the bottom line is that maybe the way to think about maintenance is not as a chore but more of an investment in your life of simplicity. Consider it your extended warranty to guarantee a simpler life. Setting up routines and systems to edit and control you the things in your life will go a long to ensure your efforts to simplify your life will last a lifetime.

Question for the Listeners/Readers:
So, have you considered the maintenance side of your simple life? What systems, routines and tools do you use
to keep your life simple. And if you haven’t thought about maintenance before, what areas of your life do you think could benefit from establishing a maintenance system? We’d love to know.

So, be sure to leave a comment and share at SimpleLifeTogether.com/058.

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**Thing Segment:**

**Dan:** I’m not buying socks for the rest of my life!

- I know it’s sounds stupid, but sometimes it’s the little things that make life simpler!
- I found some amazing merino wool socks, made here in the US that are guaranteed for life. They’re actually cheaper than the SmartWool socks I used to buy, which I loved when new, but they wore out too quickly. These new ones are awesome...I swear they’re bulletproof, they feel great, fit right into our shift to mostly travel-style outfits for our Project 333 capsule outfits, and again, have a no questions asked guarantee. I love them! I’ll be sure to put a link in the shownotes in you’re interested.

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**Qs and Comments:** Where we get to answer or talk about what you write to us!
Pam wrote:

I'm quite sure I am not in your normal demographics - I am a retired schoolteacher, however, I wanted to let you know how much I've benefited by your knowledge and expertise.

My core belief of *people before things* needs to be reflected more in my actions, and your podcasts have given me much help along those lines.

You and Dan are so genuine that I get great enjoyment listening to you.

So Vanessa, be encouraged at how your contributions and work are helping people far and wide.

And Kate wrote:

I'm not exaggerating to say that your podcast has changed my life. Every day I feel more and more free when I get rid of stuff, and I've stop spending money on things I don't want, which has allowed me to save
more and work less. Now I have enough free time to write this letter. I see a world of possibility for my future, and now there is no turning back.

I think people often participate in over consumption because everyone else is doing it, but when one person says "hey, let's get off this stupid dance floor" some people want to, but just don't think they are allowed to, or they will be criticized. I've always felt like somewhat of an oddball because I don't own a car (I ride a bike), or carry a cell phone (I make calls on my desktop computer). I also don't have cable TV. Most people don't realize you can still get TV stations with an antenna without cable, (but I still feel it is a waste of my precious time left on earth).

After listening to your podcast, I realize I'm not an oddball at all, in fact maybe I'm the future of the country! And at 54 I could use the bicycle exercise. Why pay money to ride an exercise bike at the gym when I could actually ride a real one and get somewhere. Recently, we had a major rain storm and I was happy to ride to the grocery store wearing my $5 Goodwill raincoat and $7 rain pants. And I didn't get wet. It was fun like it used to be when I was 10 years old.
I also wanted to say how much I appreciate that you don't bring political issues into your podcast, or assume your listeners are from any religion, ethnicity, gender, political group or age. Being a Berkeley Vegetarian, I must admit I never thought I would have much in common with a Texas military family who goes fishing (I say this with a smile), but now I see that the commitment to living a simple life can have positive effects in people's lives for multiple reasons. Some people might cut back on buying things for environmental reasons, for religious reasons, or for financial reasons. We can still all support each other while we ride the train together, even though we are going to different cities. Thanks so much, Kate.

And we got a ton of great comments on our first guest blog post by Lara Blair of TheExtraOrdinarySimpleLife.com. Her post was terrific and I just love the way she writes so I left a comment too. Here's her reply:

Thank you so much for the opportunity, Vanessa. I'm a big fan of all that you two do. Your podcasts are such a treat on my runs (as a runner, I know you know the value of something that can take your mind
off aching muscles!)

Looking forward to the exciting things coming up on your blog and podcast. BTW, don't stop saying "anymows"...it's sweet and part of your charm :)

This week Sheryl and Dave Baltrop from SimpleLifeReboot.com will be guest posting. Look for that on Wednesday!

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iTunes Reviews

Also from Lara Blair at TheExtraOrdinarySimpleLife.com wrote:

I think I might be gaining a reputation as “The Giggling Runner” because this podcast always make me laugh & smile during my weekend runs. I really look forward to hearing Dan and Vanessa each week with their just-my-size approach to simplifying life. They are the perfect example of how to rationally go about minimizing and show the rest of us how go about it with practical tips, wise insight and humor (my favorite part). Their mutual respect and love for each other shines through in their banter. I think it’s a great example for married folk to show how to lift each other up and grow in the process of
uncovering what’s important. I always come away from their podcast feeling like I, too, can create the life I’ve dreamed of…one that is based on faith, relationships, satisfying work, and family adventure. I was so inspired by their journey, that my own photography blog morphed into one about my family’s journey to simplicity. TheExtraOrdinarySimpleLife.com was born and I have the Hayes’ to thank!

NerdsNextDoor from here in the States wrote: Enjoyable, relatable & realistic. This is an enjoyable podcast offering relatable, realistic and practical advice to simplify your life. Dan and Vanessa have a wonderful style and chemistry that keeps the show flowing. Their advice truly takes the realities of our modern lives into consideration including work, family, finances, home, and more. I appreciate that they share their journey with the listeners.

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Announcements:

So we’ve mentioned in the past couple of episodes that I’m working with our friend Joel Zaslofsky of Value of Simple on a “simplicity summit” called SimpleRev, which is short for simple revolution. Now, Joel is the brainchild for this event and I’m pretty happy to
be helping him out. We’re looking to have about 200 attendees and we’re working on the workshop agenda right now. We know Joshua Becker of Becoming Minimalist will be there, we’re lining up other speakers soon. I think Joel will be releasing the Early Bird ticket pricing late next week so you can start making plans to come. It’s on October 3-4, 2014, at the University of St. Thomas Downtown Campus, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

If you have a minute or two to take a quick survey, we’d love to get your input at SimpleLifeTogether.com/SimpleRevSurvey To learn more, just go to SimpleRev.com or SimpleLifeTogether.com/rev

CONTACT INFO: Remember...if you have questions or comments you can always reach us at Dan@SimpleLifeTogether.com & @DanielHayes on Twitter, or Vanessa@SimpleLifeTogether.com & @GetSimplifized on Twitter and there are links to our Google Plus profiles on the website.

Wrap Up:

OK, so that’s it for Episode 58 of Simple Life Together.
Don’t forget the importance of maintenance when it comes to your simple life. Our thing this week was never buying socks again!

And if you’d like your story to be considered for a Profile in Simplicity episode, or you’d like to ask a question or leave a comment in the Qs & Comments segment, just send us an email.

And if you’d like to submit a guest post, I put up the guidelines at in a tab at the top of the site, or you can go to SimpleLifeTogether.com/guestpost (all one word).

And if you haven’t already, be sure to sign up for Edit & Forget. Just go to SimpleLifeTogether.com/edit and we’ll interact with you on the Facebook Page.

As usual, you can find all the links and info from today’s show at SimpleLifeTogether.com/058.

So let us know what you think of the show and how you’re simplifying your life, too! Either way, we’d absolutely love to hear from you.
So, until next time, we hope you enjoy your...

SIMPLE LIFE TOGETHER

Resources and Links:
Things to hyperlink to:
Action File
Edit and Forget It
Life Plan
Habits Routines and Rituals
Kids Keepsakes
The ExtraOrdinarySimpleLife.com
Spring Cleaning
Photo Organizing

Sam Carpenter's workthesystem.com

Lara Blair's blog at The ExtraOrdinarySimpleLife.com
SimpleLifeReboot.com