



Disclaimer: These are rough notes we use to prep for the show. Please excuse typos, etc.

Simple Life Together Episode 65: Strategic Simplicity

Hi and welcome to Simple Life Together!

A podcast dedicated to leading a simpler life in the modern world”

I’m Dan Hayes.

And I’m Vanessa Hayes.

Welcome back to Simple Life Together! On the last episode of the show we talked all about healthy smoothies with our friend Farnoosh Brock, author of The Healthy Smoothie Bible.

On today’s show, we’re talking a bit about strategic simplicity, and a simple tool we use to help us plan and shape our simple life together.

Okay, so let's get started...

Thesis Statement

When it comes to making long-term plans for our lives, we all go through a "dream stage"...where we just kind of day dream about what our life might be like. Seriously, we've all, at some point in our life, thought about what it would be like to win the lottery or be super rich...and you kind of lose yourself in the dream. While I'm sure there's nothing inherently wrong with that, it's really more productive to do some systematic ideation. By dreaming systematically, you'll likely improve your chances for success. For us, this is strategic simplicity.

Major Takeaway (Introduced)

By going through a process of systematic ideation, you may come up with more questions than answers initially. But in the end, you'll probably be a lot closer to what you want and be able to formulate a real plan of action.

Topic:

Ok, so what is "systematic ideation" and how can you use it? Well, I'm sure there's lots of different ways to systematically come up with ideas. I'm a bit of a tinkerer...kind of a MacGyver type and enjoy product

design. I even recently had a company put one of my ideas into production and they're getting ready to release it. But years ago, I read a book (I can't for the life of me remember or find the title) that sparked my interest in systematic ideation (explain/expand).

But today we're going to share one ideation tool with you that you might be able to use on your simplicity journey.

So here you go: A good way to be more systematic about your ideation is by looking in all four "directions". By that we mean, Outward, Inward, Backward and Forward. It'll help if we give an example, so we'll use our search for the "perfect" town or place for us to live.

So first we have:

- Look Outward. We're going to look at the local, regional, and national possibilities. We could even look internationally if we wanted.
- Look Inward...what do we really want? What are our must haves, and what are the deal breakers? And Vanessa will break this down a bit in a minute and share some things we consider.

- Look Backward, by doing a candid review of what has and hasn't worked in the past. What did we like about it, what did we dislike.
- And then look Forward. What do we want it to look like, feel like, be like?

All of these are interdependent...and this can get a bit cyclical

Back in [Episode 49](#), Live the Life of Your Dreams, we talked about our “Freedoms From” and our “Freedoms To”. One of those freedoms to was “Freedom to Choose Where & How We Live.” So, just to give you an example of strategic simplicity...as Dan said, we’ll use our search for the “ideal” place for us to live.

So, before we start the 4 directions, here are some qualities we know our dream location will have:

- A quality grocery store within walking distance
- Close to downtown shops; coffee shops, bookstores, diners, local shops, etc...oh and free wi-fi is always nice..
- We’d like to live near water. Not ocean...preferably a creek or river...or even a lake
- Small acreage to maintain; ¼ - 1 acre max!

- Good schools...or good home-school co-ops if needed
- We'd prefer an empty lot to build to our exact liking
- No size restrictions on home...for us that means small, not big
- No HOA would be ideal
- If HOA...hopefully open to green/sustainable building techniques or upgrades
- Reasonable tax rates...Military retirement not taxed...state taxes
- Local farmers markets
- Outdoor activities easily accessible...fishing, camping, hiking, biking, etc.
- Local attitudes and atmosphere...not too stuffy...easy going where the community cares about taking care of and maintaining a safe and healthy place to live.
- Maybe 2 small home sites or in different locales?

So looking outward:

- We're not tied to a specific geographic location like where our families live.
- Visiting family and friends is already a part of our plan, and one of the main reasons we want to live small is so we can travel large!
- Although we could live internationally if we desired, at

this point we are more grounded here in the US. Again, we'll scratch our international itch through travels abroad.

- We want 4 seasons...with relatively mild winters ;o)

Looking Inward (again, this is where we look at what we really want and what our must haves and deal breakers are):

- Keeping our 5 pillars in mind, we want a place and lifestyle that can support all of them in fair balance. For example, we don't want to live in a place with a high cost of living that would restrict our freedom to travel and visit/spend time with family.
- Additional must haves...safe environment, access to the recreational activities we love, the outdoors, ability to live small, high walkability rating (walkscore.com) and 4 mild seasons. The reason these things are so important to us is because these things fulfill us.
- Deal breakers...restricting our freedom to live in a small, environmentally conscious home....too much traffic...high taxes, intolerance, etc!
- Bottom line, we want a place with personality!

Looking backward:

- We actually miss apartment-style living! No yard maintenance, small space with a home for

everything, little home maintenance and access to fitness and pool facilities.

- Yet we like having our own home and a yard to chill and play...BBQs, darts, playing catch, gardening, fires, bird-watching ;o)
- We also like designing and creating our own unique home.
- Don't like cookie-cutter "suburbia" homes. Although many are incredibly beautiful and offer tons of amenities, in our experience and the suburban homes we lived in, lacked a sense of community.
 - Vanessa's sister Julianna lives in downtown city but they have block parties, celebrate holidays and walk to downtown to eat and hang out with neighbors.
 - Bandera and Van's parents
 - East Aurora is another example of a community.
- Don't like traffic!!!! And don't like being car-dependent!

Looking Forward: Look, feel, be like?

- For our example of our ideal location, what does a day there look like? (Describe a day).
- What does a week there look like? (Describe a week...routines, shopping, weekend, etc).
- What do the seasons look like?

- While these are cyclical, what does it look like in a linear sense, from now to a point in the future?
- Small home with capability to live off-grid; green sustainable building materials, and eco friendly, low maintenance yard and garden...on a river or creek.
- Would like to be able to support local shops and businesses
- Be able to eat locally grown foods or farm to table foods. Wouldn't it be awesome to be able to make a daily trip to the local grocery store to get fresh foods for dinner? No storing or thawing frozen foods!
- Sense of community...not just hanging out with neighbors, but supporting them, working together, learning together to help maintain a healthy place to live.

Major Takeaway (Reinforced)

So the major takeaway here is this: By all means, DREAM. Dream Big! But when it comes to getting serious about strategic simplicity, be systematic about your ideation. Look Outward, Look Inward, Look Backward, and then look Forward.

By going through this process of ideation, you may come

up with more questions than answers initially. But in the end, you'll probably be a lot closer to what you want and be able to formulate a real plan of action.

Question for the Listeners/Readers:

So, what is one of your long-term simplicity or other life goals where you could use this ideation process. Is it your home, your career, a business opportunity, a passion, or even a relationship? We'd love to know.

Be sure to leave a comment and share at SimpleLifeTogether.com/065.

So...on the next show, Episode 66, we're going to discuss some ways we're taking this strategic simplicity from the ideation and planning stages, and really making progress to turn it into our reality. We're almost 2 years into this, and on our next show you'll see how we're connecting the dots to shape our future, and enjoying the journey along the way. You'll be nodding your head and saying "Ah, I see what they're doing!" So, don't miss out!

Thing:

Vanessa: I just turned 40 years old and feel great! (reflect on 20s, 30s and simplicity shaping a more secure

future...and self)

Dan: Recently we had to do some document faxing. We usually bug my ex and send faxes from her office, but this time I just used the HelloFax extension for the Chrome browser. HelloFax makes it easy to sign documents and send faxes online. You'll never need to print, sign and scan documents again! You can get 50 free fax pages each month, for 6 months! If you want to check out Hello Fax just go to SimpleLifeTogether.com/hellofax

Qs and Comments:

We just wanted to say thanks to Genevieve Parker Hill for including us in her post, [9 Websites To Help You Live Simply](#). She lists some fantastic simplicity blogs and we're honored to make the cut!

And also to Sheryl and Dave Balthrop for mentioning us in their post [The 7 Phases of Your Heroic Journey to Margin and Simplicity](#).

Announcements:

SimpleRev Tickets: I'm helping out Joel Zaslofsky with the SimpleRev summit. It's being held on Oct 3-4 in

beautiful downtown Minneapolis on the University of St Thomas campus. To get your tickets, just go to SimpleRev.com/tickets.

And be sure to check out the All Things SimpleRev podcast as well. There's a link in the shownotes at SimpleLifeTogether.com/065, or just search iTunes for SimpleRev, all one word.

CONTACT INFO: Remember...if you have questions or comments you can find all our contact info at SimpleLifeTogether.com/vanessa or SimpleLifeTogether.com/dan.

Wrap Up:

OK, so that's it for Episode 65 of Simple Life Together. If you're doing some strategic simplicity planning, try the 4 Direction model we talked about today. With a little bit of ideation and some solid follow-through and execution, you can shape the simple future you want.

Be sure to pick up a copy of ***Supermom vs Super Mom: Simplicity Tips for Busy Moms***. It's a Simple Life Guide to Getting Organized, Finding Margin, and Embracing

Simplicity for Moms. Just go to SimpleLifeTogether.com/supermom to get your copy today!

As usual, you can find all the links and info from today's show at SimpleLifeTogether.com/065. If you keep up with our shows as they're released, look for our next show around the 15th of May 2014.

So let us know what you think of the show and how you're simplifying your life, too! We'd absolutely love to hear from you.

So, until next time, we hope you enjoy your...

SIMPLE LIFE TOGETHER

Resources and Links:

Hello Fax

[SimpleRev Tickets](#)

[Supermom vs Super Mom](#)