



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

Simple Life Together Episode 42: The Upside of Downsizing (music)

“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.

On the last episode of the show we learned all about Losing Focus and we shared a few tools we use to help get our focus back.

So, today we’re going to talk about “Downsizing.”

Thesis Statement

“Downsizing” is a word we hear a lot about these days, and I’m surprised at how often it’s talked about in the negative sense versus the positive. If you’re not familiar

with the term, typically, we hear “downsizing” being used in one of two contexts: the first is as a business term when people are getting fired or laid off, and the second is often when people are facing retirement or decide it’s time to make some lifestyle changes. Heck, sometimes the business downsizing leads to personal downsizing!

Major Takeaway

So today, we’d like to talk about “downsizing”, and share some perspective about 4 things. How:

- Downsizing is perceived
- Reasons to downsize
- Some benefits of downsizing
- Planning to downsize on your own terms

Background:

But before we get to all that, first I think we need to look at the starting point...downsizing from what, exactly?

Well, most articles about downsizing are home-size centric as opposed to stuff-centric. They focus on going from a big house, to a smaller one. Most end there. And home size is certainly relevant. OK, I’m going to throw some numbers at you:

- According to the US Department of Housing and

Urban Development, the average household size (meaning members in the home) in the United States has dropped steadily from 3.67 members in 1940 to 2.62 in 2002, and 2.58 in the 2010 census.

- The average size of new houses increased from about 1,100 sf (100 m²) through the 1940s & 1950s to 2,340 sf (217 m²) in 2002. **So that's more than doubled!**
- It's growing still and the average new home size in 2010 and 2505 sf in 2012.
- That's about 290 sf (or 27 sm) per person in 1950
- That's about 893 sf (or 83 sm) per person in 2003
- That's 970 sf (or 90 sm) per person in 2010

That's a lot of space! Candidly, those numbers are just for you to absorb. Everyone has to figure out for themselves what size space is right for them. I just wanted to put those numbers out there.

But I think it more than just the size of the home that matters. Last year, way back in Episode 4 we mentioned Parkinson's Law, which states: *Work expands so as to fill the time available for its*

completion.

You may recall I discussed some corollaries to Parkinson's Law, one of which is:

- Storage requirements will increase to meet storage capacity
- One take-away from that is if you think your big home is a status symbol, look out because if you're like most people the "status quo" can quickly turn into the status "whoa!". Want that big house because you'll enjoy the extra space? It's not likely to last long...it'll fill up.

Here's why we say it's not likely to be spacious for very long:

- Back in Episode 14 we talked about a study conducted by UCLA's Center on Everyday Lives of Families that focused on how much stuff is in the typical middle-class American home.
- They sent a team of professional archaeologists, anthropologists and other social scientists to conduct a systematic study of home life in 32 middle-class, dual-income families in Los Angeles.
- I'm just going to recap 4 highlights of what they found:

- With Family #27, they found 2,260 visible possessions in the first three rooms recorded (two bedrooms and the living room),” and that didn’t include “untold numbers of items tucked into dresser drawers, boxes and cabinets or items positioned behind other items.”
- In another home, Family #1 they looked at a display shelf in a girl’s bedroom and found: 165 Beanie Babies, 36 Human/Animal Figurines, 22 Barbie dolls, 20 other types of dolls, 3 Porcelain dolls, 1 Troll, 1 miniature castle
- The average refrigerator front panel in the homes studied holds 52 objects. The most crowded refrigerator was covered with 166 different objects. In most cases there was a direct corollary to the amount of stuff on a fridge and the amount of stuff in the home (ie: a more cluttered fridge = a more cluttered home)
- Only 25 percent of garages could be used to store cars because they were so packed with stuff. One article called this, “The New Junk Drawer” and rightfully so because that’s exactly what it’s become.

- We'll have links in the shownotes to a 3-part video series on this study. It's pretty eye opening
- The bottom line is that a lot of house is likely going to mean a lot of stuff! A lot of house plus a lot of stuff equals a lot of cost. It's life, supersized.

So, now that we have a little background on what downsizing is, let's talk about How Downsizing is Perceived:

When I'm doing research on something that I'll be working on down the road, I typically use Google Alerts.

Google defines [Google Alerts](#) as:

Emails sent to you when Google finds new results -- such as web pages, newspaper articles, or blogs -- that match your search term. You can use Google Alerts to monitor anything on the Web. For example, people use Google Alerts to:

- find out what is being said about their company or product.
- monitor a developing news story.
- keep up to date on a competitor or industry.
- get the latest news on a celebrity or sports team.
- find out what's being said about themselves.

I use it to do research, and one of my alerts is set for "downsizing." And as I mentioned, often the links that

show up in my alerts refer to downsizing negatively.

I typed “what is downsizing at retirement” into Google, and I’ll read some of the first 10 results...I’ll put a screenshot of this in the shownotes, too at SimpleLifeTogether.com/042



what is downsizing at retirement



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About 1,760,000 results (0.47 seconds)

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[Reduce Your Cost of Living in Retirement: Best Places to Downsize ...](#)



[money.usnews.com/.../retirement/.../best-places-to-downsize-in-r...](#) ▾

by Emily Brandon - in 87 Google+ circles

Many Americans are looking for a way to reduce their cost of living in **retirement**. To find a few great places to **downsize**, U.S. News fired up our Best Places to ...

[Downsize your home.: 21 Ways to Reduce Your Retirement ... - Money](#)

[money.usnews.com > Money > Retirement Planning, News, and Advice](#) ▾

by Emily Brandon - in 87 Google+ circles

Once your kids move out of the house, you don't need a several-bedroom home near a good school district. Consider **downsizing** to a smaller house or condo ...

[Ways to **downsize** during retirement - Bankrate.com](#)

[www.bankrate.com/finance/.../ways-to-downsize-during-retirement.aspx](#) ▾

At best, **downsizing** is sometimes undesirable; at worst, it suggests failure. But it can be a smart move.

[Downsizing in retirement turns less into more - TODAY.com](#)

[www.today.com/.../downsizing-retirement-turns-less-more-6C10883527](#) ▾

Aug 12, 2013 - For empty-nesters and retirees who still have a mortgage and a house to maintain, **downsizing** can reduce one of their biggest fixed...

[Hidden Costs of Downsizing a Home in Retirement - Yahoo Finance](#)

[finance.yahoo.com/.../hidden-costs-downsizing-home-retirement-10000...](#) ▾

Jul 24, 2013 - From Yahoo Finance: For older Americans who have watched their **retirement** savings shrink over the past few years, **downsizing** seems like a ...

[Downsizing in retirement turns less into more - Yahoo Finance](#)

[finance.yahoo.com/.../downsizing-retirement-turns-less-more-16182758...](#) ▾

Aug 9, 2013 - From Yahoo Finance: Some retirees who still have a mortgage are considering **downsizing** to reduce expenses. One survey says more than 40 ...

[Downsizing in Retirement: Moving Home, Possessions - AARP ...](#)

[www.aarp.org > Work & Retirement > Retirement Planning](#) ▾

Apr 20, 2011 - **Downsizing** in **retirement** can be emotionally traumatic and expensive as well.

Activ

Wow....such a negative spin on downsizing! Why not call it "Rightsizing"...to reduce to an optimal size...or creating new surroundings by decluttering eliminating, throwing

out, donating and simplifying one's own environment to create a more functional home that better suits your needs.

So, why do people downsize? Let's look at some possible Reasons to Downsize:

- frustrated with or don't have enough time for the upkeep
- maintenance and cleaning costs are too much
- expecting a decrease in your monthly income (retirement, loss of job, quitting job, lifestyle change/business like us)
- home is not functional or not being used efficiently (space not used, or not well designed for your needs)
- physical limitations to literally downsize...like take the house down a level..from a two-story home to a one story home
- decreasing their environmental footprint

So those are some reasons to downsizing. You'll notice that those reasons seemed like pretty legitimate ones and not so negative.

Now let's take look at Some Benefits of Downsizing:

- Save money now and direct it towards others important goals

- You'll save time down the road
- Things tend to run more efficiently: less to care for = less stress and confusion....a smaller home = smaller utilities bills...systems don't have to work so hard.
- You can decrease the chance of a major inconvenience to loved ones having to help you downsize if you wait until you "have to" downsize.
- Downsizing now can give you a sense of control. You're doing it on your terms as opposed to waiting until you have to downsize...which could cause undue stress and resentment.
- And watch out for some unexpected positive side effects...downsizing has a funny way of simplifying your life overall. And when you simplify, you're more focused on your life goals, more deliberate with your purchases, and more in-tune with what's important to you like family and relationships.

Planning to Downsize on Your Own Terms:

- I'd suggest looking at downsizing from the "stuff" centric point of view versus the house-centric point of view (explain)
- Maximize the market to decide when to downsize
- Take a good look at your life goals...remember to start with the end.
- Get in tune with your finances and where your money

is really going to see if downsizing is the real issue

- List was your must have's in your your life and home are, then work backwards from there to eliminate the excess. It helps to have an idea of what you're downsizing into.
- Take a systematic approach...no need to rush. Just like our edit and forget it challenge...you have an entire year to let go of 2013 things.
- Edit one room or one area at a time. It's probably best to start with the easy and not-so-sentimental stuff first like in the garage...then tackle the more difficult items.
- Set goals for yourself like: edit "x" number of rooms by "x" date; or sell "x" amount of items on eBay or Craig's list before "this" date....have garage sell on "such and such" date...put home on market "no later than" this date date.....or decide on new home by "this" date... and so on.

Major Takeaway

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Conclusion:

So, when it comes Downsizing, there's a huge upside!

- Why wait until retirement to make the decision to simplify your life?
- That isn't a rule.
- Do it when it's right for you.
- Take some time to think about ways to edit the "stuff" in your life.
- Take little steps every day to shape how you want your life to be.
- The benefits are huge.

We've talked about how we're not following the deferred retirement plan, well why defer the benefits of living life at the right size now...on your terms.

- Make incremental changes to meet your goals.
- Bend with the wind.
- Find targets of opportunity to get rid of the things holding you back.
- And let us know how it goes.

Question for the Listeners/Readers: So, have you started downsizing on your schedule yet? If not, what's

holding you back from right-sizing your life? Share your thoughts on downsizing by leaving comments in the shownotes at SimpleLifeTogether.com/042

THING Segment

Dan's Thing: My Thing this week is the new Get Noticed Theme we switched to on our site.

- I've used 5-6 "premium" themes over the years
- GN is the easiest to implement the look I wanted for SimpleLifeTogether.com
- So many built in functions
- I think it looks great
- It's in limited release right now but I'll let you know when it's available

Vanessa's "THING": Using the new IX500 ScanSnap to help a client go digital!

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

ScanSnap Scanner Sale at Amazon: Amazon's ScanSnap sale is still going on. You can go directly to the models on sale simply by typing in SimpleLifeTogether.com/scan. I even bought the one for my client this week!

Platform Conference:

If you're trying to build your platform within your company, industry or field, or your business, you may want to consider Michael Hyatt's Platform Conference.

- It runs from 3-5 November, in Dallas TX this time, at the Omni Dallas Hotel at Park West.
- Michael and his team have given us a special discount code just for Simple Life Together listeners
- So if you're interested, to register for the event or to just learn more, go to **SimpleLifeTogether.com/Platform,**
- Use Coupon Code **SIMPLE** to save \$100 off your registration.
- Vanessa and I will be there and we hope to see you

there, too!

Green Juicing Intensive Clinic: You met Farnoosh Brock back in [Episode 19](#). She is the premier expert on juicing and author of The Healthy Juicer's Bible. Her Green Juicing Intensive Clinic is just \$147. I went through the original class of this and I still take part in everything I learned there and in her Private Facebook Group. If you're interested in juicing, just go to SimpleLifeTogether.com/juice to learn more about The Green Juicing Intensive Clinic. By the way, she gives out lots of freebies with Clinic membership, so check it out at SimpleLifeTogether.com/juice.

Edit & Forget It: We have people sign up every day for the Edit & Forget It Challenge! It's never too late, so just head over to SimpleLifeTogether.com where you can sign up for Edit & Forget It over in the right column of the site

Feedback: None

Wrap Up:

OK, so that's it for Episode 42 of Simple Life Together. So

today, we talked about Downsizing On Your Own Terms. We shared a few personal examples of how we started downsizing earlier than most, and shared a couple of tools you might consider trying as you plan for living a lifestyle that's "right-sized" for you.

My Thing was the GetNoticed Theme and Vanessa's thing was the new iX500 ScanSnap

As usual, you can find all the links and info from today's show at SimpleLifeTogether.com/042.

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

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

SIMPLE LIFE TOGETHER

Resources and Links:

[Platform Conference](#)

Coupon Code for \$100 Off: **SIMPLE**

[The Book: Platform: Get Noticed in a Noisy World](#)

[Podcasting A to Z course](#) Discount Code : **SIMPLE** for \$500 off!

ScanSnap Scanner Sale at Amazon

Videos from the CELF Study

[A Cluttered Life: Middle-Class Abundance \(Ep.1\) Stuff](#)

[A Cluttered Life: Middle-Class Abundance \(Ep. 2\) Food](#)

[A Cluttered Life: Middle-Class Abundance \(Ep. 3\) Space](#)

[2010 census](#)

[US Home Size 2012](#)