



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

Simple Life Together Episode 59: Maximizing Your Margin!

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 the maintenance side of simplicity.

But on today's show, we're going to talk about what to do with some of that margin you've created! We'll share some examples of how we've decided to spend some of our time, and maybe you can come up with some great

new ways to use your margin time, too!

And this is going to be a shorter episode, too. So you can enjoy even more of your margin time!

Thesis Statement

So now that you've been working on building some margin in your life, maybe it's a good time to start thinking about how you can tap into that margin to make your life fuller. Not fuller with stuff, but fuller with satisfaction.

Major Takeaway (Introduced)

Once in a while when the topic of our simpler lifestyle comes up, someone will ask, "Well what are you going to do to fill all your extra time?" It's a valid question, I guess, but one we can easily answer. Each of us could answer differently, with a list of things we **could** do to fill the time. Actually, anyone could make a list of things to fill their "spare time". But I think what separates us from our former selves, and what makes those of us on this simplicity journey a bit different, is that we would likely answer it very similarly. We'd say, "Well, first of all, I don't feel the need to fill my margin, but if I choose to use some of it, it will be doing things that are important to me. Things that help fulfill my Life Plan."

So let's get started!

First, let's review what we mean by margin:

- This is how we define it: We define margin as “uncommitted time and space in your life.” Margin is what gives you options. Margin is what allows you to be spontaneous. Margin is what makes you feel more free. Just as there is a place for work and commitment in our life, there must also be a place for margin.
- Margin on a page helps us appreciate the written word, the content and the context. But if those written words went from one side edge to the other, and from the very top of the page to the very bottom, the written words wouldn't nearly as enjoyable. Those margins give us a place to make a little note; to record a thought or a question. The margin helps keep the written words, the message, in focus.
- So, I know we've all been working on building more margin in our lives...
- So, what have we done to achieve it?
- I know we've...
 - Decluttered
 - Reduced voluntary commitments
 - Streamlined our processes and systems...like setting up routines for all the *must-do items*, to

make room for the *want-to-do* items.

- But, there comes a time when we're faced with the fact that what we've let into our lives has stolen our margin from us. Here are some ways margin slips away from us...
 - When you answer "Yes" to be on that committee you really would rather not be a part of,
 - when you say "Yes" to that dinner party invitation even though you really don't want to go,
 - when you're guilted into being a chaperone for the field trip...you just gave away some of your margin.
 - But when we decide we've had enough, we can vow to take that margin back. That is the first step. What follows is a stream of questions that all seem to start with "How?" How can I get my time back? How can I have more options? How can I stop feeling like I'm juggling chainsaws?"

OK...enough of the review. So let's get to the Maximizing Your Margin part.

Be careful how you fill it (Parkinson's Law corollary)

- Parkinson's Law states: Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion.
- Corollaries include:

- Storage requirements will increase to meet storage capacity
- Data expands to fill the space available for storage.
- Well, I'm sure that applies to margin, as well.

So, make sure you choose things that are congruent with your Life Plan

- Things that don't require too much "stuff"
- Things that don't take *all* your margin (horseback riding AND gymnastics...or being asked to be on several Professional Organizers committees)
- Support as many of your Life Plan pillars as possible (no magic number here, just the more the better.)

Here's what we've chosen for us and why. Now, yours will be vastly different and that's fine...but here's some of ours:

- Camping>teardrop>minimal>forced outdoors>w/o the set up>go off grid, if desired
- Tenkara>out in nature>minimal>stores easily in teardrop
- Gymnastics (Vanessa was hoping for HB riding)>minimal equipment>fitness pillar
- The way we cook:
 - Green Egg >multi-use>grill-roast-smoke-low

/slow-hi/fast

- Fitness pillar
- Family pillar
- It's a stretch, but finance pillar
- Making sausage
- Dehydrating: veggies, fruits, jerky

Our example from this weekend:

- Last minute decided to go camping (freedom, family pillar, and fitness pillars)
- How we spent Friday
 - Woke at 4:20, did a little web surfing for inspiration
 - V & D took Sunshine to school together
 - Son is with his Mom this weekend
 - Picked up some last minute food for camping
 - Went and did yoga (fitness pillar)
 - I worked on shownotes (finances pillar)
 - Vanessa worked on project for Disney (finances pillar) Explain.
 - Prepped for camping
 - Picked up Sunshine
 - Hooked up the teardrop
 - Loaded bikes (fitness)
 - Drove to Garner State Park
 - Listened to Andy Stanley (faith)

- Camping (freedom)
- Tenkara (freedom)
- Campfires (family)

Major Takeaway (Reinforced)

So the major takeaway here is this: Know that you don't need to fill your margin, but if you choose to use some of it, make sure you're doing things that are flow right along with your Life Plan. Be frugal with your margin, be conscious of how you spend your margin...just like you are with your money. Invest your time in quality activities, not a larger quantity of activity.

You've worked hard for your margin. Make sure you take time to enjoy it!

Question for the Listeners/Readers:

So, how do you spend some of your margin? Have you considered which of your life pillars you're supporting by your activities? We all enjoy different things in life, so tell us your favorite activities that you invest your margin time in! We'd love to know.

So, be sure to leave a comment and share at SimpleLifeTogether.com/059.

Thing Segment: Sunshine saying “This is the life.”

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

Miriam wrote:

You mention standardizing wardrobes - I recently standardized our dinner menus. My family is a tough crowd to serve dinner to - a few picky eaters plus a few (conflicting!) food sensitivities. At one point I drew up a monthly menu plan. Now each week I pull out the monthly plan, copy over the coming week's menu and tweak as necessary. So simple. With enough variety but not opening up the entire world of choices which mostly get rejected and just cause me stress to sift through. Since I plan at the start of each week I can change the plan a little or experiment if I want to, but from a position of stability.

(mention Vanessa's 31 day meal plan)

iTunes Review

Marsha Scott from here in the US wrote: So Real...
Hi, I've been listening since the very first few shows. I took

a break and missed a few but have come back. I've also joined the edit and forget it page and just love the interaction we have on there. This is the only podcast I listen to and enjoy every minute. Vanessa and Dan have so much fun putting this together and it totally comes through to their audience. I listen while I clutter purge and it always give me more incentive to keep going. Love you guys. Please keep it going. Marsha

Awe...thank you Marsha!

Announcements:

As for the SimpleRev conference, I'll be hitting that as updates are released. Remember, it's on October 3-4, 2014, at the University of St. Thomas Downtown Campus, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Joel Zasloffsky of Value of Simple released a fantastic "All It Takes to get There" page on SimpleRev.com at SimpleRev.com/allittakes. As the name implies it covers all your transportation options, lodging, what to do, how to get around...everything a conference attendee would like ask about the area. It's great, so check it out. It seems like a long time away, but I'm getting pretty pumped about SimpleRev! We could still use some input from

you, so head over to SimpleLifeTogether.com/SimpleRevSurvey and take a moment or two to take the survey. Thanks!

Podcast Movement: Dan and I have been selected to speak at the Podcast Movement podcasting conference in Dallas on the 16-17 of August. If you have any interest in podcasting whatsoever, the tickets are crazy cheap and you can get them right now on Kickstarter by going to PodcastMovement.com

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 59 of Simple Life Together. Use your margin wisely! You worked for it, you earned it. So guard it and invest your time in activities that make your simple life, the life of your dreams.

And if you'd like 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 challenge. 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/059.

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:

