



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

## Simple Life Together Episode 61: Simple Living With Kids

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 about splurging a bit when it comes to simplicity...and we shared some of our splurges with you.

On today’s show, we’re talking about living a simple life with kids. Now we know not everyone who listens to the show has kids, but many probably do or will. And those of you don’t, probably have nephews or nieces, or friends

with kids. So, the good news is that even if you don't have kids yourself, you'll probably be able to apply a lot of this to other relationships in your life.

But before we get into the main topic, we wanted to let you know that our Simple Life Guide called ***Super Mom vs Supermom: Simplicity Tips for Busy Moms*** is out and available in the Amazon Kindle store for just ***\$4.97. It's just under 125 pages and is a Simple Life Guide to Getting Organized, Finding Margin, and Embracing Simplicity for Moms.***

*We have a direct link to it on Amazon, just go to [SimpleLifeTogether.com/supermom](http://SimpleLifeTogether.com/supermom) and it'll take you right there.*

Thanks to all those who gave us some corrections, updates, and feedback before the book went live, especially listeners and Edit & Forget It members Diane and Kate...we appreciate your help so much!

A review of the book on Amazon.com would be really appreciated, too. We've only had 2 reviews on Amazon so we really need some help there. Amazon rankings are directly tied to reviews and downloads. So, the more purchases and the more reviews, the more exposure the

book gets, and the more likely people are to find it!

Again, you can purchase the book and review it at [SimpleLifeTogether.com/supermom](http://SimpleLifeTogether.com/supermom). That'll take you directly to Amazon.

Okay, so on to the Main Topic...

## **Thesis Statement**

So one of the most asked questions we get is how do I simplify my life with kids?

## **Major Takeaway** (Introduced)

Well first off, “simple life with kids” doesn’t have to be an oxymoron. Like simplifying the rest of your life, simplifying with kids will take some planning, work, and positive change, but it will be well worth it. Notice I didn’t say “well worth it in the end” because there really isn’t an end when it comes to simplicity...that’s why we call it a journey.

## **Simplicity Issues at Different Stages of Our Kids’ Lives**

Before we get into the different stages of our kids' lives and how that effects simplicity, there's something that

needs to be addressed first. I call it the "Stuff Cycle"...for lack of a better term. If you don't realize you operate in a stuff cycle before you have kids, you will as soon as you're expecting. Here's how it goes"

### Universal problem: The “Stuff” Cycle

- Perceived Need Phase
  - All the things advertisements tell you you need
  - All the things you ‘think’ you need
  - All the things everyone else ‘thinks’ you need and don’t hesitate to tell you
- Acquire Phase
  - Purchase
  - Gift
  - Rent or borrow
- Utilization Phase
  - You figure out what you really need and use
- Replacement Phase
  - You fill those needs with things that actually work
- Edit Phase
  - You take action to get the things you don’t need, don’t use, and don’t work out of your life
- Refine Phase
  - Continuously evaluate, acquire, replace or upgrade as necessary, edit as required.

So, realize this cycle now if you haven't already. It'll make life much, much easier. "Know Thyself"...a Delphic maxim inscribed at the temple entrance to Apollo's Oracle almost 3500 years ago...and just as true today as it was then.

### **So, what are some simplicity issues we see at different stages of our kids' lives?**

- Babies: Just making sure they are cared for requires so much (or we think it does)
  - Amount of stuff required at home...but babies grow up so fast that its impossible to use every toys, or clothing items.
  - Amount of stuff required on the road
  - Time and attention required
- Toddlers: first steps of independence; just trying to stay ahead or just keep up parents feel they need to buy every learning gadget or tool so they are ahead when they start kindergarten
- Kids: starting to understand commercials and get a taste for consumerism and wanting more..brand name toys...brand name clothes...(YugiOh, Hello Kitty Disney shows, clothing and toys) and even exposure to peer pressure(V tell story about school picture day)

- Teens: consumerism: clothing, gadgets, food; more time commitments with extracurricular activity, work, etc...and as parents now its crunch time to teach then the life skills to be successful adults.
- Adults
  - Are you responsible or do you hang on to your grown kids' "stuff" as they start their adult life?
  - Do they feel "entitled" to things beyond their income?
  - What's your comfort level or threshold for monetary support?

Ways to keep things simple (we talk about this in the book)

- Toys and Gifts
  - Family members go overboard (time for a talk)
  - Birthday parties (manage expectations)
  - Holidays (manage expectations)
- Boundaries
  - Not every room is the play room (CELF study, Episode 14)
  - Don't buy more storage for more toys...edit the old to make room for the new...create a

boundaries or limit of how many toys your kids can have

- Screen time
- Personal chores (clean up after self)
- Family chores (team building, contributing)

- Routines and Rituals

- Morning
  - Is that a mouse?
  - Lap time
  - Morning butt grab
- After school routines (we talk a lot about this in the book)
  - snack
  - homework
  - dinner
  - clean up and declutter
- Holidays
  - Reusing costume clothes
  - Easter baskets
  - Edit before Christmas, birthdays...
- Camping
  - Fire Team Leader
  - Field training (hand & arm signals, land nav, etc)
  - Around the fire

- Stories
  - Smores are a myth
  - Reading time
  - Sonic after Scouts
  - Different handshakes for each kid
- Dealing with younger kids' schoolwork (keepsake systems)
- Having constant communication with your kids...reinforcing ideas
  - talk about your values regularly
  - try to instill valuing experiences over things
  - set the example...pick up after yourself...limit your tv and Internet exposure...play with your kids...read to them...give away and donate things (bring your kids along)
  - stick to your guns on your rules, boundaries and routines...you've got to use them and hold everyone including yourself accountable (craft time punishment...rules for getting a treat or prize for good behavior)

### **Major Takeaway (Reinforced)**

So the major takeaway here is this: yes, kids provide their



own unique spin on simplicity, but just like us it has a lot to do with how you establish norms in your home, how you manage expectations, the example you set, the boundaries you establish, and how effective you are at using the Laws of Learning (Episode 13, Vanessa's segment called First Steps on the Road to Simplicity). Just like simplifying the rest of your life, simplifying with kids will take lots of planning, work, and positive change. But, it will be well worth it for you and serve them well in their life, as well.

### **Question for the Listeners/Readers:**

So, how do you simplify life with your kids? What tips or techniques do you use that could help the rest of us? We'd love to know.

Be sure to leave a comment and share at [SimpleLifeTogether.com/061](http://SimpleLifeTogether.com/061).

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**Thing:** Vanessa attending the Minimalists meetup at the Twig Bookstore in the Pearl Brewery district in San Antonio. Got to meet up with long time SLT listener and Edit & Forget It member Robin. My main takeaway was that minimalism looks different for all of us. I also like their take on what they allow or edit in their lives; basically they

don't keep anything that doesn't add value to their lives (kind of like our "*use it, need it, love it*" questions we ask when deciding what to edit from our lives).

**Dan: Tech tip:** The new Add-Ons function in Google Docs. Provide additional functionality right inside Google Documents and Spreadsheets. In your Drive menu bar you'll notice a new menu option title Add-ons. Click Get Add-ons and explore...you can do mail merge, Avry labels, bibliographies, etc...FREE.

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

***Kerry emailed us his story...***

Dan and Vanessa,

I couldn't decide whether to write and tell you how much I appreciate your podcast or to share a little bit of my cluttered story... so I will do both.

I am an Air Force officer, having served for 13 years so far. While I haven't moved around as much as you did in your careers, moving forced me to take stock of what I owned and what owned me. I grew up with a lot. My dad

was a successful doctor and business owner. When I say we had a lot, that might be understating. Christmas morning was like walking into a Toys R Us. While I certainly appreciated the fact that I was lucky, I never took it for granted and shared a lot with my big family that didn't have as much.

It wasn't until I joined the Air Force and got married that I began to consider how "stuff" made me feel. I realized that I had hoarding tendencies (from my mother) and a desire to simplify (probably from my dad). From the perspective of having moved away, I realized that my Mom was a hoarder with means. That is, she could afford to keep everything. We had multiple vacation homes and each one had a basement or attic packed full. In addition, she had three 20x40' storage units, all neatly organized but full! My parents divorced around the time I finished college and joined the AF and my mom continued to spend, collect and store. As a few examples, we had every Dept 56 Christmas Village, Halloween Village, Snow Baby, etc ever made. She also framed EVERYTHING! And you don't throw away framed things so she now has, in storage, somewhere between 500 and 1000 framed prints.

The longer I was away from home, the more

uncomfortable I was going home. While everything in my mother's home is nice and clean, it's everywhere. I realized she had a problem when I went home for my sister's funeral and actually couldn't set a drink down because every horizontal surface is covered. In the past few years, she has spent and collected herself into near bankruptcy and I still can't get through to her. But... I started my own journey of self-reflection and consideration. I began to realize that it felt good to divest myself of clutter. I am no where near where I hope to end up, but my awareness of "stuff" has been amazing. I was always a person who collected "just because". I had 39 bottles of Marylin Merlot wines because people kept buying them and I didn't know what to do with them. I had every knick knack from childhood stuffed into boxes all over. Most of this stuff (and lots more) is gone. But what I really wanted to do is share with others is that the family aspect can be really hard. My mom and lots of other family members attach so much meaning to stuff that it comes between relationships often. When she visits me and my family, she will load my kids up with toys from the Goodwill. I have asked her not to do this and specifically told her that it makes me stressed and unhappy. But the message isn't received. When she finds out that I get rid of a lot of the things she buys she is upset. In my mind that means stuff is affecting our relationship.

As for my life, I am inspired by what you guys do and say. I connected with Dan's story for a few reasons. I am very techie and a mac guy to boot. I am also into home improvement and woodworking. While you guys have your teardrop, I grew up flying hot air balloons (fourth generation pilot). So I own a balloon and that certainly comes with a lot of stuff. But I do my best to keep things simple. I drive a pickup because the balloon fits in the back, but that means I don't have to own a separate vehicle. Ballooning is my passion and I really enjoy doing it with my family. But if it ever started detracting from life, I would give it up.

So, I have a long way to go, but I am enjoying it. My wife is naturally not a clutterer, but she isn't sold yet on my journey. I choose to share the important lessons that make my life better. Maybe they will sink in. I learned a long time ago that I can't force her to do anything she isn't ready for. Thanks for what you do. I believe it works.

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**Announcements:**

**iTunes Reviews:**

**Thanks to Chauddog, Turtletruth, and Robinvb1 for the great iTunes reviews**

**And thanks to Sheryl and Diane** for their reviews of Supermom vs Super Mom on Amazon. Folks, we need some help over there on Amazon reviewing the book. Again, just go to [SimpleLifeTogether.com/supermom](http://SimpleLifeTogether.com/supermom) to review the book.

**As a special incentive, the book will be available for free all day Friday, 21 March 2014 from midnight PST to midnight PST.**

**CONTACT INFO:** Remember...if you have questions or comments you can find all our contact info at [SimpleLifeTogether.com/vanessa](http://SimpleLifeTogether.com/vanessa) or [SimpleLifeTogether.com/dan](http://SimpleLifeTogether.com/dan).

## **Wrap Up:**

OK, so that's it for Episode 61 of Simple Life Together. Remember, simplifying your life with kids does provide some unique challenges, but that means you have unique opportunities, too. You'll find the the effort is well spent and it also passes along some great life skills, as well.

We hope you decide to pick up a copy of ***Super Mom vs Supermom: Simplicity Tips for Busy Moms***. It's a *Simple Life Guide to Getting Organized, Finding Margin, and Embracing Simplicity for Moms*. It's \$4.97 on Amazon and you can pick it up for free on Friday, 21 March 2014 from midnight PST to midnight PST. Just go to [SimpleLifeTogether.com/supermom](http://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/061](http://SimpleLifeTogether.com/061).

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:**