



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

Simple Life Together Episode 66: The Best Way to Predict Your Future is to Create It

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 strategic simplicity, and a simple tool we use to help us plan and shape our simple life together, where you are systematic about your ideation by looking outward, looking inward, looking backward, and then looking forward.

Now on today's show, we're going to discuss some ways

we are taking this strategic simplicity from the ideation and planning stages, and really making progress to turn it into our reality.

Thesis Statement

So, back in Episode 38, we talked about the concept of preparation meets opportunity. You may recall a few lines from that show that went like this: “When you’re working on that Life Plan, or your dreams and goals, prepare for those opportunities you want to come along. I’m a firm believer that you can determine your own destiny if you make your own future. Shape it yourself. You’ll have obstacles along the way for sure, but you’ll also find encouragement and inspiration, too.”

Major Takeaway (Introduced)

So that’s what we want to talk about today...we want to give you a little bit of context for our journey by connecting some dots. If you’ve been listening for a while and are familiar with many of our back episodes, now you’ll see exactly why we picked some of the subjects that we did. If you’re new to the show...and we have more and more joining us each week...then this will be a great “jumping on” point for where we are and how we got here! So, the “What’s in it for you” is this...taking deliberate small steps forward from the ideation we talked about on

the last show, will help you shape your own journey to live simply. "The best way to predict your future is to create it" is a great way to think about it. So, thanks, Mr Lincoln, for that fine quote and the title of today's episode.

But before we start, we owe you some additional backstory. You know Dan loves his "frameworks" so I think a bit of an introduction to the framework we're working in here. It's another military lesson...we haven't had one of those in a while...so settle in for a minute or two, ok. Babe...why don't you go ahead and share the framework you use for our plan.

The Troop Leading Procedures:

- Not a "checklist" for leadership, more as you said, a framework for planning and execution of steps
- I used to use this with my troops, teach it and evaluate my students on this, and encourage others to use it, too. Thankfully, many of them have gone on to become some of the finest leaders in their field; whether ground pounders, door kickers, fighter pilots, bomber pilots, Infantry officers, special operators...heck, even admin officers, planners, acquisition officers, & attorneys...you name it! From young enlisted folks, to command chiefs & Sergeants Majors, even general officers. Why was I such a

proponent of this framework? Because it works!

- That said, this episode isn't about leading troops or Troop Leading Procedures (or TLPs), it's about how we've used it for things that we've done to achieve our desired lifestyle. We just thought you'd appreciate knowing the tool we like to use and adapt, that's all. Maybe I'll do a post or something someday about the TLPs if you're interested.
- Here are the steps and a brief explanation of each:
 - Receive Mission
 - Issue a Warning order (a heads up)...flying into PDX...About video
 - Make a Tentative Plan
 - Initiate Movement (which is where we're going to focus today)
 - Conduct Reconnaissance (the major purpose for our travels and possible 1 year on the road)
 - Complete the Plan
 - Issue the Completed Plan
 - Supervise and Refine
- So again, most of what we talk about today falls in the Initiate Movement phase

Topic:

Like we said earlier, you'll see how a lot of our past

episodes relate to the things we are doing in the “initiate movement” step of the TLPs, to move towards our simple life goals. In no particular order, here are some of the things we’ve done, are still doing, or getting ready to do, to move us forward:

The Edit & Forget It Challenge

- We introduced The Edit & Forget It Challenge back in Episode 9
- The Edit & Forget It Challenge has fulfilled a lot of objectives for us. Here are a few:
- It helped us loosen our grip on “stuff”...physically, emotionally, and intellectually
- By intellectually I mean that buying became a lazy, default “easy button” that overrode the acts of contemplation (considering whether or not we really needed something), innovation (what else could I use, how can I get access to that?), patience (do I need it now?), and appreciation (caring for what you have now so it can serve you long term).
- Helped us develop new habits toward spending. (why did I ever buy this?)
- Taught us to be more deliberate about what we buy or allow into our lives (things, circumstances, commitments and events).
- Helped us physically downsize our stuff so we can

achieve the goal of living in a smaller home, customized to our lifestyle now and long-term.

- Edit & Forget It continues to challenge us. We recently did a another full frontal assault on our garage and it felt fantastic!
- Identified our pain points and solved them
- Eliminated duplicates, triplicates and quadruplicates of hand tools.
- This allowed me to find what I needed so much more quickly
- Eliminated some “space stealers” without sacrificing storage capability. This opened up a LOT of floorspace that was formerly taken up by yard tools, etc that encroached on the main area of the garage.
- We still have more to go! Not that we have so much “stuff”, but when you’re fine tuning to get where you really want to be it takes time.

In Episode 42, The Upside of Downsizing, we took a look at some of the benefits of downsizing:

- It includes downsizing not just your stuff, but your commitments and obligations too.
- Save money and time now...and direct them towards others important goals
- You’ll save time...yardwork, maintenance, etc.
- Things tend to run more efficiently: less to care for =

less stress and confusion....a smaller home simply = smaller utilities bills...systems don't have to work so hard.

- Another thing...and one thing that I'm always cognisant of personal and with clients...is that you can decrease the chance of a major inconvenience to loved ones if you have to ask for their help when 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 like I just stated, 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, relationships, your health and on and on...

Back to the Episode 38 Preparation meets Opportunity, and Episode 54 Setting Limits to Simplify Your Life, here's how these concepts have worked and are continuing to work for us:

- First and foremost we developed 5 pillars and goals within those pillars to keep us on track and focused.

- Selling our land was a huge step in our “initiate movement” phase. Selling the land freed us up from the majority of our debt and allowed us to purchase the Guidon, our tiny teardrop camper. That act alone fulfills a lot of our goals and priorities...we reached a few financial goals as well as our goals to travel more and spend more time as a family.
- In preparation for living small, we’ve established some boundaries there as well:
 - Limiting how big our home will be
 - Editing our possessions now...over 4000 things gone in a year and a half...preparing to go down to 1 car very soon...getting rid of cable, etc...editing our obligations and commitments as well.
 - limited ourselves to a smaller camper for our travels
- Speaking of travelling, it is one of the primary reasons for us wanting to live simpler lives. Living small would allow us the opportunity to travel more. Originally we thought the answer to our traveling dreams was to get a big Class A RV. But after further contemplation we realized it would be more restrictive (in regards to cost, time to maintain it, and places we could actually visit). The RV would have required us to find a place to store it, buy a bigger tow vehicle,

pay extra for gas to tow it, and find places to hook it up to run it. It was way more than what we wanted and needed.

- Instead, we decided our teardrop camper was a better fit for us. Although, by design it limits us to what and how much we take, it gives us way more freedom in regards to our time, money and places we can travel to and visit.
- And the same thing goes for our Jeep. We knew eventually we wanted a 4 wheel drive all terrain vehicle that would be beneficial on our travels and in different climates. So we ended up getting one (a little sooner than we planned but hey...preparation and opportunity helped us out here...even on short notice). The Jeep is small, but because of it's restrictions in storage space, we are much more deliberate about what we bring on trips...which actually makes things so much easier when it comes time to pack up and go!
- An added benefit to our tiny camper is that it has really given us a taste of living small which is our end goal. We mentioned that we actually camped for 3 weeks in a 50 square foot loaner teardrop camper last summer and it was fabulous! We learned how to plan simple meals, how to pack even lighter for the trip and how to create simple routines just as we

would in our normal home...they were just a little different and on a smaller scale. We honestly didn't miss all the luxuries our 1800 square foot home had to offer. Matter of fact, the only thing I missed was having my own bathroom...but that's it. I didn't miss having our laundry room (we just made weekly trips to the laundromat which was awesome because we could do a bunch of loads at once!). I didn't even miss our big kitchen (although our kitchen is incredibly lovely and my favorite room in the home). I didn't even miss our backyard or home office shedquarters because the views out camping were way better than our backyard, and not having a home office actually helped us curb our digital addiction!

- So basically, the camper solidified the idea that we can live small and still be happy.

So all of things things are just examples of how we used the tools of Strategic Simplicity...or Systematic Ideation...to move us forward in our journey of living simpler...in different areas of our lives. From ideation to initiation, you can see how systematically looking at things in your life, can really help you move forward...no matter what your goals or dreams are.

Now, the next phase for us will be to...Conduct

Reconnaissance. And we'll be doing some recon this summer on our trips out east and west...and probably for the next couple of years as we explore and hone down the places we'd like to live. We dreamed it...developed some criteria of the ideal place for us (which we discussed in detail in Episode 65)...and now we're executing part of the plan by visiting places before we move on the the final troop leading procedures steps of...Complete and Issue The Final Plan...which of course is moving to a place we'll call home.

Major Takeaway (Reinforced)

We're far from "there"...but it feels great to be on the path. So the major takeaway here is this: You don't "find" your path to living simply. You make it. Our path certainly won't be yours, but we can share some tools, some experiences, and some support to one another along the way to forge our own path. And it all starts with some ideation, determination, and some deliberate actions to not only make dreams a reality, but make your journey a whole lot of fun, too. As Mr Lincoln said, "The best way to predict your future is to create it." Start creating the future you want, today.

Question for the Listeners/Readers:

So, what are some things you're doing to make your own path. Are you downsizing? Prepping for a new career? Starting a side gig business? What are some things holding you back from getting started? We'd love to know.

Be sure to leave a comment and share at SimpleLifeTogether.com/066.

Thing: None

Vanessa:

Dan:

Qs and Comments:

We had some terrific iTunes reviews! Thanks to:

TClongLPC wrote: I love these two! Dan and Vanessa feel like kindred spirits when I listen to them. I'm a technogeek like Daniel and my wife is an ultra-organizer like Vanessa. BOTH of us are looking for ways to simplify our life. Recently I've been delving deeper into Evernote and have been using the webclipper feature to save

pages of WordPress code and blog posts that I want to refer back to to help with my organization goals. Thank you SOOO much for your hard work and dedication! You guys are fantastic!

Prankstr45 wrote: Strategic simple living...I listened to your podcast for the first time about where you want to live... You might like downtown Fayetteville, Arkansas. Our state does have income tax but seems to be a close match for the other criteria on your lists. Good luck!

SherryLCarver.com wrote: Simple Never Gets Old! Dan and Vanessa do not hide the fact that their pinnacle of "a simple life" is filled with changes, mistakes, margin, compromise and first and foremost what is best for their family. The best part for me is the exposure to new ideas, products and life lessons with each new podcast. Simple is hard -- Simple is laughter -- Simple is sacrifice -- Simple is a lifelong process -- This is the reality show we are all looking for!

Website Comments: (these were all comments from our last show Episode 65 Strategic Simplicity).

Don Hamilton wrote:

I sure do love listening to you folks. My wife and I have

lived in 37 places so far. We have only been married 48 years so maybe another move or two.

We love living in Old Orchard Beach, Maine, and I am afraid we don't qualify in many of your requirements We live on the ocean and we have lots of winter. People are nice...it is just that some of these New Englanders think you need to be cold and distant until they have known you for about 20 years.

Anyway, Happy Birthday Vanessa. Life is wonderful at my age--69

Congrats to you all.

Tania of MauiShopGirl:

This episode was so helpful for me! As I look backwards and forwards in my life I have begun to realize every bad decision/consequence was a result of coasting through life. I don't mean life has been so easy I've coasted along but more that I have never had a plan. I don't live in the moment impulsively per se but I've never gone through the analysis of "pillars" as you've done. This coasting has permeated into all areas of my life from finances to men to career with some serious consequences. At the beginning of 2014 instead of doing resolutions I have been writing in a life journal (there are some pre-printed ones online with writing prompts or you can make your own). Writing in a life journal is completely in line with your concept of life

strategy and the exercise is meant for all year, not just at the beginning. It goes through strengths/weaknesses/goals/self-reflection. Writing down pillars and going through this methodology is a perfect activity for my journal. Be sure to let us know when Dan's product goes live (is it on Quirky or a similar crowd sourcing platform?). Happy birthday Vanessa and there are many good things that come with being in your 40s. I was pleasantly surprised and wouldn't go back to any earlier decade.

Jenny Thompson also wrote and swears her town is the best town for us!

Wow! I had to pause the podcast and write because you two are describing my town. I had to laugh as you were listing all the ideal features you are looking for and mentally checking them off. We even have a military base.

Not that I'm trying to pitch Meaford Ontario to you. We don't really want our secret to get out ;) but boy it feels good hearing you two articulate all the way I feel satisfied with my choice of town.

We meet just about all your criteria except taxes and weather. We're in Canada so I'm pretty sure our taxes would shock you (as much as we grumble about them, I've

always felt I get good return for my money)

As for weather - well we're in Ontario so I know Dan is familiar with those "four" seasons. Let's face it - it's really winter with a side of summer and a sprinkling of soggiess and autumn.

Thank you for your thoughtful podcast. Your advice on being intentional about the place in the world you want to be is so wise. I will be thinking about looking inward, outward, behind, and forward in all my decision making from now on.

Enjoy your searching!

Sara Grafton:

I can really relate to your process and criteria! When you find a place that fits, I cannot wait to hear about it.

You may just end of the some Simple Life Together listeners as neighbors.

And a shout out to **Hope Griffin**, **Sheryl Balthrop** and **Toni Scott** also wrote in. Thank you!!!

So yeah...Episode 65 was a pretty popular episode so check it out if you haven't already.

Announcements:

BTW, Dan and I are speaking at the National Assoc of Prof Org Annual Conference in Phoenix, so we'll be in Phoenix, AZ from 27-31 May. If you're in the Phoenix area and are interested in a meetup, email me at Vanessa@SimpleLifeTogether.com and maybe we can set something up in Eventbrite. It would be great to meet you!

SimpleRev Tickets: Dont forget to pick up your tickets to 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.

There will be some great workshop leaders there, including Joshua BECKER from BecomingMinimalist.com, Mike VARDY from Productivityist.com, Brooks DUNCAN from DocumentSnap.com, David DELP from PilotFire.com, and others.

And be sure to check out the All Things SimpleRev podcast as well. There's a link in the shownotes, or just search iTunes for SimpleRev, all one word. On Episode 3 Joel and I talk with our friend Joshua Becker about...you guessed it...simplicity! So have a listen.

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 66 of Simple Life Together. There's no path to simple living out there waiting for you. You have to find your way. But together, we can make the journey a bit easier. We can shape our future by sharing some triumphs & trials, and tools & techniques to help each other out along the way.

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/066. If you keep up with our shows as they're released, look for our next show at the end 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:

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