

Voluntary Simplicity

"The course has given me a sense of hope and support for a happier, healthier, more balanced life."

- Communications consultant, Portland, Oregon

VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY IS A FIVE-SESSION DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR THE WORKPLACE, COMMUNITY CENTER OR HOME.

PARTICIPANTS IN THIS DISCUSSION COURSE WILL:

Gain an understanding of the meaning of voluntary simplicity

Explore the material and psychological distractions that prevent us from caring for Earth

Consider how life might be enriched through the practice of simplicity

Develop a personal Action Plan to integrate simplicity into their lives



INSPIRING PEOPLE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EARTH

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VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY: DISCUSSION COURSE DESCRIPTION

SESSION THEME	DESCRIPTION	READINGS
The Meaning of Simplicity	The concept of simplicity, as a religious practice or philosophy of life, has a long history. Inner simplicity and outer simplicity are both involved. What are some common misconceptions about a simple life?	<p>"Voluntary Simplicity and the New Global Challenge" by Duane Elgin</p> <p>"Living Deeply" by Janet Luhrs</p> <p>"Take Your Time" by Heather Menzies</p> <p>"Seeing" by Annie Dillard</p> <p>The Simple Living Wheel</p> <p>Action Plan</p>
Living More With Less	Accumulating material possessions is part of the American Dream. For some, the dream has become a nightmare. When do material possessions add meaning to our lives and when do they detract?	<p>"When It's All Too Much" by Barry Schwartz</p> <p>Excerpt from <i>Stepping Lightly</i> by Mark Burch</p> <p>"The Secret to Happiness" by David Myers</p> <p>"Cleaning the Closet" by Juliet Schor</p> <p>"Teachings of World Religions on Consumerism" by Alan Durning</p> <p>"When Enough is Enough" by Maurina Schaffler</p> <p>Action Plan</p>
Making a Living	A growing number of people wish to resolve the conflict between the desire to make and spend money and the desire for a more enjoyable lifestyle. Why is that so difficult in our culture?	<p>"In Praise of Slowness" by Carl Honore</p> <p>"Economy and Pleasure" by Wendell Berry</p> <p><i>Your Money or Your Life</i> by Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin</p> <p>"What Should I Do With My Life?" by Po Bronson</p> <p>Action Plan</p>
Do You Have the Time?	In modern society, our minds are focused on the "busyness" of the day, our current problems, and our future challenges. Are there alternatives to the fast pace of mainstream culture?	<p>"Simplicity, Time, and Money" by Mark Burch</p> <p>"Caught in the Current" by Jay Bookman</p> <p>Excerpts from "Simplifying" by Victoria Moran</p> <p>"Beyond the Blue Glow" by Lisa Lambert</p> <p>"I Need a Virtual Break...No Really" by Mark Bittman</p> <p>"Decompressing Time" by Heather Menzies</p> <p>"Washing the Dishes" by Thich Nhat Hahn</p> <p>Action Plan</p>
Living Simply and Sustainably	As a society, we engage in patterns of material consumption that are damaging the environment. How much do we really need?	<p>"The Green Triangle" by Earnest Callenbach</p> <p>"Conservation is Good Work" by Wendell Berry</p> <p>"Living Simply and Strengthening Community" by Richard Czaplinski</p> <p>Excerpt from "Small Wonder" by Barbara Kingsolver</p> <p>"Everyday Ought to be Earth Day" by Ann Lovejoy</p> <p>Final Action Plan</p>

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