

# Voluntary Simplicity

*“The course has given me a sense of hope and support for a happier, healthier, more balanced life. I now am aware that there is another way of living different from what we are bombarded by out in the rest of the world.”*

*- Community leader, Victoria, BC*

**VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY IS A FIVE-SESSION DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR THE WORKPLACE, COMMUNITY/FAITH CENTRE OR HOME.**

## **PARTICIPANTS IN THE 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**

389 Atkins Avenue  
Victoria, BC  
V9B 3A1

Phone: 250-727-9163  
Email: [info@CanadianEarthInstitute.org](mailto:info@CanadianEarthInstitute.org)  
Website: [www.CanadianEarthInstitute.org](http://www.CanadianEarthInstitute.org)

# VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY: DISCUSSION COURSE DESCRIPTION

Session Theme	Description	Readings
<b>The Meaning of Simplicity</b>	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>
<b>Living More With Less</b>	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>“The Secret to Happiness” by David Myers</p> <p>Excerpt from <i>Stepping Lightly</i> by Mark Burch</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>
<b>Making a Living</b>	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>
<b>Do You Have the Time?</b>	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>
<b>Living Simply and Sustainably</b>	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>