

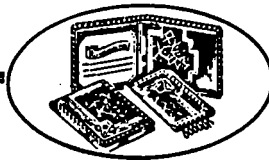
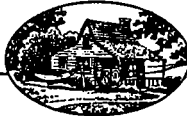
SIMPLE LIVING

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How Much Is Enough?

by Vicki Robin & Joe Dominguez

Vicki Robin and Joe Dominguez have written a book detailing their philosophy, titled "Your Money or Your Life" (Viking/Penguin, 1992).

Back when we all more or less bought the American Dream, life seemed so much... well, simpler. We had clear, compelling and wholesome goals. Upward mobility. Better living through chemistry. Being a company man. Mom, dad, two kids, a dog and a house in the suburbs. Big business and big government closing ranks to eliminate poverty, hunger and deprivation for everyone. This was the type of simplicity, however, that comes from excluding troubling aspects of reality that don't fit the tidy model. For many the dream became a nightmare. Witness the Los Angeles riots. For others (perhaps the majority), however, there's been more of a slow dawning than a rude awakening. Something is not right. I have it all -- the house, the degree, the dream job, two children -- and yet it's not enough.

Those who have had the courage to look this malaise in the eye are coming to see that feeling fulfilled will come not from having all the answers but from asking the right questions. Is the American Dream my dream? How much is enough for me -- in every area, from cars to kids to career advancement? Are there things I have sacrificed in the effort to have what everyone else seems to have? Is there alluring and worthy territory to explore that isn't even shown on the old road map for life?

Voluntary simplicity is one answer to the yearning for a richer, fuller, more balanced life. For 23 years we (Vicki Robin and Joe Dominguez) have lived a life of voluntary simplicity. Voluntary in that we have purposefully/ consciously chosen to live each one of those years below our income. Simplic-

ity in that our incomes have been modest (at a level described, erroneously in our view, by the U.S. Government as "near poverty") but totally adequate -- always "enough" and always balanced and fulfilling.

Are there things I have sacrificed in the effort to have what everyone else seems to have?

Yes, voluntary simplicity seems to be a solution to the rat race -- but a word of warning! This new lifestyle isn't a new answer. It simply gives you the opportunity to entertain (and be entertained by) a whole new set of questions, ones that will lead you on a joyful path of discovery.

It was through entertaining such questions that our audiocassette course *Transforming Your Relationship With Money and Achieving Financial Independence*, was born. (All proceeds from tape sales are donated to various organizations working for a worthy cause.) The information in that course came out of Joe questioning the old road map back in the 1960s when he was in his 20s. What is money? Does money buy happiness? Is "9-to-5-'til-you're-65" the only way to live life? Is it possible to work for a finite period of time, releasing "the best years of your life" for exploring other, perhaps higher purposes?

The by-product of this questioning was Joe's plan for retiring early, which he did in 1969 at the age of 30. The fact that the course exists came out of another series of questions. How can we serve? How can we share what we know so that others are

empowered to create their own answers to questions about money and meaning and purpose? The course has been purchased and put into practice by many people, catapulting them into a similar process of questioning their assumptions and searching for answers. Some of them write to us with the quandaries and concerns: Should we pay off our mortgage? What do I do about health insurance? How can we teach (impose?) these new values to our kids? Should I stay in a secure job or branch out? What do I do once I no longer have to work for a living? What if... We have agreed to write a column for this newsletter in which we share our answers to such questions. We plan to be both practical and philosophical, since both approaches are essential to living more simply. We share with you a love for this adventure of living true to what's important and of refining our answers to the central question of, What is enough -- of anything!

If you have made changes in your life as a result of the New Road Map Foundation course and would like to share your story, please call Vicki Robin at the Foundation.

VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY WORKSHOPS

If you'd like to learn more about simple living, you can join a voluntary simplicity workshop held at North Seattle Community College in Seattle, Washington. The workshops are held quarterly. For information call 206-527-3705. Or write to *Simple Living*, 1802 N. 54th Street, Seattle, Washington 98103, U.S.A. for information on how to start a workshop in your area.