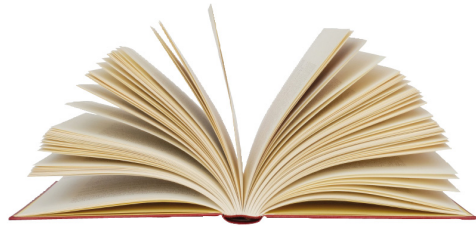
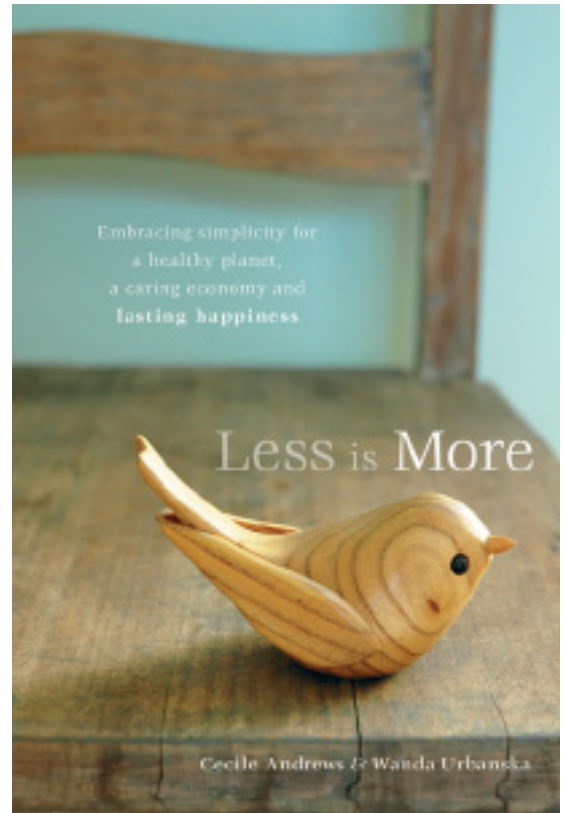


David Suzuki Foundation
BOOK CLUB



Reading Guide

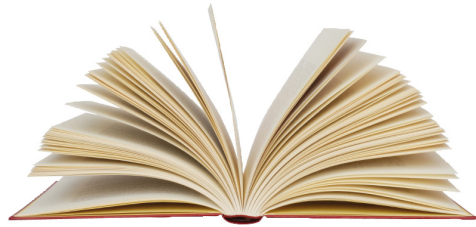


Less is More:
Embracing Simplicity for a Healthy
Planet

Edited by Cecile Andrews & Wanda Urbanska



David Suzuki Foundation BOOK CLUB



Welcome Readers!

Thank you for participating in the David Suzuki Foundation Book Club! It's an opportunity for Canadians to take part in a broader discussion about our shared future. Whether you gather online or in your local communities, we hope the conversations inspired by reading our selections will motivate everyone to work together to protect the diversity of nature and our quality of life, now and for the future.

Our second selection, *Less is More*, is a group of thought-provoking essays on voluntary simplicity, compiled by Cecile Andrews and Wanda Urbanska. Wisdom traditions have always taught the value of simplicity but today, finding more balanced ways of living has become a necessity. Climate change, economic insecurity, and the end of cheap oil mean that a life driven by consumption is no longer possible.

This reading guide is designed to help stimulate personal reflections and meaningful discussions around the issues of balance and sustainability. It includes discussion questions to get conversations started and ideas for taking concrete action individually and as a community.

We believe that the themes found in *Less is More* will help Canadians explore the exciting possibility simplicity holds as an individual and collective response to the planetary crisis. We hope everyone involved in the David Suzuki Foundation Book Club is inspired to initiate change at the local level. Please join us on Facebook and share your reflections!

Warm wishes,

Aryne Sheppard
Manager of Community Leadership
David Suzuki Foundation



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Discussion Questions

1. What is simplicity? How can you apply the themes of simplicity found in Less is More to your life?
2. Have you ever experienced 'buyer's remorse'? What situations or emotions make you buy something you don't really need?
3. Wanda Urbanska, the author of "Simple Living: Lessons from the World of Television" wrote about "The Thing That Refused to Die" [LM 11]. Is there something in your closet or home that you are still using after many years?
4. In "Why Isn't This Empire Sustainable?" David Wann refers to polls which show that "more than half of all Americans...would gladly trade a day's pay every week for an extra day off" [LM 216]. Would you be willing to take a pay cut for additional time off? What are the barriers to reducing the 40-hour week?
5. The discussion about climate change often leads to worries about sustainability and the cost of green technology. But what is the economy for? What will happen when the global oil supply runs out? These are questions raised in "What's the Economy for, Anyway?" by John de Graaf [LM235].
6. Make a list of things that make you happier. How many of these are tied to your social status? How many are material objects?
7. 'Lagom' is Swedish for "exactly the right amount" [LM 102]. What is 'lagom' for you? How often do the people around you stop at "exactly the right amount"?
8. 'Ecocide' is the large scale destruction of the natural environment. Do you think humans are committing 'ecocide'? What would be your biggest 'crime'? Can you do anything to change this?
9. What would be an ideal day for you? How many things in your day require you to make a purchase? How many things involve being social and spending time with loved ones?
10. "The typical urban resident waits in line for five years of his or her life," says David Wann in "Finding Real Wealth: Twice the Value for Half the Resources" [LM 42]. We value our free time, yet we complicate our lives with activities that we consider 'wasting time'. What are some activities that waste your time? Is there any way for you to reduce or change these activities to reclaim more of your time for yourself?



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Take Action in your Community

Use the activities listed below to bring your book club conversations to life!

Start a simplicity circle

A simplicity circle is a group of individuals that meets on a regular basis to discuss ways to live more consciously. Getting together with others to talk about balanced living makes the practice easier to implement. “Time to Talk! Creating Simplicity Conversation Circles” by Cecile Andrews [LM 251] provides helpful hints on how to organize a circle with people in your life.



Tap into compassion

In “We Are Hard-wired to Care and Connect”, David Korten explains how expressing positive emotions like compassion “triggers the brain’s pleasure center and benefits our health by boosting our immune system” [LM 245]. Tap into these benefits by writing a

letter or visiting a loved one, and reconnecting in a meaningful way.

Ask for change

Vote with your voice and your dollars. Next time you are in a store that does not provide environmentally or socially conscious items such as organic produce or fair trade products, let the staff know you are interested in purchasing them. Most retailers care about what their customers want!

Improve your community

In “Changing the World One Block at a Time” [LM163], Jay Walljasper talks about how small changes at the local level can improve the lives of community residents. If there’s something you think can be improved where you live, gather a group of like-minded folks and act toward change. Let us know what you do!

Buy nothing day

‘Buy Nothing Day’, dedicated to consuming less and reducing waste, takes place the Friday after American Thanksgiving. Choose to celebrate your own ‘Buy Nothing Day’ with friends and family, or challenge yourself to a week (or month!) of only buying the bare essentials.

Read more from the authors you love

One of the benefits of an anthology is that some writers speak to you more than others – and there’s so many to choose from! Each essay in Less is More includes an introduction about the author. Look for more titles from those that inspire you.

Start a book club!

If you don’t have one already, Less is More is a great first read for a new Book Club. The chapters are short and can be used as conversation starters. Start a book club at work or with your friends, and use your favourite chapter to start the discussion.



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