



Simple, with Tsh Oxenreider

Episode 210

thesimpleshow.com

Segment One

Tsh: [00:04](#) This is Simple; I'm Tsh Oxenreider.

[00:14](#) Hey friends! In this episode, I'm chatting with my friend and co-host Kathryn Willis Pershey and as always on the show, we're talking about what we wrote about this week. Katherine wrote about a few great things to add to your reading list this fall and in the spirit of continuing education, it's back to school season, so why not for those of us who are no longer students as well. It's always good to be lifelong learners. We get into three things to help you learn more about history, ecology, and contemporary poetry. Then I shared with you my current good list in the spirit of my birthday, I turned 42 this past Monday and my birthday has always a season of reflection for me as I'm sure it is for many of you. In this chat I talk with Katherine about five things I've been learning the past few years, little shifts in my thinking and convictions that have made my life better. We'll get right into it.

But first, if you like Simple and you want to make sure you never miss a new episode, make sure you're subscribed. This means new episodes automatically drop into your podcast player. Just subscribe, either use your default podcast player like Apple Podcasts or Google Play for Android, or download a player of your choice like Stitcher or Overcast, that's what I personally use. We're also on Spotify. Search for Simple and you should see this show. Click to subscribe and done. It's the best way to never miss an episode. You can find links to do all of these things at thesimpleshow.com. Without further ado, here is Katherine and me first talking about good fall reads for deep diving on some important stuff.

[01:50](#) Katherine, this week you wrote about a reading list for us adults as we head into the fall school year. Tell me a little bit more about what you were thinking.

Katherine: I remember very clearly the first year after, I went straight from college to grad school and so I was 24 by the time I had my first year where I didn't have somebody giving me a book list, required reading. I remember thinking that was the most amazing thing I could have possibly happened upon. I got to pick all of my books. I started reading fiction again for the first time in a long time and just

loved that rhythm of being able to totally follow whatever I was interested in. I did a lot of reading for pure pleasure and, and just rediscovered who I was as a reader without the external reading lists, syllabus.

But I've felt in recent years, a longing for a little more structure and really liking the list of this is the plan. Obviously I don't stick to it with, I mean nobody's forcing me to, but I've loved being thoughtful about what I'm going to read over the over the course of of the next few months. I was thinking about back to school time and how all of our kiddos get to have their reading lists and their new school supplies and wanted to think that way for myself as an adult lifelong learner.

Tsh: [03:22](#) It's funny, I was an English major in college and I remember by the end of my senior year thinking I no longer like reading. I read a ton of novels as part of my degree, but it was all forced upon me like you said, and I almost felt this rebellious nature stir up in me, making me not want to read those just because somebody asked me to, even if I would have read them had it been my own choice. I just think it's funny, a couple of decades later now I am a high school English teacher. I teach class once a week and I have a reading list for these kids and I have for this school year, some books on there that I specifically remember not liking just because somebody told me to read them and it's just hilarious to me that the tables have turned and now here I am making some other teenagers read these books.

Katherine: [04:07](#) Okay. Now I'm totally curious. Do you assign *Heart of Darkness*?

Tsh: [04:11](#) I haven't yet, but I want to, I'm going to do, to nerd it out for the future, I think if next year I do a broader world lit reading list, we're going to do *Heart of Darkness*, but I hated it senior year.

Katherine: I hated it too! I can't believe that you're going to bring that upon another generation.

Tsh: I know, I might change my mind. But here's the thing. For example, the first book we're going to read in class is *The Scarlet Letter* and I hated that my junior year of high school. I feel like there's a bit of wisdom that I've gained over the few decades since I've read it last that helps me see, okay, maybe it's not my favorite book ever, but it's important to have read it, if that makes sense.

Katherine: [04:51](#) *Heart of Darkness* is just for me, the symbol of everything academically required reading. I had to read that book for three different classes in high school and college. By the time I had it assigned the third time, I was an English major too, and then seminary I was studying, seminary is this totally different situation where you're studying a little bit of everything. There's reading in

theology and biblical studies and pastoral care. You have this really broad scope though you can't go super in depth in any one area cause there's just too many, too many areas to study. In terms of my history as an English major, that book is everything that I wanted, that freedom from. I've been returning to some of the classics that I read as a high school student. Even the ones that I didn't love and slowly rereading them as an adult. I love what I learned about from the book itself, but then about who I was then and why I responded to the literature the way I did.

Tsh: [05:55](#) Oh, it's so true. It's hilarious. Last year we read *Jane Eyre* in our class and I loved that book in college and I felt like I identified with Jane Eyre and she was like my kindred spirit and I can read now and I totally see why the 21 year old Tsh thought that way. But I feel like I can look back and see I still really admire her as a literary figure, but I see a lot more flaws in her character than I used to, in a good way, I think. That's what's fun about rereading these classic books as a form of self-education in this lifelong learning you were just talking about in your post.

Tell me a little bit about what you're thinking for yourself moving forward or maybe what you've suggested.

Katherine: [06:38](#) I think you are familiar with the *1619 Project*, as well. That is the first piece. That's actually what really got me thinking about this in terms of I want to create a syllabus for myself because reading this American history project that was put together by the New York Times. It's the 400th anniversary of the first slave ship arriving in Virginia. On the occasion of that they have put together this incredible wealth of historical articles and then there's literary responses by contemporary African American writers on different topics in history. It's so much that I didn't know and it's so humbling and honestly, I mean the actual content is obviously horrifying because slavery, but then I think about the way that it was taught to me and softened and just filtered through. In some ways, I mean you have to teach a 12 year old in a developmentally appropriate way. But I never really returned to that. I didn't take a lot of history classes in college and beyond the the units I've had here and there, I just feel like I have just this gaping hole in my education about what that institution of slavery really was. And so reading it, it's humbling and it makes me want to know what actually happened. I committed. I am reading the whole thing cover to cover. We actually have the paper copy but you don't have to be a subscriber to the newspaper to get it. They put the whole project online.

Tsh: [08:16](#) Yes. I have the paper copy and I am so glad I did. I went out of my way on Sunday to go find it in my neighborhood. But like you said, not only can you look at the interactive website, but they partnered with a Pulitzer Center to make an available online free as a pdf. I'll put a link in the show notes to that. I don't

know if you knew this, Katherine, but they have a curriculum geared towards, I don't know what exactly what age, but it's for kids, school age kids on how to incorporate more lesson plans and classroom activities in an age appropriate way. I'm going to dig into it. I bought it both for myself, like what you were saying, but also for my English class because we are doing American literature this year so it could not be more perfect, but also for my own kids, just maybe resources to talk over the dinner table or something.

Katherine: [09:03](#) That's really heartening. I mean I remember a few years ago when I was astonished to realize how much longer there was slavery then since there's been slavery. It was 400 years ago that slavery started and we haven't even gotten to the point where we've been out of slavery as long as we were in slavery. I can't remember the year, but it's so far into the future. That hit me a few years ago, the first thing that hit me this time was learning that that first slave ship arrived even before the pilgrims landed. How did I not know that?

Tsh: Well, we weren't taught it, probably. I feel very similarly to some of the things I've read. I mean not only some of the history, but the application to modern era stuff. I don't remember hearing this perspective at all in my public high school, that was a really good school and I don't think my teachers had ill intent or were purposely trying to be biased or to whitewash history or to leave parts out, but they were in some of the things that frustrate me and make me mad about a lot of this stuff is maybe not so much that people currently teaching it in a way that's biased, but they're doing that because they were taught that and they're doing it because those people were taught that to where it's like been a systemic longterm issue in our country that's from the beginning. You can look back and say, oh, generations of people probably didn't know that it was 1619 when the first slave ship came.

Katherine: It's really something else. I'm only two articles into it, but I'm going to keep working my way through. I'm not letting myself off the hook on learning this history.

Tsh: Nice. I love that. We'll have to keep up with that and hear what takeaways you have from different ones. I've sort of bookmarked the ones I can't wait to read. Not to mention is the content itself important and good, but these writers are enormously talented who's featured in this. You've got Bryan Stevenson and Eve Ewing and Nicole Hannah Jones and Barry Jenkins and Yaa Gyasi. I mean these are brilliant journalists, but also poets and novelists. It's just fantastic.

You mentioned a few other things. What was the other one?

Katherine: This is an interesting one. Twice the summer, the book *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer came out. maybe three years ago.

Tsh: I have never heard of it.

Katherine: Well I hadn't either. But again, it came up twice this summer, once online and there were seven comments of people saying, oh me too. I love that book. But then it was when it came up, I was at the Glen workshop in Santa Fe this summer and someone mentioned this book and I'm telling you like a third of the room just had this audible reaction. I thought, clearly I need to find this book. I didn't know anything about it. I bought it from our library audiobook app. It's read by the narrator and she is, I can't tell you how likable she is. She is so likable as a reader. She always sounds like she's smiling when she talks and it just so endearing, unless she sounded like she's going to cry, which is also endearing and its own way. She a Pottawatomie woman who is a botany professor and so she's weaving together this indigenous wisdom and this very high level ecology and scientific approach of seeing the world and just weaving it together with this beautiful writing. I mean it's so poetically written, just lyrical and she tells stories and she sometimes you think to yourself, I am listening to a chapter about lichen and it doesn't impossible that this chapter could be so very fascinating, but she just makes the world, she makes you really curious about the world around you and part of what she's writing out of is this desire to heal the relationship between humans and our environment and the world around us. Then she teaches these students who are very clear on how humans hurt the earth but trying to tease out all of the ways we we can have this relationship of reciprocity and respect and she talks about the honorable harvest. It is nothing like anything I've ever read before and I cannot get enough of it. I feel like I'm learning a lot about science, a lot about native American ways of thinking. Again, just as you said with the 1619 Project, such good writing.

Tsh: That makes all the difference when the writing is so good you can't stop thinking about it, when it makes those of us who are a little more right brained, enjoy science I think is is a telltale sign for me that it's well written. Does it have a how to element or is it simply poetic and you extract your own how to?

Katherine: It's not really how to. If you paid really close attention, you might in fact learn how to strip apart cat tails and get to this aloe vera like gel on the inside that you can rub up skin with a sunburn. That's stretching pretty far. It's more of a more of a pure learning and literary experience.

Tsh: I love that. It sounds fantastic. I'm going to put that on my TBR list.

Katherine: I think you would love it.

Tsh: Yeah, it sounds up my alley. Okay, which by way I meant to mention earlier, whenever you're bringing up the 1619 Project, those of you who are patrons, the most recent World At Home episode is about the 1619 Project. I put it out a few

weeks ago at the time of this recording, so just heads up, go check your patron feed if you hadn't heard it. This *Braiding Sweetgrass* actually sounds, I mean it sounds World At Home-ish, so I'm going to have to look into that. We might do a deep dive on that as well, thanks for that heads up.

Katherine: [15:15](#) I'm pretty sure it came out in 2016 and I think it wasn't especially well known at first, but I think it's one of those books that's growing by word of mouth. I would be very surprised if someone within the next month doesn't recommend it to you.

Tsh: [15:31](#) It's funny how books have that cycle like that. I tend to appreciate books that are several years old that are recommended to me because that means they've stayed the test of time and they're not just a one hit wonder or a flash in the pan because it's popular right now or you know what I mean? That's cool.

What was the third thing you mentioned? Because this is one I haven't heard either. Tell us more about it.

Katherine: [15:51](#) I was as I said, an English major in college and took as many poetry reading and writing classes as I possibly could. Loved poetry. It hasn't had as much of a role in my life as an adult as I wish it did. It's so easy to get hyper-practical and the beautiful thing about poetry is it's impractical. That's actually a good thing. Like Sabbath, not accomplishing anything on Sabbath. This is a different one. It's not quite the same as learning about botany or history but, two poetry books that I have been reading and intend to finish this fall, *Good Bones* by Maggie Smith and *Sorry for Your Troubles* by Pádraig Ó Tauma. Are you familiar with either of those poets?

Tsh: I am not. I'm looking at Maggie Smith's website right now as we're talking, so tell me more.

Katherine: [16:46](#) You might have seen the title poem, "Good Bones," is a poem that went viral a few years ago. The thing that happens super often, poetry doesn't really go viral in our culture, but, it was this incredibly beautiful poem about how the way that a realtor walks somebody around a house and tries to convince them that they can make this house beautiful.

Tsh: Yes, that sounds familiar.

Katherine: She's trying to convince her children that despite the pain and tragedies of the world, that it's worth their time and attention. It's worth their appreciation. She's selling the world to her children.

Tsh: Yes, I remember this.

Katherine: It's a heartbreaking poem. Actually, this is the only time I've ever said an expletive in the pulpit. I read that poem in worship because I just love it so much and it has so much to teach us, I decided to take the risk of offending everyone and I read it and then I prayed that I might be forgiven for having spoken that word on the pulpit. Despite the one word that might be offensive to some, it's just an incredible poem. It's also the title poem for this whole book of poetry and the poetry explores a lot of the same themes of motherhood and vulnerability and that tug between the ache of things being so painful and yet so beautiful and it's very accessible poetry. Even if you don't have a lot of experience reading poems. I know poetry can be really intimidating if you aren't familiar with it. Oftentimes poets are doing things and we don't follow and it can be hard to settle down and just accept the language as it is and the beauty of it. But these are very accessible poems and I highly recommend it. I'm really enjoying it so far.

Tsh: We've written about poetry in the past on the blog in particular, our fellow co-host here, Crystal, because she is actually a poet. She's gotten her master's in, I want to say poetry. She's written a small collection of poems and so she talked about the, like you say, there's not a real purpose of poetry, but there can be a purpose in that it purposely slows us down. It's lack of purpose adds value to our lives because we are intentionally adding something. It came up first whenever we made it as suggestion to the antidote of social media. Whenever you are cutting out social media in your life, let's say you have a habit you can't seem to break of scrolling Instagram right before bed. Maybe try replacing it with reading some poetry. It's really slow. You have to concentrate. It might lull you to sleep pretty easily. Her suggestion was instead of your smartphone, keep a book of poetry on your nightstand and just give it a try and see if it affects you positively basically over this social media habit and I thought that was really great.

Katherine: This would be a good one. Some of them are really sad but honest. I think that's one thing that our readers and listeners probably have in common is they don't really have the energy for false cheeriness, so that even though there's that sorrow there, it's the gift of honesty is everything.

Tsh: I completely agree. I am so glad to have known about this, especially the "Good Bones" poem, just reminding me of that actual poem. I had forgotten about it. I'm reading it right now and I remembered how much I loved it when I read it. Good recommendations.

Katherine: Then Pádraig Ó Tauma is the other poet I mentioned and the book of his that I bought is *Sorry for Your Troubles*. Troubles obviously it refers to that phrase but the troubles in Ireland. He's an Irish poet and I encountered him this summer. I was able to take a workshop with him at the Glen Workshop, I mentioned

before, I was in Santa Fe this summer. Incredible experience. He was such a good teacher and introduced me to a lot of other poets. I have more poets I'm going to work through their catalogs and anthologies. But I wanted to spend a little more time with his work.

I'd read his memoir, *In the Shelter*, which is also beautiful, but this book comes out of his work as a peacemaker. And again, the context of our world, listening to poems written by an experienced peacemaker just seems like a really good spiritual practice. I'm learning a lot about history of Ireland from some of the notes and I heard him read this this summer and he speaks beautifully about that painful time in the history of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Tsh: We'll put a link in the show notes to that book and I just found an episode of his when he was On Being.

Katherine: Listen to all of his interviews on On Being, that's a great way to get acquainted with his work.

Tsh: Very cool. Okay, I'll add that as well in the show notes. Thanks. That's a great suggestion. I'm glad to know about them.

Segment Two

Tsh: [26:14](#) This week I wrote about, I mean, I want to say I wrote about my birthday, but I didn't really write about my birthday. I've had this tradition where around my birthday I tend to write some heartfelt, deeper reflection piece about things I'm learning, things I've learned the past year or maybe my whole life or whatever it is. Whatever it was, I just didn't have the bandwidth, I think it's because this year just specially crazy with also being a teacher. Just trying to get ready for the school year and my new class along with my kid's starting school, blah, blah, blah. My birthday comes at a really inconvenient time of year to be honest, as a parent, because it's always right when school starts. As a student, it was the same way. My birthday was frequently the first day of school, which no one wants. But that's okay. I still wrote it this past Monday because it was actually my birthday, I just wrote a good list. It had been a few months since I'd done one and I thought, I'm gonna just keep it lighthearted and make suggestions on things that are just making me a little happier, making my life a little sweeter. That post is really lighthearted. It talks about a TV show I really enjoyed this summer, a beauty product I'm really using a lot right now, that kind of thing. Link in the show notes if you're curious what I said there. I thought I would save my chat with you, Katherine, about a few of the deeper things maybe I'm reflecting on right now, in light of having turned 42. I just thought I would talk with you about five things I'm learning right now. You're similar in age, aren't you? I don't remember.

Katherine: I love the way that you have written about your birthdays over the years as I am getting ready to turn 40 this year. You're always just a little ahead of me, especially for that big four-o. I've learned so much from the ways you reflect on this. I feel like I have less work to do when it's my turn.

Tsh: That's good, I love it. What made me really think about this is, not too long ago, a good friend of mine turned 40 just a few days after my birthday, so this week and all month long, she's celebrated her birthday, made August her birthday month where she's just going out to dinner with different friends. That was her gift to herself as basically just asking a whole bunch of friends for dinner. She invited me in another mutual friend to dinner. The three of us went out and I thought, what a cool way to recognize your birthday, to interact with people who are meaningful to you. She helped me flip that switch into more like, oh, I should be reflecting on my turning another year. I liked that she did it, especially for her 40th. If I would go back, I would probably incorporate some of that into my birthday month.

Here's five things. The first one, I know you can probably identify with this, Katherine, as a yoga instructor. The thing I've been learning over the past few years is that it's so important for me to move in order to feel better and not for some arbitrary numeric goal. For that I mean, most of my life I've thought of exercise as this means to an end, whether it's losing weight or getting stronger or specific goals that can be quantified. While those things are well and good and not bad at all, for me, I'm learning that I stick with it and I actually enjoy movement so much more when I think of it as a way to make me feel better and that the means itself of exercising the end is just the enjoyment of exercise. It's helped, this little tiny shift in perspective has helped me with things like letting go of perfectionism. I used to think, gosh, if I can't devote a full hour to working out, I might as well not at all, as opposed to now, I really embraced this whole idea of something is better than nothing. I will literally do yoga for 10 minutes in the morning if I have a full day just because I know it'll feel better than not doing anything or I will really focus on the endorphin release. I mentioned in a post recently about the books I read on sabbatical and one of them was *Burnout*.

Katherine: I read that this summer too.

Tsh: You did? They talk about closing the stress cycle and that running or doing some form of aerobic activity or even just movement in general really can help with that. I completely agree because for me one of the best reasons to work out is just for those endorphins and just to feel better emotionally maybe not so much like literally with my muscles. That's an added bonus almost. Is that something that you recognize in your yoga instructing at all?

Katherine: Oh, absolutely and with running too. I had to take a year off of running because I was having hip issues last year and I missed it so much and it wasn't that I missed races. I've never been a competitive runner. I missed the endorphins. I've always said I'm like a horse. You have to like run me in the fields or even for my, especially for my mental health and yes, it's good for my physical health too, but my primary motivation really is that integration feeling good in body, mind and spirit.

Tsh: Yeah, me too. I took a year off of running as well back when I tore my ACL and it took me a long time to get back to running and I'm still not a regular runner and I miss it and I'm going to get back to that for that reason alone, just for the stress release. That's something I'm learning a lot that's come with age over the past few years.

[32:01](#) A second one is the idea of Jomo, which we have talked about before. It is not new, it's the alternative to Fomo and Jomo stands for the joy of missing out. For me, I've really come to embrace this more and more as I've gotten older because it helps me flip the script. For example, just a really practical thing. For me, sometimes I struggle with Instagram because it does create fomo in me. It creates this, oh gosh, those people that I know collectively, they're all together and I'm not there. Or this person is in this beautiful location on vacation and I am folding laundry in my living room. Those kinds of feelings can really build up and it just messes with my head. I need to have a pretty arms length distance with Instagram in my life. But what I've learned to do is flip the script a little bit by embracing Jomo, by thinking about what I am getting to do by missing out on that thing.

For example, by not being on Instagram, I've been able to read so many more books because my attention span has increased and I literally have more time. It's amazing what a time suck scrolling Instagram can be. Or if I see friends together on Instagram because they're at, let's say, a conference together that I couldn't make, it's easy for me to really wish I was at that conference or workshop. But instead, flipping the switch by thinking about what I am doing instead of that be it some family event which is causing me to not be at the conference or more time alone to recharge, let's say like maybe that conference was cost prohibitive, but instead what I'll choose to do is maybe have a workday that's just for my own personal benefit. Whether I'm taking a class online or I'm spending that time journaling to think through sort of my game plan for the next six months, whatever it is, focusing on the thing I get to do instead of what I missing really helps with that idea of Jomo. Am I right in thinking you're the one that you've written about it or podcast about it or something? I can't remember.

Katherine: [34:01](#) I can't remember if I have, I'm definitely familiar with it and it's definitely something I have to work toward because I for sure go into the Fomo.

Tsh: I think for those of us who are Enneagram fours, like the both of us, we tend to have that low grade feeling like something is always missing in our lives. That's a struggle we have. The idea of Jomo helps me realize and recognize what isn't missing because it's my default to notice what's missing. Jomo really, I don't know, I don't want to say gives me permission, but it reminds me to notice on what isn't missing and what's actually added because of the thing that maybe is missing. Just a thought there.

The third thing that I've been learning the past few years is that for me personally, events are almost always better than things. I've written for a decade now about how I don't like lots of clutter in my house. That is not brand new information. I think a lot of times, especially early on, I make that choice out of necessity. Meaning we don't have the money for that thing. And so I think of an alternative way to, like a DIY project or just learning to live without it or embracing the things I do have in life. All those good things. That's still true but I'm learning over the years that when I do have the money, I'm actually finding myself more apt to enjoy events over things on purpose. Like with my birthday instead of a thing, I asked Kyle for a membership to Masterclass this year. In the past, or I think last year maybe we went to see Andrew Bird in concert. Those events and activities, going out to dinner or alone time at a coffee shop, definitely travel. All those things, the events in our lives that take time, to me, they're all better than stuff. They last longer in terms of memory and personal growth and bonding and all those things so much more than a thing would. The older I get, the more I see the value in spending money on doing something, even if it's a onetime event over a thing because I just enjoy it more.

Katherine: Yeah, I've heard it too that with things, their value depreciates over time. But with events as you remember the memory, it gains value over time. It's even an investment long term.

Tsh: Yeah, I've heard that too about travel. That travel is the only thing you spend money on that is a net gain or, I don't remember the phrase, I said it better, I 100% agree. The dividends just keep on returning whenever you do something meaningful and you can pair it with spending time with people you love or getting that alone time you need, all those things. To me, I so appreciate events over things these days.

The fourth thing is similar but a little bit different. It's this idea of putting my money where my mouth is and I've grown to appreciate the act of doing that so much more over the past few years. The idea of, and I'm not talking about dedicating a lot of money, it's not about the amount at all. In fact, sometimes it's

even a small amount because, it makes you feel like you're able to do something when you can't do it all. This idea of, for example, political candidates that align with our values or supporting artists on patreon, going ahead and spending a dollar or two more on fair trade coffee or chocolate, choosing to shop on Etsy for something handmade or indie made as opposed to big box made or just donating to organizations that I truly care about.

All those little things, and I'm talking like \$5 more max. To me, it's just so empowering and it's also enjoyable and I've learned over the past few years how enjoyable it is to do that. I never thought, I mean five years ago, if you told me I would enjoy giving money to a political candidate, I would have thought you were crazy because it just wasn't even on my radar. But now I feel like that is a small thing I can do as a human to vote with my dollars. I've really grown to appreciate that more and more over the past few years.

Katherine: That seems like good stewardship of your resources. The only that I would add to that list that this kind of speaks to the one before, events are almost always better than things unless that thing is an original work of art. You know me and my love for buying art. The Etsy thing. But that's another thing, supporting artists and I feel the same way about buying a new book of poetry. So few people are supporting the arts in that way. That's another one, even though it is a thing is another one I'd add to that list.

Tsh: Oh yeah. I totally think that there are some things that are worth spending money on. For me it's that little nudge of conviction whenever I am enjoying an album or I am watching some kind of art on whatever it is. Like whenever I notice it and I think, oh, I wish more people knew about this person, or I wish this person, I just would love for this person to get the recognition that they deserve. And then I have to think, oh wait, have I done anything to contribute to that? That's when I'll like go on Patreon and become a patron or that's when I'll go ahead and buy that book of poetry. I'm totally with you there.

The fifth thing, the last thing that I feel like I've learned over the past few years is this idea of talking to myself 10 years in the future or, or maybe not so much talking, but just remembering myself 10 years in the future when I make decisions now. This was a huge thing for me on my sabbatical that really helped me move forward when I thought about things like the fall or a year down the road. It's this idea of looking backwards in the future. 10 years from now, what will I look back on and be glad I spent my time and my resources and my skills and all those good things on.

It's this idea of in a way, like when they say to write your eulogy and you reflect back on what was the most important thing in your life. It's a basic idea of the me a decade from now, what could I do to make her proud of how I was a good

steward of all those things? This is especially pertinent for me right now in my particular life stage because my youngest is nine my oldest is 14 so that means 10 years from now I will be an empty nester, most likely. That is bizarre to me.

Katherine: Yeah. I'm flabbergasted because I will be too.

Tsh: Right? If you think about how fast it's all gone and you know it because people have told you your whole life, how fast it goes, but you just don't realize how fast it goes till you're living in that. I still feel like I'm in the new parents age and oh no, no, I'm not. Before I know it, I know how fast 10 years has gone. In another 10 years it'll be empty nest season. That's bizarre to me. What do I want to spend those moments on? Those hours and days, not only the time, but also what I'm good at or not even what I'm good at, but more my best contribution to the greater good.

For me, that looks like, as an example, personally, I don't want to be a social media influencer. I don't want 10 years to look back on and say, I had some really amazing Instagram posts. I am not trying to knock those who choose to do that as a career option, really and truly, please don't hear me out. I'm talking about myself. For me, I would really regret if I spent most of my creative energy on writing really good Instagram captions over writing novels. I really just want to get to it now. I want to get some of those books finally written. I want to take care of my body. I know I would regret if I look back and just said, you know what? I only live once, who cares? It's just a body and not done things to make me a better parent to adult children later on life, a grandma, all those good things. I want to be a good steward of my body and it's those daily little choices that I can make today to make my 10 years in advance, version of myself happier. I want to love my neighbors well and honest to goodness. I want to spend lots of time with my kids. Back to that idea, when I think about how fast these 10 years have gone and that 10 years from now I'm going to blink and they're going to be adults. I want to make sure I do not waste this time, this moment, spending time on my laptop and just kind of ah-huh. When they're talking to me, I want to look them in the eye. I want to do things with them and not think about what else I could be doing or just wishing the time away, wishing they were a little bit older or whatever. None of that. I really, really just want to focus on the here and now and really appreciate who they are now at age 14 almost 12 and nine because I know it's gonna just wish buy.

That to me has been the key takeaway of my summer and really the past few years.

Katherine: This is why I rely on you being just a couple of years older and wiser than me. Very, very helpful. I so appreciate that you don't want your primary focus to be being an influencer, but I just want to say how grateful I am for your influence

because you have a pretty remarkable platform and you help the people who are tuning in all myself.

Tsh: [43:40](#) That is encouraging. It's not that I forget that. I just don't think about, I mean heck, back to the Enneagram Four thing, always feeling like something's missing. What's that Frederick Buechner thing about the world's deep need and your greatest whatever that is?

Katherine: Your great. Um, what is it?

Tsh: I don't know. I talk about in my course, I can't even remember.

Katherine: The world's deep need and your glad joy, is that right?

Tsh: That kind of intersection is like primo to me and so that's what I feel like I do most of the time in my work. It's just helpful whenever I hear that it does maybe scratch an itch for other people, so thank you for saying that. That means a lot.

You can find Katherine at KatherineWillisPershey.com and on Twitter @kwpershey. To keep up with me, I'm on twitter @Tsh and Instagram @TshOxenreider and of course, at theartofsimple.net where you can find my writing as well as Katherine's. Head to the show notes for this episode number 210 at thesimpleshow.com where you can find all sorts of things, links to things we talked about where you can sign up for my weekly email called Five Quick Things, how you can become a patron and support the work it takes to create the show for just a few dollars per month, as well as how to connect with Katherine and myself. The show is produced by Chad Michael Snavely, and thanks also to Caroline TeSelle, Andrea Debbink, and my furry intern Ginny. Thanks so much for listening. I'm Tsh Oxenreider and I'll catch you back here soon.