



A Few Tips for a Simple Life

by Michael Guilfoil, *The Spokesman-Review*

Organic farmer MaryJane Butters long ago embraced Thoreau's dictum to "simplify, simplify." As a Forest Service ranger in the 1970s, she spent two summers roaming Utah's Uinta Mountains with her home on her back. Later, she maintained the most remote wilderness ranger station in the Lower 48. Today, Butters and her family live eight miles outside Moscow, Idaho, on their farm, headquarters of her mail-order dry-foods business. But even e-commerce hasn't tempered Butters' enthusiasm for simplicity.

MaryJane's

2. Create a collage.

Not only is this a fun project just "for the heck of it," but collaging is also a sure way to stir up ideas. No fancy equipment required. Just gather a bunch of old magazines, greeting cards, or picture books and start snipping out images that call to you. Don't worry if they're completely unrelated or if they seem silly. It doesn't matter if you don't understand quite why they ring true. Trust your instincts. Paste the pictures on poster board and watch as a map of your spirit emerges.

3. Find a few minutes for free writing.

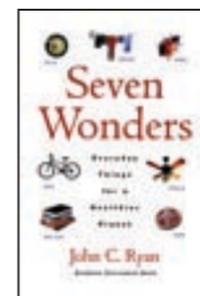
Indulge your deep love of the literary with a beautifully bound journal, just for you. Trust me, this little blank book will become your treasure-trove. Don't worry about penmanship or grammar; journal writing is a rare opportunity for unbridled thought. Unleash your pen and let it run wild across the open pages. Spur it with wishes, wonders, and what-ifs. When you read your entry, the tracks that your heart left upon the paper might surprise you.

4. Dance. Really!

Draw the curtains, lock the door, and let loose. Yes, dance! Technique is irrelevant here. The point is to hop and twist, "let your backbone slip." Wave your arms and stomp around until you start giggling, gasping, and letting go of all those cramped and uncomfortable cynicisms we carry. It will happen, guaranteed. Free-form dancing is a delightfully delirious way to loosen up and get in touch with your spirit. Try Shiva Rea's *Yoga Trance Dance* video to help set your limbs in motion.

Simple Solutions

for everyday ORGANIC™



In December 1999, a newspaper reporter from Washington called. He was writing a review of the book *Seven Wonders: Everyday Things for a Healthier Planet* by John C. Ryan. Michael Guilfoil of *The Spokesman-Review* newspaper asked me if I had my own "seven wonders." The story that ensued was headlined

"Simple Solutions." Here, then, is the continuation of that story. Each issue of *MaryJanesFarm* will feature in detail new solutions, and will give you all the information you need to make them your own.

Solutions from previous issues are available in the magazine section of my website: www.maryjanesfarm.org/Recipes-Patterns-Instructions



seven wonders

5. Meditate.

Make room in your schedule for five minutes of stillness and silent introspection once in the morning and once in the evening. You can spare that much time for getting to know yourself again, for falling in love with who you are. Shut the door, or better yet, get outdoors. No phone calls, no family matters. This is your time. Without the distractions of daily life, you can tune into your own longings. Lie back and watch the clouds. Jump on a trampoline at night and then "prone out" for a star count.

6. Create a meal, slowly.

A meal just for *you*. So often we feed others, but we must also nourish ourselves. Allow your senses to heighten as you create your personal culinary favorites. Smell, touch, see. Light some candles and present the meal to yourself—the guest of honor. Dine as if you have all the time in the world, coaxing flavor and inspiration from passionately prepared fare.

7. Practice praise.

There is no denying that the world is brimming with brilliant minds. Talent, ingenuity, and skill abound as far as the eye can see. Daunting? Nah. Inspiring. As you open your eyes to the work of talented women around you, allow yourself to experience awe without envy, and start doling out kudos like candy. You will find that the more freely you express your admiration, the greater your capacity for accomplishment, even if vicariously.

7 Ways to Tap into Your Own Brilliance

Ready to connect with your inner brilliance? The secret recipe for discovering your innate ability to shine is simple: Take a cup of curiosity, add a pinch of pampering, simmer to satisfaction, and then savor the inspiration that springs to life.

1. Take a walk outdoors.

A few minutes of peace under the wide-open sky is a perfect way to shake off the stresses that cloud creativity. The rhythmic sounds of your footsteps and breath will lull you into a more thoughtful state of mind, allowing you to focus on finding your purpose.