

Lessons of the Depression

"Things were bad," she said solemnly. "People were eating out of garbage cans." Her own family barely managed to keep food on the table – it was a steady diet of bland meals, but they were grateful just to eat. The Depression taught the economic lessons that mark many of that generation:



- The value of hard work and a decent job.
- The blessings of good food, adequate clothing and a house that is affordable, safe, warm and dry.
- The frivolousness of luxury.
- The joy of generosity.
- The preciousness of loving family and friends.

These are the very lessons lost on succeeding generations. Instead of a sense of gratitude, we have a sense of entitlement, and instead of nest eggs we have maxed-out credit cards, an array of glitzy electronic devices that will be obsolete next year, and enormous homes whose mortgage payments are ballooning out of reach.

Hearing about the threatening recession I looked at my own house, possessions and budget, wondering where I would cut if things got bad. And you know what? There was quite a bit I could do without. It taught me that I'm really not such a good steward, after all – from the clothes I no longer need to the four computers that I have. I could get by on much less.

And that's the realization that leads to living more simply. Get rid of the excess. Get rid of a lot of the nonessential stuff that, in the end, is a waste of money and a distraction to our lives. It's time to focus on what's really important in life and to value the everyday blessings for what they are.

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