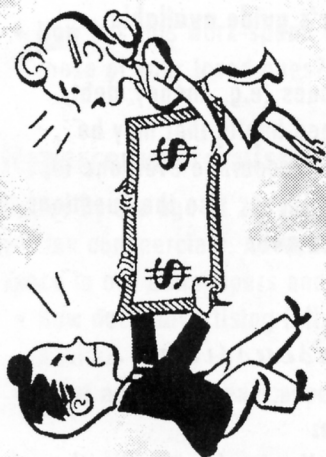


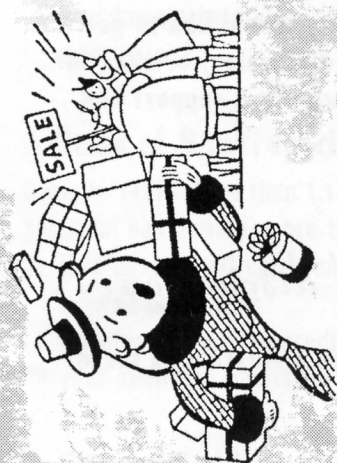
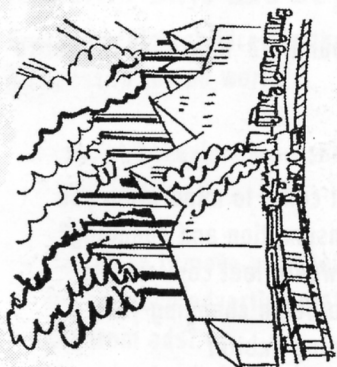


*Use it to get more
out of the program!*



Affluenza

Viewer's Guide



With your host...

Scott Simon!





Affluenza

Viewer's Guide

*A*ffluenza is a one-hour PBS special about the modern-day plague of materialism and overconsumption, and the commercialization that feeds it. The program explores how the epidemic that some call "Affluenza" is straining our personal lives and families, eroding our communities and destroying the environment. It also looks at various cures for this ailment and profiles people who are finding that spending less can mean enjoying life more.

This viewer's guide is designed to help individuals and groups get more out of the program. It contains thought-provoking questions and sources of more information on simplifying your life. **A separate teacher's guide created for classroom use is available on the Affluenza Web site.** The Web site also contains a downloadable version of this viewer's guide, and a wealth of other Affluenza-related information.

www.pbs.org/affluenza

Have a viewing party. . .

Holding a viewing party in your home or other location is one of the most effective and fun ways to see *Affluenza*. Invite friends, neighbors, co-workers – anyone you would like to see the program. Or watch it and talk about it with your family. Have dessert or snacks out, and make copies of this viewer's guide available.

Affluenza deals with personal issues (e.g., money, debt, relationships) and deeply ingrained habits that may be difficult for people to talk about. Encourage everyone to respect each other's feelings and ideas. Use the questions suggested below, or make up your own.

For a brief discussion. . .

After viewing, ask each person:

- What parts of the program really struck a chord with you? Why?
- What do you most value in your life? How does *Affluenza* affect that part of your life?

Before concluding, ask:

- What are some obstacles that come to mind when you think about reducing your consumption and spending?
- What would be one step you would feel comfortable taking in the coming weeks to begin changing your current consumption or spending habits?

Consider asking the group if they would like to get together again to continue the discussion, or even to start a study group to offer each other support and encouragement.

A more detailed discussion. . .

Suggested questions to stimulate discussion on these "symptoms" of *Affluenza*.

Shopping Fever

Fact: On average, Americans shop six hours a week and spend only 40 minutes playing with their children.

- What is the lure of shopping and material possessions?
- What kinds of pressures do you feel to "keep up with the Joneses"?

Chronic Stress

"We hear the same refrain all the time from people. 'I have no life....I get home at night, there's laundry, bills to pay....I'm exhausted, I go to sleep, I wake up and the routine begins the next day all over again.'"

— Gerald Celente, Trends Research Institute

- How has this work-spend treadmill affected your life and those of your loved ones?

Hypercommercialism

Facts: By the age of 20, the average American has seen a million commercials. Advertising accounts for 2/3 of the space in our newspapers and 40 percent of our mail.

- How does advertising influence your life and buying habits?
- What advertisements especially affect you? Why?

Material Girls and Boys

Fact: Reaching children in their classrooms is becoming big business in the ad world.

"Antisocial behavior in pursuit of a product is a good thing."
— Child marketing consultant

- How does it make you feel that corporations are targeting so much advertising at kids? What messages do they get from ads?
- Should schools be ad-free zones? Why or why not?
- How can we help kids resist the seductive pressure of advertising?

A Rash of Bankruptcies

Fact: In 1997, more than 1.1 million Americans declared personal bankruptcy, more than graduated from college.

- How have credit cards made it possible for us to spend beyond our means?
- Imagine not having credit cards. How would that alter your spending habits?

Fractured Families

Fact: In 90 percent of divorce cases, arguments about money play a prominent role.

- How do materialism and other money issues create conflict in your family?
- How can family members work together to overcome this and build stronger bonds?

Social Scars

Fact: The gap between the rich and poor in the U.S. is the widest in any industrial country.

- How does Affluenza contribute to this gap?
- What are some of the ways the gap between rich and poor affect us individually and as a society?

Resource Exhaustion

Fact: Since 1950, Americans have used more resources than everyone who ever lived before them.

- Developing countries would like to consume as much as Americans do. How can we present a different role model to the world to help ensure a sustainable future?
- How can we encourage corporations to produce more environmentally-sound goods and services?

Prevention and Cure

Fact: Studies suggest the Earth could sustain a standard of living nearly as comfortable as our own for every human being. But that would demand social as well as personal change.

- What personal and social changes would you be willing to consider making or helping to make?
- Could you live a contented life with fewer material possessions? What would make this possible?
- How can we encourage corporations to be more responsible to global needs rather than profits?

Feedback!

Tell us what you thought about the program, and any impact it has had on you. Write us at: **KCTS Television, attn: Affluenza Producers, 401 Mercer Street, Seattle, WA 98109; fax 206/443-6691, e-mail: boevi@kcts.org.**

Catch it on VHS!

Videocassettes are available from

BULLFROG FILMS

PO Box 149 Oley PA 19547

Phone: (800) 543-3764

Fax: (610) 370-1978

Email: bullfrog@igc.org

Website: www.bullfrogfilms.com



To Learn More...

Please see the **Affluenza Web** site for a more complete resource list.

Books and Periodicals

Circle of Simplicity. Cecile Andrews. New York. Harper Collins, 1997. A leader of the voluntary simplicity movement shows how study circles can help you simplify your life and find community.

Marketing Madness. Michael Jacobson and Laurie Mazur. Boulder, Colorado. Westview Press, 1995. Illustrates how advertising and other marketing strategies are invading every aspect of American life.

Simple Living. Frank Levering and Wanda Urbanska. New York. Penguin, 1992. The story of one couple's search for a simpler, less acquisitive way of life. Honest (and very entertaining) writing about the pitfalls and pleasures of leaving life's fast lane.

Your Money or Your Life. Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin. New York. Penguin Books, 1992. Runaway bestseller that has changed thousands of lives for the better. It gives a step-by-step program for reducing spending and living more fully. See **New Road Map Foundation** (below), founded by the authors.

Living Cheap News. 7232 Bellevue, Kansas City, MO 64114. 816/523-3161. How-to type newsletter includes product and book reviews, money-saving tips and more.

Simple Living. Simple Living Press, 2319 N. 45th Street, Box 149, Seattle, WA 98103. 206/464-4800. Quarterly publication geared for those who want to know more about how to simplify their lives.

Money-Saving Matters. 46 Park Avenue, Medford, MA 02155. 617/396-2075. Monthly six-page newsletter to support and give tips to people who are trying to live more frugally and sustainably.

Yes! The Journal of Positive Futures. Box 10818, Bainbridge, WA 98110, e-mail: yes@futurenet.org, Web site: www.futurenet.org. Quarterly journal of sustainable communities and cultures.

Organizations

Center for a New American Dream (www.newdream.org) 156 College Street, 2nd Floor, Burlington, VT 05401. 802/862-6762, e-mail: anewdream@aol.com. A new non-profit group created to promote national efforts to turn away from consumerism. Offers a "Simple Living & Earth Saving Action Kit" (\$10, includes postage). Web site has excellent list of resources, organizations and links.

New Road Map Foundation, P.O. Box 15981, Seattle, WA 98115. Expands on the work of the book, **Your Money or Your Life** (see above). Has study guides for groups to use with book. Write for information.

Northwest Earth Institute, 92 S.W. Morrison Street, Portland, OR 97205, 503/227-2807. Has excellent voluntary simplicity guide for workplace study groups.

Simple Living Network (www.sln.com). An online organization with information, publications and products to assist with simple, Earth-friendly living. Includes listings of local support and discussion groups by state.

Before You Buy, Ask Yourself. . .

- Do I really need it? Can I afford it?
- Could I borrow one from a friend or neighbor?
- Do I have one already that could be fixed up or repaired?
- How long will it probably last? Am I prepared to maintain it?
- What are all the costs over its lifetime?
- How many hours or months will I have to work to pay for it? Is it worth it?
- Are the resources that go into it renewable? Is it recyclable?

Tip!

Give yourself a 48-hour "cooling off" period to think about it before you buy (30 days for a major purchase).

Internet resources

There are many other Web sites, listservs, e-mail newsletters and user groups on the Internet devoted to simple and sustainable living. Visit the **Affluenza Web** site for direct links to many of these sites at www.pbs.org/affluenza.

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Coming in 1998 on PBS by the Affluenza production team:

Living Better on Less

A follow-up special for viewers who want to learn about simple living.