

The #1 *New York Times* Bestseller

SIMPLE ABUNDANCE



A DAYBOOK *of* COMFORT AND JOY

Sarah Ban Breathnach

CONTENTS

Back Cover
Acknowledgment
Copyright Notice
Dedication
Foreword
Jan - Dec
With Thanks and Appreciation
Bibliography

~0~

[Back Cover]

With the grace of Anne Morrow Lindbergh's *Gift from the Sea* and the wisdom of M. Scott Peck's *The Road Less Traveled*, SIMPLE ABUNDANCE is a book of 366 evocative essays — one for every day of your year — written for women who wish to live by their own lights.

In the past a woman's spirituality has been separated from her lifestyle. SIMPLE ABUNDANCE shows you how your daily life can be an expression of your authentic self ... as you choose the tastiest vegetables from your garden, search for treasures at flea markets, establish a sacred space in your home for meditation, and follow the rhythm of the seasons and the year. Here, for the first time, the mystical alchemy of style and Spirit is celebrated. Every day, your own true path leads you to a happier, more fulfilling and contented way of life — the state of grace known as ...

SIMPLE ABUNDANCE

Embrace its gentle lessons, savor its sublime common sense, dare to live its passionate truth, and share its extraordinary and exhilarating gift with every woman you encounter: the authentic self is the Soul made visible.

~0~

Also by Sarah Ban Breathnach

Mrs. Sharp's Traditions: Nostalgic Suggestions for Re-creating the Family Celebrations and Seasonal Pastimes of the Victorian Home (published in paperback as Victorian Family Celebrations)

The Victorian Nursery Companion

~0~

I would like to gratefully acknowledge all of the writers I have quoted from in my meditations for their wisdom, comfort and inspiration. An exhaustive search was done to determine whether previously published material included in this book required permission to reprint. If there has been an error, I apologize and a correction will be made in subsequent editions.

The following authors, their agents, and publishers have graciously granted permission to include excerpts from the following:

Loving and Leaving the Good Life by Helen Nearing, published by Chelsea Green Publishing CO., is reprinted by arrangement with Eleanor Friede Books, Inc. © 1992 by Helen Nearing. All rights reserved.

In Search of Balance, copyright © 1991 by John Robbins and Ann Mortiffee. Reprinted by permission of H J Kramer Inc. P.O. Box 1082, Tiburon, CA 94920. All rights reserved.

Creating Money, copyright © 1988 by Sanaya Roman and Duane Packer. Reprinted by permission of H J Kramer Inc. P.O. Box 1082, Tiburon, CA 94920. All rights reserved.

A Return to Love by Marianne Williamson. Copyright © 1992 by Marianne Williamson. Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

Copyright information continued on page 512.

Copyright © 1995 by Sarah Ban Breathnach
All rights reserved.

SIMPLE ABUNDANCE® is a registered trademark of Sarah Ban Breathnach
Warner Books, Inc., 1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

A Time Warner Company

Printed in the United States of America
First Printing: November 1995

60 59 58 57 56

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Ban Breathnach, Sarah.

Simple abundance: a daybook of comfort and joy / Sarah Ban
Breathnach.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-446-51913-8 (hardcover)

1. Women – Religious life – Meditations. 2. Women – Conduct of life –
Meditations. 3. Simplicity. 4. Self-actualization (Psychology).

5. Devotional calendars. I.Title.

BL625.7.B35 1995

158'.12—dc20 95-32330

CIP

Book design by Giorgetta Bell McRee

~0~

Her eye, her ear, were tuning forks, burning glasses, which caught the minutest refraction or echo of a thought or feeling ... She heard a deeper vibration, a kind of composite echo, of all that the writer said, and did not say. -- Willa Cather

For
Chris Tomasino
with love and gratitude
and
Katie
who is the Deeper Vibration
Always

One moved Heaven for this book,
the other moved earth.

~0~

... in a time lacking in truth and certainty and filled with anguish and despair, no woman should be shamefaced in attempting to give back to the world, through her work, a portion of its lost heart. -- Louise Bogan

~0~

FOREWORD

Often people attempt to live their lives backwards: they try to have more things, or more money, in order to do more of what they want so that they will be happier. The way it actually works is the reverse. You must first be who you really are, then, do what you need to do, in order to have what you want. -- Margaret Young

Several years ago, after I'd written two books celebrating nineteenth-century domestic life, I was about to begin writing one on Victorian decorative details. But the thought of ruminating on ruffles and flourishes for a year brought dread to my heart. What I wanted to write was a book that would show me how to reconcile my deepest spiritual, authentic, and creative longings with often-overwhelming and conflicting commitments -- to my husband and daughter, invalid mother, work at home, work in the world, siblings, friends, and community. I knew I wasn't the only woman hurtling through real life as if it were an out-of-body experience. I knew I wasn't the only woman frazzled, depressed, worn to a raveling. But I also knew I certainly wasn't the woman with the answers. I didn't even know the questions.

I wanted so much -- money, success, recognition, genuine creative expression -- but had absolutely no clue at to what I truly needed. At times my passionate hungers were so voracious I could deal with them only through denial. I was a workaholic, careaholic, and perfectionist. I couldn't remember the last time I was kind to myself. Was I ever? More often than it feels comfortable to admit, I was an angry, envious woman, constantly comparing myself to others only to become resentful because of what seemed to be missing from my life, although I couldn't have told you what it was. This secret sense of longing contributed to a perpetual state of guilt because I share my life with a marvelous man and our smart, sweet, witty, beautiful child, whom I adore. I had so much. I felt as if I didn't have the right to want more.

Money was an enormous, emotionally charged issue that controlled my ability to be happy because I let it; money was the only way I could measure my success and self-worth. If I couldn't write a check on my accomplishments, they didn't exist. Frustrated and unable to fathom why some women appeared to lead much more fulfilling lives -- even though I was conscientiously connecting all the dots -- I careened between feeling that I was frittering my life away to feeling that I was sacrificing it on the altar of my own ambitions.

I was a woman in desperate need of *Simple Abundance*.

But before this book could be written, I had to take stock of what was working in my life and what wasn't. Perhaps for the first time, I had to be ruthlessly honest both inwardly and outwardly. During this time of profound introspection, six practical, creative, and spiritual principles -- gratitude, simplicity, order, harmony, beauty, and joy -- became the catalysts that helped me define a life of my own. One morning I awoke to the realization that, almost imperceptibly, I'd become a happy woman, experiencing more moments of contentment than distress. Feeling confident again, I proposed writing a downshifting lifestyle book for women who want, as I do, to live by their own lights.