

The Great Simplification

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[00:00:00] **Nate Hagens:** Why did I just greet you in duck? stay tuned to the end of this, to find out. But, yesterday at the grocery store, I had, a little story happen to me. And of course, a lot of stories these days always have a wider boundary, implication and relevance to the human predicament. it is a story about price and cost and value and blueberries and ducks.

[00:00:42] So I went to the store, and of course I always end up going for three things and buying 12. I don't know how many of you are like that. And I saw in the fruit, area that blueberries were \$1 for a pint, but limit one per customer. I'm like, that's like really cheap. I can buy them for a cheap snack for my ducks who love berries.

[00:01:09] so I put 'em in the cart. I was in the checkout line, and they're like, well, do you have the app? I'm like, no, I don't have the app. Then they're \$5. And I'm like, well, I don't really need, the blueberries, but there were people behind me and, I didn't want to cause a fuss, so I bought the blueberries, for \$5 a pint.

[00:01:32] But here's the twist. At \$1, I was happy to give them to my ducks, but at \$5, they suddenly felt too good and too expensive for the ducks. So I planned to eat them myself. same blueberries, same Nate, but the price. It changed the story in my head about what the blueberries were for, and it got me thinking, how many things in our culture do we buy just because they're cheap, even if we don't really need or want them?

[00:02:10] how many things would we use differently or not use at all if the price went up 500% overnight? How much of our consumption is about the thing? And how much of our consumption is about the story that the price of the thing tells

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us. and I think we could apply these questions to us as individual viewers, of this program, but also to society, writ large, because at a dollar, those blueberries were extra.

[00:02:47] I could be generous, even frivolous. my ducks have duck food. I don't need to give them blueberries. I also buy them watermelon once in a while and I have bought them minnows before and I stopped doing it 'cause it's too cruel. But they're like piranhas. They go in their little swimming pool and get those minnows.

[00:03:06] It's crazy entertaining to watch, but I digress at \$5. The blueberries became a luxury worth only eating for myself. Even though I didn't originally want them, nothing about the blueberries changed only my perception of their value. And of course, on The Great Simplification, I'm not really talking about fruit here.

[00:03:31] when fossil fuels are as incredibly cheap for what they do. We burn them like feeding blueberries to ducks, for snacks. And when they're expensive, we suddenly can discover all kinds of efficiencies and, behavior changes. When water is abundant, we spray it on lawns. but when it's scarce, we would treat every drop, as it's precious because it is.

[00:03:59] The price tag changes our behavior, but the real cost, the ecological and replacement cost doesn't show up on the stickers on the things in the grocery store. So there's a difference between price and cost and value. A gallon of gasoline is \$3, but its cost in damage to the environment is much higher than that.

[00:04:25] In a wide boundary sense and its benefit to the creature comforts of, supporting us in the modern, civilization is way higher than \$3, probably a thousand times higher. So anyways, this is just, a brief, reflection. Here's some open questions for viewers. Have you had a blueberry moment, in the buying and reflecting of things?

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[00:04:54] Are there things that you treat as disposable when they're cheap, but guard like treasure when they're expensive? What's the Blueberry's for Ducks? Equivalent of housing, travel, energy use, shopping trips, technology. And lastly, what would our world look like if the prices actually reflected the true value and the true cost?

[00:05:17] Of the things we use, maybe, try it in the coming days on things you purchase, this weekend. Consider the difference between their price, their cost, and their value. and I'll, close with, two little footnotes to this story. I ended up not eating the blueberries because I didn't put the lid on after I had a couple of 'em and they fell out of the fridge onto the floor and I had to sweep 'em up in, one of those dust pans and I gave them the ducks anyways, and I had to drive back to the store to get another pint of blueberries to shoot this closing video of me feeding my blueberries to the ducks.

[00:05:58] I hope you're all well. I wish I could do like funny videos like this once in a while. Not that it was really funny. Ha But, this work is so serious, that it seems, inappropriate to be smiling and laughing about silly things, but it's the silly things and little stories like this and my ducks that keep me going, and I hope you all have something like that in your life too.

[00:06:26] Talk to you next week.

[00:06:38] What are you guys doing? Where are you going?