

Are Possessions Vital?

Irwin had a standalone computer and a laptop—he only needed one. He also had two cars, theirs and his late mother-in-law's. His wife drove that red car to work—Irwin worked from home, did not need a car, yet they maintained both. And storage lockers filled with possessions they were unable to part with.

The possessions they kept were part use, part display. The lovely dining room table, the large flatscreen, the hand carved bookcase. Irwin understood possessions were usually about status: the more you had the higher you grew, touting success to the world. Irwin, like almost all of us, was such a person, as was his wife and two children. It was a normal family. Actually, each saw the other as often a proudly displayed and used possession.

Irwin used some possessions every day, others he looked at and admired. Some he remembered, some were long forgotten. One afternoon, looking at the storage bills, Irwin wondered: why? As he sat on the nice couch, by the mahogany coffee table, he had no answer—except possessions made him feel good because of how others thought about him. It was the real world, but did it make sense?

Irwin daydreamed of moving to the woods or an island, where possessions only helped him survive. Irwin never lived his daydreams—sounded boring. Irwin refused boredom, ignoring he might entertain himself without possessions.

Irwin's problem was solved! By impending bankruptcy!

His debts—caused by his possessions—meant selling the storage lockers' contents, leases were cancelled, closets mostly emptied, duplicate appliances taken to recycling. Irwin and his family deeply regretted their loss—at the same time enjoying more space to move around in, living with possessions they used.