
**SOME BABY BOOMERS (BORN 1946 TO 1964)
ARE STILL LIVING IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION.**

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Many Baby Boomers such as myself have been so greatly influenced by our parents that we are living in the Great Depression and don't know it.

Let me be clear from the outset. I am not a hoarder. The house of a hoarder has rooms that can no longer function as they were intended to function. Hallways and stairways are so full of "things" that they are unsafe. That is not the condition I am describing. No one has to climb over anything to enter any room in my house.

The Baby Boomers have inherited a different sort of condition, one that is hidden from view. We might detect it in each other, but no casual outsider visiting our home would think anything unusual was going on. But it is. We are, in fact, still living in the Great Depression.

Here is just one example of why this has evolved in me. When my sister redid my father's bathroom after he moved back home, he did what he usually did. He told the men who were working, " Don't worry about hauling off that old sink and bathtub. We'll take care of it." First of all, was it not their job to put in a new sink and tub and haul off the old one ? Why did my father say things like that? Because, the next week when I walked through the barn, there was the old sink and bathtub. He had "saved them in case they were needed later." That is the Great Depression that was alive in him after all of these years.

Walking from France to Berlin in 1944/45 while under machine gun fire wasn't enough to change him, I guess. He would tell me that he couldn't go to the movies when he was 15, because he didn't have a quarter. Maybe I believed him, maybe not.

Now if you are old enough to have lived during the Great Depression, this message is not intended for you. Don't try to change. We like you just the way you are. Save the plastic butter dishes. Save the bread loaf ties. Save the grocery store bags. It is part of your charm. S and H Green Stamps were made for your generation. And mine.

Yet lately, by no choice of my own, I have been forced to analyze my current situation. Why do I have clothes from 20 years ago? Because another Great Depression might come and I will need them. Why do I have 30 towels and 12 sets of sheets? Because my father taught me that we have to save everything for the future, because the Big Depression might hit again. I didn't sense all this was in me until the de-cluttering books became popular. Does having 20 dish rags give me joy ? They must; I have that many now. I detest the smugness of the de-cluttering books. They make it seem so easy. Baby Boomers are in a state of anguish mixed with anger, even though we can get a good burn pile going with the best of them. I don't experience joy when I read about de-cluttering; I usually experience stress.



Allen and Sadie Evans picking tomatoes.

I have finally accepted, with the help of my family and friends, that I am living in my parents' era of the Great Depression. I bought 30 more garbage bags for this week (The white ones from the grocery store I save are too small). I think the cancelled checks from the 1980's can probably go now. I think I might be able to part with a few Christmas cards and birthday cards from the last twenty years. I could even throw away some of my college text books and term papers from 1976. (I don't think I'm ready to part with my artwork on the brown sheets from Mrs. Nathews' first grade class in 1962.)

I'm sure the "I'll fix it one day" furniture won't be missed. (My sister has worked in the mental health field for 40 years. She says "one day" never comes. It has to be a certain day.) There is a closet upstairs filled with over 100 picture frames. I have not been in that closet in 10 years. Why am I saving them? Because it's the thing to do if it's 1935. I might need to frame something some day. It's in me. Those who write the de-cluttering books and articles seem to think all of my "stuff" is worthless. Maybe it is to them, but not to me. I don't want my house to look like a hotel room. Yes, some things need to go, but not everything.

I am trying to work it out. My friend in Denver is trying to help me. My sister is trying to encourage me. Another friend can't help me. I've seen her closets. She probably has 400 dresses. I guess realization is the first step. I took a hammer one afternoon to the barn and busted the sink and bathtub into small pieces and hauled them to the dump. My father never missed them. I'm just glad he didn't put the bathtub in the front yard. I am told they make great planters for flowers.



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