



Issue 1, July

Hi Steve R,

Over the years, we've all come to expect what a standard woodworking or maker video looks like. A YouTuber builds a project, films key steps along the way, and posts a video of the process. In order to garner attention from the crowd, we might hire professional camera operators, editors, and workshop staff. We might experiment with multiple camera setups and special effects. We obsess over thumbnail images and titles. We continually search for new ways to tell the story of a project within a tried and true format that accounts for almost all project videos on YouTube. I know, because I've done this for years.

But what if we looked at woodworking videos completely differently? Instead of telling the story of projects, what if we told the story of woodworking?

As many of you know, on the first day of the lockdown here in the Bay Area, I shifted the format of Woodworking for Mere Mortals to something new. I decided to build a printer stand for my office with no time schedule or due date, nor did I have a clear idea of how I would tell this ongoing story. I just knew that I didn't want to make a "project video".

I stripped everything back, bringing you with me into the design process, and soliciting your suggestions and advice. In a way, I wanted to tell the story of my woodworking experience in real-time. If I wasn't able to accomplish much in a given day, I'd simply post a video of everything I did up to that point. We'd resume the story tomorrow. The printer stand would get done and we'd have time for other things along the way. Woodworking shouldn't be on a time schedule.

More than 100 days have passed since I began the [Lockdown Woodworking](#) series and it's taught me that online woodworking can be far more intimate than we're used to. I'm not as interested in showing you something that I built, but rather having you virtually accompany me in my shop as I build.

In these videos, I still keep the story of building a project central, but there's more room to interact with viewers in a less mechanical way. You help me solve problems and come up with creative ideas. I get distracted with side projects involving my cats and talk about the ABCs of woodworking. We tell jokes, talk about movies or weird Amazon deliveries...you know, the kind of stuff people would be chatting about while working together in a workshop.

There are a lot of rough edges and some awkward editing in these videos because I'm trying to avoid having the video be *the thing*. The ongoing story of woodworking in my shop and the connections we make are far more interesting to me.

With this newsletter, I want to take what I've learned over the past three months about being part of a community and drop it into your inbox once a month. I want to feature some of the amazing contributions, tips, and creations from YouTube viewers, and by the amazing family of Weekend Woodworker members.

We can all agree that 2020 has been a rough ride, so it's my hope that my little bubble of woodworking can provide you with a few minutes of fun and distraction when you need it. It's a message *you can spread too*...be the person who brings fun and joy to others. We need it, and you might notice your year improving.

Have a great month,

- Steve

FROM THE VAULT

It's summertime! And of course, that means outdoor projects! Here's a couple of garden benches you can make with 2x4s and just a few tools.



BUDGET-FRIENDLY

[Outdoor park bench](#)

My favorite is this purple bench from 2013, but it might be tricky to align the holes without a drill press. Purple color is optional.



BEGINNER-FRIENDLY

[Simple garden bench](#)

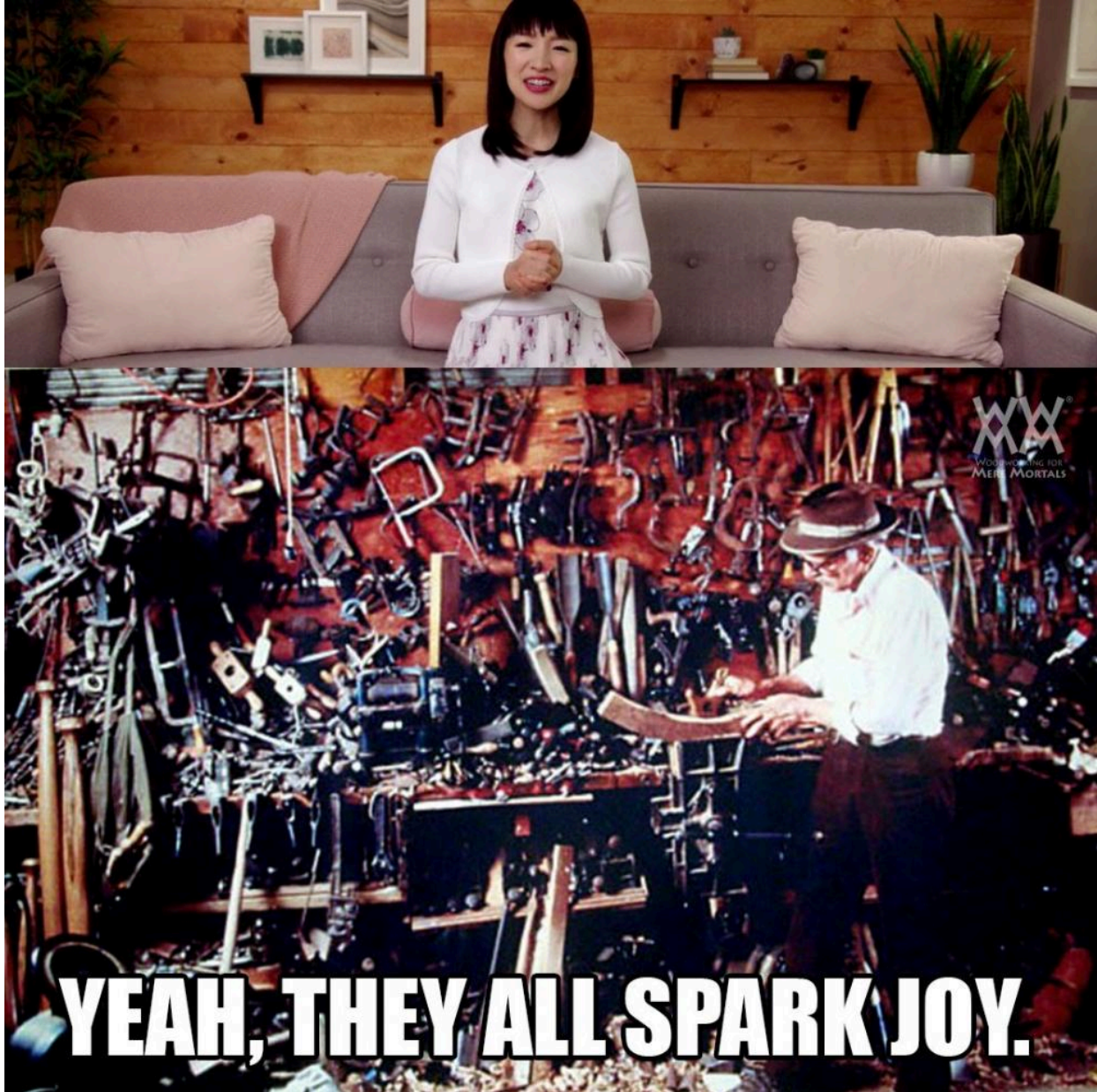
For an even simpler, totally beginner-friendly bench, check out this one from 2012.

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT

16-year-old Henry Sowell from Maryland took up woodworking after the shutdown and began selling his projects so he could donate the profits to a local charity and help feed the homeless. His desire to make a difference is inspiring and reminded me once again how incredible this community is. *Henry is a member of [The Weekend Woodworker](#), and you can read about his story in [this](#) article.*

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The finished product is nice, but I really enjoy the smells involved. I actually enjoy spending inordinate amounts of time sanding things, as strange as that may be."
- Jesse, a member of [The Weekend Woodworker Community](#)



What course members have built this month

Since I launched The Weekend Woodworker back in 2017, it has been thrilling to see the course projects built by members. I love seeing how people find ways to make all of those projects unique, but what inspires me the most is to see how people have taken the skills they've learned and built their own stuff. Here are a few of my favorite recent outdoorsy projects by TWW members.



Adirondack Chairs

Patricia's beautiful chairs and matching California Style Patio Side-Table (a project included in The Weekend Woodworker) are perfect for relaxing. Patricia is a member of [The Weekend Woodworker](#).



Outdoor Furniture

Check out this great outdoor furniture set built by Dave, a member of [The Weekend Workshop](#).



Swing into Summer

Looking for a project the whole family can enjoy? How about a swing set like this one built by Mike, a member of [The Weekend Woodworker](#).

Thanks for reading, be well.

- Steve

P.S. This new newsletter, which I am calling "Notes from the Shop" will be coming your way on the first Friday of the month! I hope you enjoy it.

Can't get enough WWMM? Subscribe on [YouTube](#) or connect on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#).

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