



# Walden Today

*Wayne M. Thomas*

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Walden Today is about creating personal freedom and making a living in a time where there is less job security, fewer jobs, less trust in government and corporations--and more need to rely on yourself to survive. It is a survival manual for avoiding a life of what Thoreau called "quiet desperation" in depressing economic times. Historically the American Dream was a given that every person who worked hard, who was ethical, financially prudent and self-reliant could achieve a life of relative comfort and security while leaving a modest legacy to their children. Today American Dream has become shattered and most Americans believe that it is now out of reach. 1. In our jobs: dissatisfaction, discouragement, insecurity 2. In our personal lives: a quiet desperation that we cannot improve our situation Walden Today provides an answer to: How To Change What We Do Into What We'd Rather Be Doing. The solution is to live more deliberately to gain more autonomy (freedom and independence). We can live deliberately by applying Thoreau's seven principles of living and working: 1. Be true to yourself 2. Network to grow and survive 3. Life is short, so enjoy it by living simply to stay free 4. Become Self Reliant: Do it yourself 5. Adapt to changes in life by continually learning and trying new ideas 6. Take advantage of the conveniences and opportunities of the age 7. Work deliberately Interestingly, there are striking parallels to America 150 years ago. They were worried about an environmental warming crisis. They were worried about ever growing, big spending national government. They were living through a huge real estate bubble that popped and took half the banks with it because of "sub prime loans". There was credit deflation and few jobs. Overnight America was in a depression called the Panic of 1837. Most importantly, Thoreau dealt with the number one question all of us still ask today: How can I make a living and still have the freedom to do what I'd really like to do? Our family has applied Thoreau's seven principles since 1994 to thrive. Thoreau's principles changed my family's ideas about work and money. He had these sayings, such as "The cost of a thing is the amount of life (work) you have to trade for it." He said it's a terrible thing to live "a life of quiet desperation" and helps us avoid the horror of discovering at the end of our lives how we would feel having accumulated a ton of "stuff," but discovering that we hadn't really lived.

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