

Made From Scratch: Discovering the Pleasures of a Handmade Life

Jenna Woginrich

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Planting gardens and raising chickens sound like smart ways to help increase our own sustainability on a daily level, but in the face of apartment living and 9—5 office jobs, even the smallest steps can seem daunting. Jenna Woginrich, a twenty-five-year-old Web designer, persevered with great heart and boundless energy and now wakes to the sounds of clucking hens and serves her friends salads made from the green stuff in her own backyard.

Striking just the right inviting tone, *Made From Scratch* provides a blueprint for changing one's life into something authentic, healthy, and fulfilling by way of digging in the dirt. Woginrich, while researching a vegetarian lifestyle, discovers just how connected she is to the global economy and decides to take a break. "I wanted a lifestyle that was no longer part of the problem," she writes, and so she starts with five chicks in a cardboard box in her rented house. Then come three raised garden beds. And a beehive. Followed by sewing her own clothes, learning to fiddle, and traveling by sled dogs over snowy hills.

Woginrich writes with effortless tact, never slipping into judgment on those who still rely on Wal-Mart. Hers is a personal journey that she shares out of pure, joyful exuberance. Nor does she gloss over the hard realities of farm life. When one of her Angora rabbits is injured beyond repair, Woginrich does what has to be done: she pulls the trigger to end the rabbit's misery. Then she better prepares herself for the next emergency, because part of raising animals is accepting responsibility for their deaths. She writes, "How simple is the simple life? Clearly it's complex enough to make a Buddhist vegetarian kill a rabbit at point-blank range, then go buy a gun."

Each chapter is split between Woginrich's own story and practical advice for readers who want to try their own hand at keeping bees or refurbishing their kitchens with thrift store finds. A well-rounded list of resources at the back of the book offers ample places to look for further information.

With wit, generosity, and cheerful honesty, Woginrich shares her journey towards self-sufficiency. Readers who were both inspired and daunted by books like Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* will find here a more manageable set of circumstances to emulate. Saving the world isn't just a job for those with acreage; Woginrich shows us what can be accomplished in a few square feet.

ANDI DIEHN (October 13, 2008)

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