

# Can I borrow that? How my friend, Robert Guddahl, got his pool for free.

*by Annie Margarita Yang*

Today I want to share with you an idea I got from my dear friend Robert Guddahl a few years ago. One day, Robert and I were talking on the phone. I asked him what he was doing. He responded, “Just swimming in my pool.” I thought he lived in an apartment. How could he own a pool? After I pressed him, he laughed and said, “Annie, I got my pool for free. It’s the Atlantic Ocean!”

Robert always has such a good sense of humor and comes up with the most unconventional ideas. Out of all our years as friends, his philosophy above has stuck with me most.

As Americans, our general pattern is to consume. We want to own the things that we use, even if we use the item only once before we get rid of it. Can we have a different mentality? The other day, my friend Janani talked about how she wanted to buy a grill. My friend Ivana had a grill. Instead of buying another grill, we borrowed Ivana’s and had a dinner night. Sharing with each other, rather than owning more stuff, has brought us closer together.

Three months ago, my 2011 MacBook Pro died on me. The Apple Authorized Service Provider diagnosed the logic board as the problem. It’s unfortunate that since my computer is over five years old, it’s considered vintage. Therefore Apple won’t repair it or provide any parts. It’s a shame how Apple’s policy encourages customers to own yet another laptop rather than fix what would otherwise be a good laptop.

My first thought was, of course, to buy another laptop or maybe even a desktop. I began researching models with a high repairability score and an affordable price. I wanted the HP EliteBook 840 G3. But to tell you the truth, I still haven’t bought a computer yet. I’ve been saving up for an expensive move the last few months. I don’t have any disposable money for something like this.

Somehow I’ve made do without. I use the computer at the school library instead, which is open 24 hours, 5 days a week—great hours for my busy schedule. I have also limited my workaholic tendency because I only use the computer for two hours. I need to come to the library with a list of things to do or else I’d waste time. With limited distraction, life has definitely slowed down for me.

I remember back in the early 2000’s, it was common for each household to own only one computer. Everyone took turns using the computer. A lot more people used the public library computer. Outside of the United States, people frequented Internet cafés. Today, people have personal computers, tablets, and smartphones. Personal computers have become a necessity in our lives. This experience made me realize that they’re not real necessities.

Going back to Robert's free pool story, can we find ways to get the things we want without having to buy them? I definitely think so. What do you believe?

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