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### Stuff It

**Why some consumers just say no to new purchases**

[Entrepreneur magazine](#) - [August 2006](#)

By Chris Penttila

Kate Boyd just isn't buying it anymore. "When you say no... it's a surprising release," she says.

Boyd is a founding member of the Compact, a group for consumers who intentionally limit their purchases to absolute necessities. Its Yahoo! site has more than 700 members across the country.

The Compact is part of a larger movement called "voluntary simplicity." Adherents say their mind-set isn't about frugality; it's about owning less to gain greater independence. Your life doesn't have to be run by what you buy, says Judith Levine, a New Yorker who attended voluntary simplicity meetings and wrote about the experience in her book *Not Buying It*. "It's a good personal discipline."

Protecting the environment and fighting globalization also play a part in the movement. But George T. Haley, director of the Center for International Industry Competitiveness at the University of New Haven in West Haven, Connecticut, sees it largely as an urban rebellion against rising debt and a cooling housing market. Levine notes that half of the people in her group had either been laid off or were worried about losing their jobs.

Concerned about the just-say-no trend? Third World countries with growing middle classes will create new market opportunities, says Peter Rodriguez, a business professor at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Closer to home, you can offer more do-it-yourself products and services that appeal to the voluntary simplicity crowd, which prefers to support the little guy anyway.