

AUDIO SCRIPT

[Passage 1 – M1: Male Host; F1: Female Guest]

M1: Good morning, listeners. Welcome to another edition of *The Home Show*. My guest is Dr. Cynthia Fortescu, an architect and lecturer at Hudson University. The topic of today's program is the Tiny House Movement. Welcome to the program, Dr. Fortescu.

F1: Thanks for having me, Alistair. Please call me Cynthia.

M1: So, Cynthia, tell us a little about the Tiny House Movement.

F1: Well, Alistair, to put it simply, the Tiny House Movement is an emerging social movement of people who want to downsize their living space and minimize their material possessions. Tiny House owners share the philosophy that people accumulate too much stuff that they really don't need. They have decided to "live small."

M1: What's the difference between a Tiny House and, well, a small house? My first apartment in New York City was 275 square feet. Is that considered a Tiny House?

F1: Well, that was certainly a *tiny space*, Alistair. Of course, many residents of large cities like New York, Tokyo, and Seoul live in tiny apartments, and small living spaces have been around forever. Some of our ancestors probably lived in tiny caves. By definition, a Tiny House isn't an apartment. It's a free-standing house that is very small.

M1: How small is *small*?

F1: A Tiny House is between 100 and 400 square feet, whereas the average American home is about 2,600 square feet.

M1: Wow, that's quite a contrast. Aren't Tiny Houses uncomfortable?

F1: Actually, despite its size, a well-designed Tiny House can be as comfortable as a larger house. You see, Tiny House owners have to utilize every square inch of space, and there are some pretty ingenious ways of doing this. So the *size* of the living area isn't as relevant as how the area is *utilized*. Every feature in the Tiny House must have a function, and anything that isn't absolutely necessary must be excluded. Furthermore, each space must have a dual purpose. For instance, a sleeping area is typically converted into a living area during the day.

M1: Why do people get involved in the Tiny House Movement, Cynthia?

F1: People are attracted to the movement for all sorts of reasons, Alistair. One reason is financial freedom. Tiny Houses are affordable. Some Tiny Houses can be bought as components and assembled by the owner very cheaply. Likewise, being so small, they're easy to maintain. Most people spend a third to a half of their income on rent or home loan repayments. That's a significant amount of money. And 76 percent of Americans live from paycheck to paycheck. A lot of people are stressed about losing their homes if they lose their jobs. Remember, during the economic crisis, many homeowners found themselves underwater.

M1: Their home loans were higher than the value of their homes ...

F1: That's right. Many of these people walked away because they couldn't afford to stay in their homes. Some of them chose to live in a Tiny House instead. Other Tiny House owners have been displaced from their homes as a result of natural disasters such as hurricanes or wildfires. They lost everything and had to start over.

M1: But not all Tiny House owners have lost or abandoned their previous homes ...

F1: Oh, no, not at all. Many Tiny House owners join the movement based on environmental concerns. They want to reduce their carbon footprint, you know, the amount of carbon dioxide and other carbon compounds they emit due to the consumption of fossil fuels, such as oil and coal. Some Tiny Houses are made of recycled materials, so they're environmentally friendly.

M1: So, Tiny House owners are concerned about finances and the environment. Anything else?

F1: I would add a third category: adventure. Some Tiny Houses are mobile, you know, they have wheels. Hence, the owners can transport them from place to place. They can hit the road and visit friends in other parts of the country without having to worry about accommodation. A lot of these people don't want to conform to social expectations. So it's a lifestyle change, and a change that enhances their lives.

M1: Do you have to obtain a special license to drive a mobile Tiny House?

F1: Generally you don't, but the rules vary from state to state. So, people should check with their local authority regarding license and registration requirements.

M1: Well, the Tiny House Movement is certainly an innovative concept. It sounds like it's not for everyone, though.

F1: That's true, Alistair. It's a logical and rational choice for people who want to simplify their lives and not be restrained by the demands of maintaining a large house. Most Tiny House owners I talk to say their lives have been transformed since they downsized. They like "tiny" living so much they can't imagine returning to their

old lifestyle. But you're right, it's not an option for everyone; only about one percent of the population chooses this route.

M1: Okay. We have to take a short break now, and then we'll take your questions.

[Passage 2 – M1: Male Teacher; M2: Male Student; F1: Female Student]

M1: Okay, let's start the debate. We're discussing the question of whether to allow countries to develop nuclear energy. Justin, you're arguing for the positive side—that countries should be allowed to develop nuclear energy. Lisa, you're arguing for the negative side—that nuclear energy should be prohibited. You'll have four minutes to debate the issue. You go first, Justin.

M2: For centuries, humans have depended on fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas, and coal as our major sources of energy. However, fossil fuels are nonrenewable and finite. One day, they'll run out. Subsequently, governments have been looking at alternative and sustainable energy sources, such as solar, wind, hydroelectric, geothermal, and nuclear energy. However, the sun, wind, water, and the Earth's heat are not reliable sources of energy. They can't fulfill the energy needs of large cities. That leaves nuclear energy. Nuclear energy is a cheap, clean, and safe energy source. It's the energy source of the future.

F1: It's not the case that nuclear energy is a renewable form of energy. It's not. Producing nuclear energy requires extracting uranium from the ground, and there is a limited amount of uranium. I'm not in favor of nonrenewable energy sources, especially fossil fuels, because of the negative effects of carbon compounds on the environment and their contribution to global warming. I believe that scientists will eventually figure out how to make solar, wind power, hydroelectric, and geothermal energy meet our needs. According to a study by Dr. Mark Jacobson, professor of civil and environmental engineering at Stanford University, there are no technological or economic barriers to converting the entire world to clean, renewable energy sources. He and other scientists believe that wind and solar power can supply 90 percent of our energy needs. They think this can be achieved by 2050, if we all get involved and make it happen.

Furthermore, nuclear energy is not cheap, clean, and safe. It's dirty, expensive, and dangerous! Each year, huge amounts of radioactive waste are created during the process of producing nuclear energy. For instance, more than 58,000 metric tons of highly radioactive waste has accumulated at nuclear plants around the U.S. As for safety, the accidents at Chernobyl and Fukushima illustrate how unsafe nuclear plants can be. These accidents caused an enormous amount of devastation to both humans and the environment.

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M2: The incidents at Chernobyl and Fukushima are examples of what happens to old plants that failed because of highly unusual and extreme circumstances that will probably never happen again. In the past 50 years, there have been a small handful of nuclear accidents. Conversely, coal-mining and oil-drilling accidents in the past have repeatedly caused severe damage.

F1: Did you say a handful of nuclear accidents? On the contrary, there have been over 100 significant nuclear incidents worldwide. Chernobyl and Fukushima are just the most famous ones. Another factor to consider is that uranium-mining damages the environment. Pipes containing radioactive elements can leak and contaminate the water supply, kill animals, and make urban areas uninhabitable. There is simply no safe method to store nuclear waste and your argument that nuclear energy is safe is simply not valid.

M2: While it's true that accidents have happened, advances in technology will help to minimize the possibility of accidents in the future. It's also true that radioactive waste management is a challenge, but radioactive waste is very small compared to waste produced by other sources of energy.

M1: Time's up, students! So, class, who do you think made the best argument?