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Homemaking Is A Challenging Career

Martha Coover
Iowa State College

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Homemaking Is

A Challenging Career

Says Martha Coover

I WANT marriage and a career." This is a statement frequently made by the modern college woman. What does she mean?

She generally means that she wants both a husband who will be her life companion and a position which will challenge her mind and occupy her time.

The idea that the modern homemaker has much free time is played up by advertisers. They picture housework and cooking as being done almost entirely by gadgets, machines and special preparations. Advertisers describe the homemaker doing nothing more than turning on electricity and ordering food and other supplies by telephone. For the woman who advocates combining a career and marriage, the career satisfies two needs: it supplies the extra money necessary to furnish her home as the advertisers picture it, and it makes living seem more challenging by filling the spare time created by these "luxuries."

How is the professional woman's home managed then? She does her own house work in the morning by pressing buttons. Then she is off to the office, lunches downtown and is back in time to have dinner ready by seven. Dinner over and the dishes done by the electric dishwasher, she can spend the evening with her husband. Of course there are the children, or are there? Many modern marriages are childless. Children would force the mother to leave her position for a while. She feels she can't afford to do this if, for example, the home laundry unit is only partly paid for.

This may be a picture of marriage combined with a profession such as designing, journalism, teaching, laboratory research or advertising. These are jobs men can do and have done for a long time. The modern woman seems to shy away from the one career for women, homemaking.

Why don't we look at homemaking as a career that is just as thrilling and just as challenging as any career outside the home?



Today, women are not called upon to produce necessities in the home. They naturally feel they are needed less there. Large families are no longer economical assets but to many seem quite the opposite.

Cooking doesn't take much time when the nearby grocery has all that is necessary to prepare a good meal in 10 minutes. There is not the need for home gardens and canning that there was a few years ago. Housekeeping is looked upon as drudgery of pushing buttons and polishing already shining surfaces. It does not challenge the intellect of the woman.

But is this all there is to homemaking? It is not if we are broad enough to see what a woman needs to give to it. The modern woman seems to have a negative attitude toward manual labor. She hasn't analyzed herself and her duty as a homemaker well enough to see anything else to housekeeping.

In our living pattern today there is much to challenge the homemaker. It is her duty to train her children to be the leading citizens of their generation. This training cannot come in the schools. There is no time there for more than forming a firm foundation. The homemaker must act as an interpreter of current community and world affairs for her family. She must teach her children to be clear thinkers in all they do. The religious attitude of tomorrow's leaders must be developed in the home. This does not mean that the homemaker holds classes each evening in current events and religion. It means she must create a home where these things come naturally to her family.

The homemaker acquires her knowledge of current community problems through continued contact with local activities both as an onlooker and as a participant. Movies and radio are great instructors. The intelligent homemaker will guide her family in using these to full advantage.

It is the duty of the modern homemaker to bring her family into a closely knit unit, yet not isolate them from the exciting world in which they are living. She must be able to meet and understand all the problems, opportunities and situations which will come to herself and her family. She must be a constant sympathetic support to her children and her husband in social and business life. This is a full-time job.

Being a full time mother and wife is time consuming. The modern woman is greatly mistaken if she thinks she can't have a home unless it is well stocked with every invention the advertiser tries to sell.

If her aim in having a career outside the home is having more money to buy more home appliances, dresses and country club memberships, then she may be a traitor to herself, her husband and their children. If she wants a career because she feels she has more to offer to life than creating a home, then she should devote her whole life to this career and not try a marriage that can be no more than a companionship affair. Marriage and a career can be most successful if that career is homemaking.