Accomplish Your Work by Scheduling Your Time

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Confusion is characteristic of failure. Organization and system are marks of progress and growth. In the well ordered home one seldom hears the accusations made by the home maker that her work is drudgery or that it leads to mental stagnation. Such complaints usually arise from the woman who gives little thought to her work and just drifts along. There is no greater or more important field for constructive thought and work than is offered by the home maker but there is perhaps no vocation in which the workers are more inclined to drift.

There are some good reasons for this tendency. Conditions in the home are unlike those in every other occupation. In that the work of the home maker is not supervised, nor checked up upon periodically, the home maker has no competition. She is never promoted, and although she may be a flat failure, she never loses her job. Self improvement is much easier if one is being prodded along from the outside. This inspiration is lacking in housekeeping.

Again, in any business concern, which is run on efficiency principles, provision is always made for definite material rewards in the form of promotion or increased salary, which come at stated regular intervals. This incentive is no longer a factor, as a stimulant to increased effort. You may say: "Yes, but the rewards of the successful home maker are so much greater than can possibly be measured in terms of honor or glory or money. True, but the home may regard itself only a human being, and it has been proved that human beings do respond to immediate tangible rewards. Many times the homemakers' rewards are so intangible and long deferred, that their value as incentives are almost lost sight of. Her contributions to the family comfort and happiness are taken for granted and often times she does not even receive the ordinary courtesy of expressed appreciation. Last week a woman said to me: "I always know every one is enjoying the dinner if nothing is said. If it isn't all right I hear about it."

We can see some reasons why it is peculiarly easy to drift and to postpone in the business of housekeeping. This lack of immediate incentive makes it doubly important that the homemaker should define to herself and keep very clearly in mind her ultimate goal, her ambitions for her home and family.

If there is to be home improvement: if the standard of living is to be higher than it is now, the home maker must recognize the fact and face it, that she must take the initiative in making the needed improvements.

The goal of the true home maker, I think we will agree, is the establishment of a home where a strong family bond exists, the kind of home which is loved by all of its members. They do not want to leave it, and when away from it are always eager to get back to it.

The big problem universally in home making seems to be the vexation of the problems of food, clothing and cleaning and to the even more important ones of provision for the things which make up the all so essential to happiness.

A first requisite in meeting this problem is a proper sense of values and of making a relation between these two sets of demands on the homemaker's twenty-four hours a day.

The most effective ways of reducing the problems of food, clothing and cleaning to a minimum are by means of simple methods of work, labor saving equipment, step saving arrangement, and a well planned schedule.

In our studies of the problems of time saving with the farm women of Iowa, we have in a small way used the same plan in checking upon household efficiency, which has been used effectively in some business establishments. We have taken a half of the work from the standpoint of equipment, its arrangement methods of work, the schedule, cost of the output, and the product.

Our first check up was on equipment and kitchen arrangement. Each woman has gone over her own kitchen and equipment and has filled out a detailed information sheet. She has gotten down in black and white conditions as they are. We find that such records are very enlightening and inspirational. She then goes over this information sheet and compares her kitchen with a high standard, well equipped, step saving kitchen. A list is made of desirable changes. From this list she selects possible changes, which may be made without expense. She also decides upon one or two labor savers, which she thinks she will add when the opportunity offers. Some women have proceeded to find out the possibilities and to get all the information they could concerning ways, means and cost of making labor saving changes, or securing the equipment, which at the time their installation seemed quite out of the question. By this means they have been able to at least begin to bring the matter of the needed changes to the attention of the family. Sometimes a long preliminary educational campaign must be carried on before the man of the house is convinced that changes are really needed. Her interest increases as her information increases. She talks about it, and sooner or later the improvement is installed.

A couple of months ago, one of our women began investigating sinks. She had carried the waste water out for twenty-two years, but just as soon as she found that she could get a sink for six dollars and a half, it didn't take her long to order one. When she understood if her reason for not having a sink for twenty-two years was because of the six dollars and a half, she said: "Why of course not, but always when I thought of a sink I thought it meant the installation of an expensive water system, which we couldn't afford, so I never even instigated it; but when I found out how easily I could have it, even if I couldn't have running water, I realized how stupid I had been and I never would have dreamed it would be such a help."

Four of her neighbors profited by her example and are planning to go and do likewise.

I recall one kitchen which was checked up with the result that the number of steps in doing the kitchen work were reduced one half, with a saving of an hour and a half a day, or about six weeks of ten hour days in a year. A pedometer was worn for a week before and after the changes were made.

In checking up on arrangement we have followed these rules:

1. Group together articles which are used together.

2. Keep articles used most frequently in the most convenient places.

Numerous time saving practices have been adopted by many women over the state. One woman in Black Hawk county scrubs her kitchen only half as often as she did the bare floor before she put down linoleum.

Sixty-five women in one county have pasted oil cloth on the pantry shelves, because it requires just one-fourth as much time to clean them as it does.

Many women report that a power washer cuts down the time required to do the washing from six hours to two hours, and a pressure cooker reduces the time of watching food two-thirds, besides cutting the gas bill half in two.

After the mechanical matter of equipment and arrangement has been checked up comes the more difficult matter of checking up on the plan of work.

The systematic woman, who works on a schedule, believes in it thoroughly. She

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says it is the only way to get all of the work done and still have some leisure time left. The woman who has never tried it says it may be true, but that there are too many interruptions, you can’t predict. I am inclined to agree with the former, when I compare the achievements of the two types of women, those who have come under my observation.

If you are not quite sure whether you need a schedule or not ask yourself these questions:

1. Does confusion reign in your home; is the house disorderly; are the children uncontrolled and disorderly; every time the family goes out to do you have to stop darning a stocking or sew on a button?

2. Are important tasks habitually left undone, such as mending, cleaning closets or perhaps reading, or specially planned family recreation?

3. Do you use your time to good advantage, or do you belong to the great army of "putters-on"?

4. Are you continually hunting for things? Not long ago while in a home for thirty minutes the following articles were hunted for: The father’s hat, paring knife, door key, ice pick, scissors, tape, yesterday’s paper, and key to the car. A monstrous waste of time, and time enough to saw off nothing of the irritation.

5. Is the general trend of family development what you want it to be?

If any or all of the above conditions prevail, you may be fairly certain that you are more or less a failure at your job, and the schedule is the surest means of escape from the inevitable unhappiness which follows failure.

In planning a schedule, first take an inventory and find out exactly what is becoming of your time now. As a help in checking up on this we have been using a Blank.

The women have kept this for a week or two, or better still for a month, and then have studied this record to find:

1. If the schedule is regular and effective.
2. If one department is doing the work of another, or if the division of work in the family could be improved upon.
3. If too much time is spent on certain things. We have found the length of time spent on cooking for a family of five ranges from 1½ to 6 hours a day.
4. What unnecessary jobs are done?
5. What things were left undone thru the entire month?
6. Was there needless repetition? One woman found that she phoned fourteen times in one month to the grocery store. Her little boy was sent there three times a day.
7. Is meal time regular, or do members of the family come drifting in at all hours, especially at breakfast?
8. Are rest periods included in the working day?

9. Is too much time on recreation and outside interests, with the neglect of essentials at home neglected?
10. Is the family recreation satisfactory?
11. How much time is given to the child’s work? One woman said: "I really like my children and I am panic stricken that the years slip by, and I am missing their companionship and for their trial troupers and keeping their stomachs filled. I must have more time to be with them."

Then the question of leisure, Is it well planned? Is it inspirational? Is it used in a worth-while way.

Examine your labor record carefully to find out if every day time is provided in your schedule cannot be fitted into some ready made time budget planned by some expert a thousand miles away, and based on averages of how other women have used their time budget, like the money budget, must be made to fit the needs of the individual family. Now two things to consider when the homemaker, having taken an inventory, studied and analyzed it, needs to begin with a few of the things that need most to be changed.

The outstanding deficiencies will help to determine where she shall begin. At least regular order of work for all fixed duties should be put into operation as rapidly as possible, including tasks that lie in region of choice. One woman, before planning her schedule, spent two weeks in finding places for everything, time well spent, and a good place to begin in many homes. She said if she had not she would have had to carry out her schedule, as she was interrupted so often to hunt things for various members of the family.

With some overworked women the addition of a regular afternoon nap has been the first step. The assignment of fixed hours to all members of the family is the particular need in some families. The homemaker cannot hope to put her entire program into operation at once. She has her goal before her and a well worked out written down plan as a guide she has made a good beginning. The unsystematic housewife is not discouraged because she cannot establish system in her home over night. Growth is slow and it is the task of years to change habits. She must keep thinking, changing, improving. It may be months, years before she is able to live up to her program, but the time schedule like the income budget brings rich returns if it is lived up to to no greater extent than she can.

It helps you to think, to take a square look at the general trend of family life. If helps you to weigh values and to make wise choices. It adds incommensurately to your interest in your work, helps to keep you alert, increases your self respect of your family for you. And last and greatest, a plan lived up to takes the worry out of housekeeping, brings peace of mind, and a satisfying sense that your job has been well done.

Norwegian Cookery

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flour, salt and water. It is rolled out and baked on a greased griddle. Flat bread is thirty inches in diameter and one-sixteenth of an inch thick.

Another Scandinavian food somewhat similar to flade brod is leve. It is baked in the same way as the flat bread. In the making of this the oil is poured over plain flour and allowed to stand until cool, when white flour is added. This bread is eaten on Christmas Eve with lushef, (soaked codfish). When baked it is crisp but generally before serving it is spread with molasses.

Potete kager (potato cakes) are also baked on large greaseless griddles. Potatoes are mashed and flour is kneaded in until the dough is of a consistence easily rolled. Pieces of dough are cut in rope-like shapes, then these rows of dough are made into forms similar to pretzels but about five times as large. If too much flour is used on the board the dough slips and will not roll into the desired shape. They are then put on baking sheets and baked in a moderate oven for fifteen minutes. When taken from the oven they are crisp and very appetizing.

Berliner krands (Berlin wreaths) are another Norwegian paste. The name would suggest they originated in Berlin, however, they are often made by Norwegian cooks. Three hard boiled egg yolks are mixed with four raw yolks. One pound of washed butter and one-half pound of sugar are added, and over a low fire the yolks are stirred in. The dough should be allowed to stiffen overnight. Pieces of dough are then rolled into eight-inch ropes one-half inch thick. The ends are crossed making a wreath-like form. One side is dipped into egg whites then in the sugar. (Granulated or lump sugar is preferable) and baked in an oven for fifteen minutes. The wreaths should be removed with a spatula while the pan is still hot or they will stick and break. These