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Sharing Work and Responsibility

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Sharing Work and Responsibility



*Save time and energy for the
things you want to do*

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE
EXTENSION SERVICE
C. Larsen, Director
Brookings, S. D.

Sharing Work and Responsibility

by

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The efficient home is the product of cooperative family effort to secure with minimum expenditures of time, energy, and money, a home atmosphere where each member can achieve a well balanced physical, mental, and spiritual development.

Every family has had such a goal consciously recognized by its members. If it has been repressed by discouragement, misunderstanding or the autocratic dominance of some member, it should be brought into use again.

The seemingly least interested member loves his home and is happiest when giving freely of his best to help make it a success. Whether the reason why he is not giving his best be real or fancied, the results are the same and the situation needs careful study.

Family life has been a center of study for a number of years. There are those who have been as devoted in giving their time to the discovery of the elements of successful family life as others have been in giving themselves to the discovery of new planets, new combinations of chemical elements or the production of new types of plants and animals.

Elements of Successful Family Life

The following have been given as contributing factors to successful family life:

Parents with vision and knowledge of homemaking; their personal efficiency and general attitude winning the respect and voluntary following of the family members.

Faith in the ultimate success of the family and pride in family membership.

Family agreement upon a simple but satisfying standard of living.

A well planned program of work.

Cooperative sharing of home work and responsibility by the family members.

Each member intent upon discovering for the mutual benefit of all the most efficient way of accomplishing the essential work of the home.

Home and family problems frankly faced and discussed by the group.

Common sense rather than sentiment, the accepted rule governing individual and group decisions.

Efficiency Principles of Organizations Applied to the Home

Successful organizations meet regularly to discuss their business. The responsibility of the organization is divided among the membership. The members are interested in all the work of the organization but each is not burdened with the whole responsibility. There is much frankness, courtesy, and respect for the rights of others. Common sense and justice direct its decisions. There is no place for misunderstanding in the successful organization. It is the business of each individual to understand and be understood. The leaders have the ability to direct without seeming to. They are alert to anything which might increase the efficiency of the or-

ganization. They are willing to give up old practices and approve new ones. They help individual members to see and accept opportunities.

Homemakers who have applied these principles of successful organizations to their homes have found that a happier home life results.

The Family Council

Some form of family council is common to most of the outstandingly successful homes. The council recognizes homemaking as the cooperative responsibility of the whole family. It analyzes the work of the home and provides for group discussion of its problems.

Homemakers having developed a successful family council give us the following pointers:

"There should be a stated time for the family to meet for weekly discussions when all subjects of importance are brought before the group and decisions made as to their solution.

"As a rule the mother and father should take turns as chairman of the group but each member in turn should have opportunity for this training.

"It is not necessary that these discussions be formal but the most successful ones adhere rather closely to the form and courtesies approved by public custom. It prevents waste of time, keeps sentiment in the background and common sense foremost.

"The simplest form of a family constitution and by-laws stating the goals of our family and the rules for family council meeting, have proved interesting and helpful.

"Even the youngest should be listened to with attention and respect. Suggestions should be invited from the little ones.

"Complaints should be reserved for the proper time and presented in written form as a rule, at the regular family meeting."

The Family Bulletin Board

"We find the family bulletin board an asset. (Fig. 1.) Children like written directions. It enables me to plan when planning is most convenient and it cuts down on interruptions by calls for directions or repetition of directions when I should be giving my attention to what I am doing.

"Everything finds its way to our bulletin board. 'Help wanted' signs take care of unexpected emergencies;

new directions or plans to replace regular plans when occasion demands it; the granting of unplanned-for privileges; a word of appreciation or encouragement to someone needing it; jokes, quotations, bits of verse for individual members or the group as a whole.

"Our family has added the post office feature to the family bulletin board (Fig. 1). A pencil is attached to the board by a long string. Under

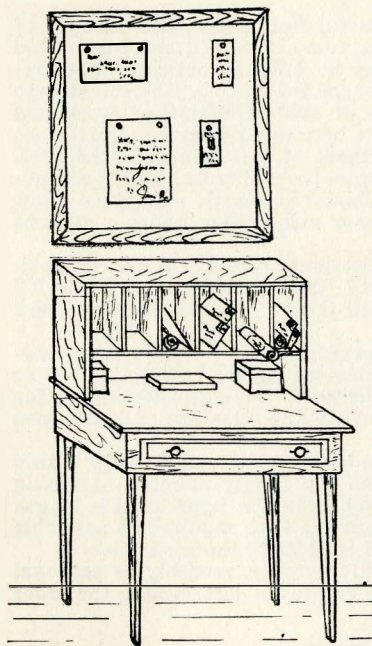


Fig. 1.—The Family Bulletin Board. Post Office and Business Center.

the bulletin board is a small table with a drawer containing a supply of cheap paper in half sheet size and a box of gummed paper cut in small strips. Things of interest to the family as a whole are posted on the bulletin board but things of interest to members individually are written, sealed with a gummed strip, and put in the pigeon-hole belonging to the member. The family mail is also distributed. The plan has proved interesting and has brought splendid results."

An Efficient Home Program

Every successful concern has a clearly defined program with schedules for its members. Homemakers experienced in the development of successful home programs give us the following advice:

"The family should agree upon a simple but satisfactory standard of living and determine the minimum work needed to maintain the standard.

"After making a thorough study of the work of the home the next step is to work out a program and schedules best suited to these conditions, experimenting with them until they seem to do justice to the work and to the family's comfort.

"You cannot draw up the most successful family program and set of schedules in a week, a month, or even a year. You will constantly find points for improvement. Some tasks may be dropped entirely. The frequency of others may be reduced. Time needed for various jobs will change due to better methods and development of skill. Shifting of work and responsibility among family members may be found advisable. Conditions themselves may change requiring adjustment of program and schedules. The general tendency is to make the program too elaborate. Try to simplify and not to complicate it. A schedule should be elastic enough to allow you to do things in a quiet leisurely manner rather than under a nervous strain.

"Scheduling really means organized distribution of work and responsibility. It is the answer to who is to do it? Why should she or he do it? Where is it to be done? Why is it to be done there? When is it to be done? and Why is it best to do it then?

"List all various jobs which must be performed to maintain the standard adopted. Do not omit the irregular jobs no matter how small. After each job list the needed frequency for doing it. Base decisions upon the minimum work actually essential to maintain the standard and not upon convention or habit.

"Check all jobs to be done outside the home or by outside help within the home. Note after each remaining job the family member assuming responsibility for doing it. After each job note the approximate length of time required to do it. Take into account the time required to assemble tools and supplies, to put them away, and to shift to the next job.

"Plan the best order for doing all daily, weekly, monthly or seasonal jobs. We found the following chart forms helpful in determining the order and distributing responsibility:

Daily Plan of Work

Time of Day	Mother	Father	Ted	Joe	Ruth	Jane
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Weekly Plan of Work

Day of Week	Mother	Father	Ted	Joe	Ruth	Jane
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Monthly or Seasonal Plan of Work

Month of Year	Mother	Father	Ted	Joe	Ruth	Jane
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“Plan a definite time for regular meetings of the family council to discuss efficiency methods and other matters of home business. Include in the calendar a definite time for taking care of business and some recreation for the family as a whole.”

Individual Responsibility

The family which actually conserves time and energy for the things which they want to do has a membership who see their work in its relation to that of the others. They work independently without supervision. Each determines the best order and method for doing the work for which he is responsible. The best way produces superior results which brand the worker as “skilled.” It gives him a sense of individual power and self-esteem. It makes work recreational and the home radiate with efficiency and happiness.

Much of the success of individual and family life is dependent upon the development of such personal freedom and ability. Someone has said—“To be dependent upon the presence, the efforts, the humor or even the ability of another, to feel bound by custom, rule or regulation produces tension, nervousness, and cuts down personal efficiency.”

Personal Efficiency

The ability of a family to achieve its goal depends upon the personal efficiency of each member.

A business efficiency expert maintains “There is no waste in the world that equals the waste of ineffective, ill-directed human effort.

Another adds, “It is amazing the amount of power that is wrapped up, unused, unrecognized, in an ordinary human being. Every one possesses a threefold nature, physical, mental, and moral. Natures or qualities are so interrelated that weakness in one phase reacts to weaken the productiveness of the individual as a whole. Strengthening any phase of one’s nature tends to increase one’s total accomplishment. Each individual possesses, when born, positive and negative qualities more or less dormant. Life is a battle for supremacy between these forces. A person succeeds or fails according to which of these forces rules.” He insists that it is possible to rid one’s self of negative ineffective and undesirable qualities by developing the positive qualities which they replace.

The home, with its varied work rightly directed, offers splendid opportunity for the development of well balanced productive personalities. Each member should feel himself unfolding and growing in the home atmosphere. He should sense a continued increase of power through the development of his positive qualities.

Homemakers covet a sense of well balanced personal existence. It is the basis of their desire for leisure. The leisure which they want is time to do the things which they believe will give them this feeling of satisfying existence.

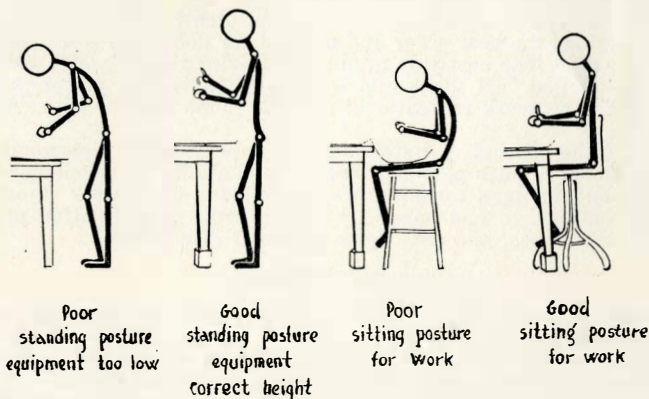
Health

Attitudes and ideals are placed first by those studying the problem of home efficiency. Health is emphasized next. Family accomplishment is largely dependent upon the health of individual family members. Many have grown so accustomed to not feeling up to par that they have accepted the situation as an unavoidable part of their make-up. They think that they are naturally “delicate.” “slow geared.” They not only accept the idea but grow content with it using it sometimes as an alibi to attain selfish goals. Positive health makes one welcome the new task with assurance. It may not be had by mere wishing but it can be secured through study and persistent effort.

Factors Producing Fatigue

All factors producing undue fatigue are health destroying. Fatigue may be the result of long hours and heavy work but often it is due to other sources.

Authorities say that: "Fear and all passions in which fear is an essential element such as anxiety, worry, grief, envy, jealousy, anger, hatred, revenge, remorse, despondency, and despair are constant foes of vitality,

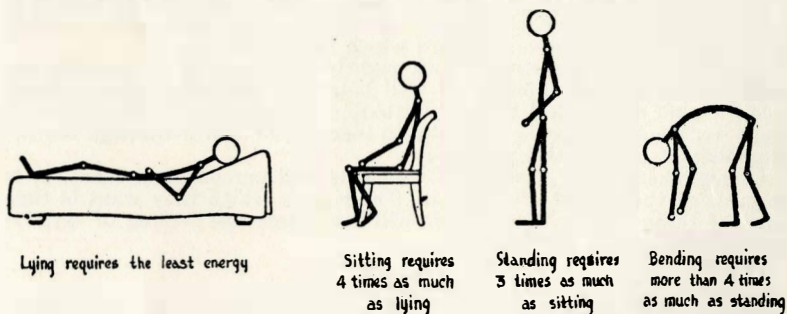


Reichskuratorium für Wirtschaftlichkeit
BERLIN

Fig. 2

health, and efficiency of everyone who experiences them.

"Disorder in surroundings, uncomfortable and ill-looking clothing, are responsible for much irritation and fatigue. The more one works and lives under a high standard of cleanliness and suitability of dress, the more skilful and rapid becomes the nature of one's movements."



Reichskuratorium für Wirtschaftlichkeit
BERLIN

Fig. 3

Color in dress and surroundings may be a fatiguing factor. Some colors over-stimulate, others depress. One may not be conscious of their effect, but the reaction is none the less real. Lack of harmony in color, line, or design, like general disorder, is a jarring note which reacts upon the individual, producing fatigue.

An excessive amount of noise is fatiguing. Discordant noises, high

pitched, rasping or clanging sounds are wearying. It is impossible to eliminate all undesirable noise from the home but it is possible for each member of the family to modulate his voice and speak in quiet pleasant tones. Noisy work and play can often be segregated so as not to interfere with the whole household. This element of noise in the home has a far-reaching significance on personal efficiency.

Improper lighting, ventilation, and temperature are fatigue factors and are responsible for much inefficiency in the home.

Poorly arranged furnishings, equipment, and supplies account also for much of the fatigue and inefficiency. Equipment out of repair or unadjusted to the worker, causes as much fatigue as does the lack of equipment.

Poor posture in walking, standing, and sitting consumes needless energy. Efficiency experts advise us to develop the habit of good posture; to minimize steps; to sit rather than stand; to avoid stooping; and when resting to recline, actually relaxing and if possible sleeping for a few moments. (Figs. 2 and 3.)

Loss of sleep is a fatigue factor which should be avoided as much as possible. When loss of sleep is unavoidable, its effects can be counteracted in part by additional food to supply the increased demand upon energy.

Investigation often reveals that the worker is tired out not because rest is needed but a good square meal. Careless food habits are common. It is easy in the rush of work and play to omit or slight a meal.

Poor order of work is another fatigue factor. One should eliminate unnecessary shifting from one type of work to another. "It takes energy to stop and start the human machine and to get up the momentum needed to produce the steady rhythmic motion which brings efficient results. While time and effort can be conserved by avoiding unnecessary shifts, heavy work which uses the same muscles steadily can be continued too long and cause undue fatigue. One's daily and weekly schedule should be well balanced as to types of work so as to avoid too much variety and too much concentrated effort along any one line."

Relaxation

The habit of calm, unhurried, intelligent facing of situations and working through them is as essential as scheduled rest and recreation.

One homemaker says, "Quiet assurance is the best aid to steady progress and when we learn to maintain poise and refuse to become flustered under pressure, we can see what obstacles are ahead, be able to choose which ones can be smashed through and which it will be wiser to avoid. Too often we forge ahead at continual high speed, with a consequent grinding of human gears alarming in the threat of possible breakdowns. Work which could be done easily at normal stride becomes an insupportable burden when the worry of hurry is added. Suspense, tension, and impatience develop until the very atmosphere is changed with them and calmness, serenity, peace, are forgotten words."

One reaches too often the snapping point where it seems that one's life cord will break under the tension. Such a condition, habit, or attitude is difficult to control.

"Stop before you reach that point," "learn when to stop," "relax!" is the advice repeatedly given but it is impossible to relax without knowing how to go about it.

How to Relax

Lie on floor on right side, extend right arm in a straight line under the head with the little finger edge of hand resting on the floor, fingers pointing in straight line and stacked directly upon each other and thumb bent slightly down in easy position. Stretch left arm forward over head, fore-

finger and thumb of left hand resting on forefinger and thumb of right hand, fingers stacked as in right hand. Extend right leg in straight line little toe edge of foot on floor, foot stretched in straight line with the leg. Extend left leg, inner or great toe edge of foot resting on great toe edge of right foot. You are now in position. Pull with your finger tips and pull with your toes until your body is as nearly as possible in a straight line. Continue to pull until all of a sudden you break all the resisting tension in your body and you roll over, relaxed. Rest for a few moments in this position without shifting it. If you have played the game persistently and correctly your body will be completely relaxed. If you have tried to short cut it or have not done it correctly some unrelaxed portion of your body will make you conscious of the error.

Make it a practice to stop and relax when you begin to feel tired or tense, follow it with a drink of water, a deep breath and a new determination to proceed calmly and you will be surprised how easy it is to actually do it.



A simple but satisfying standard of living.
 The essential work of the home reduced to the minimum.
 A well planned program of work and leisure.
 Cooperative sharing of responsibility.
 Each member personally efficient and responsible.

A home atmosphere where each feels himself developing unhampered into the person he wants to be.

References

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