

FINDING MORE TIME IN YOUR DAYS

I get it, you don't have a lot of time. I have been there, I am STILL there. You as the mom, may be the one that does everything. It seems like you get up early and you go all day long with no help or reprieve. There was a time in my life that my husband worked long hours and had a long drive to and from work and he was not able to help me at all due to his exhaustion when he arrived home. I didn't have any family or friends that would come and hold a baby or help with a toddler, it was just me. I HAD to do it all. I could have very easily, stayed in my bed and closed my eyes for the day, but I couldn't. I had to get up and function and make my home work. My little ones were depending upon me. Someone had to push through and make it work. It was either succeed or fail time.

How did I do it all? The reason I write this book is to share everything that I do in my life. Why? Because it has allowed me the ability to do it all. The ability to have time for myself and the things that I want to do. None of this all happened at one time. I didn't have my perfect cleaning schedule or my monthly menu all at once. I worked at them. I realized that when I did have a plan, even if that plan was to fall apart, I still knew what I had to do each day. I still knew that if I didn't get to making my monthly menu, I had one from last month that I could use and it would work. It saved me tons of hours of frustration and time. I don't have much time. Investing in something once and seeing the benefits over and over again is the key to success.

I started out way back in the day and made a list. I was already sitting holding a baby, watching Baby Faith with my toddler on the TV, why not do something productive? I started writing down the things that were frustrating in my life.

On my list were things like:

- Having a schedule so that we could get it all done in one day if we tried.
- Time for my devotions
- Weight loss and exercise time
- Time to read to little ones
- Time for crafts with my girls
- Organizing my home better

It all boiled down to TIME. I needed MORE of it to make my day. Unfortunately we all have the same 24 hours in a day. I just needed to figure out how to make it all happen. The only way to do that was to make a schedule.

I wrote down the hours of the day in half hour time slots. From the moment I got up, until I went to bed. I then started filling in my schedule with the things that I had to accomplish. Getting up, getting ready. Getting the children ready. Making and cleaning up breakfast. Doing school. Doing dinner prep. Doing my daily chores for the day, etc. When I did this, I realized how much time that I actually had leftover in my days. Then I started filling in the time slots with the things that I had "wanted" to see change in my life. After lunch and before nap, was a good time to get ½ hour of reading books with my younger ones. I was wanting to exercise, if I did it at 8:00 while everyone was watching a video before bed, I could do that. Otherwise, I was just laying their watching TV every evening. I needed some time in my afternoon to focus on my devotions, while the children took a nap that was a good time to get that in. I made time for crafts

with the girls each day, time playing with the toddlers, etc. All the things that I wanted to get accomplished I filled it in. Then I put it on my wall where I could see it in the kitchen and attempted it the next day.

I woke up and took note of what I had scheduled to do for the next hour. I then worked at my task. If I was off on some things, I penciled it on my rough draft schedule. When it was time to read to the little ones, I did. I kept note of the clock and was sure to end our story time on time. Even if I was tempted to keep going. The children knew when the stories were finished, it was nap time.

Everyone took a rest when they were little. Even the ones too old for a nap, still took the hour that we dedicated to “rest time” and did a quiet activity. This was a good time to allow them to do melty beads without toddlers getting into them. If I was needing a nap during that time, I took one. I shut off my phone and the entire house went on quiet mode during this time. The older ones had a clock in their room and knew that during nap time, you don’t come ask Mom if it is time to get up. You stay in your room, until the time is done. I didn’t place children together. This just frustrated me if they didn’t sleep. Everyone had a separate area to be quiet in. I also set my alarm as to not over sleep. When I didn’t need a nap and had a specific task to accomplish during nap time, I made sure to end during nap time. Even if I was tempted to just work for a few more minutes. I knew it was best to stop and pick up with the next task of the day. I have also learned that if you let children sleep longer, that just means they will be up later at night. Even if it is soooo tempting to let a toddler or preschooler sleep longer than usual, I would normally wake them up. If they had not slept well at night or maybe were not feeling well, then I would let them sleep longer. If I didn’t want to stay up later past my bedtime, I had better get them when naptime ended.

When it came time to doing crafting time with the girls, we worked for that ½ hour only. As much as they wanted to work longer, I said that we would put this away and continue working tomorrow at 2:30. This was then an anticipated time to look forward to. They enjoyed being creative. Every day at 2:30 we would do this together. Children like to have routines. They like to know what they are supposed to do and when they are supposed to do it.

After I tweaked and got my schedule set, I started working on the children’s schedules. I scheduled the things in their days that they needed to get done. They had slots for free time, play dough time, time to play with a certain sibling(we alternated this each day), time for school, chores, time to help Mom in the kitchen(we alternated this too), and anything else that needed to get accomplished in their days. I typed it up like I did mine and placed it on the wall. This is when it got a little tougher. Not only did I have to stick to my schedule, but now I was helping them to keep to theirs. We worked at it. Some days we were a little off, but that is okay. We learn to be firm yet still flexible for this interruptions that will happen in a days time.

I planned for most of our days to have something to do. I didn’t allow them to just lay around and watch TV. That was easy. I wanted them to be productive at things, even it if was writing a letter to a friend, reading a book, working on some crafts, or playing with a sibling. I was teaching them to maximize the moments in their days. I wanted them to learn how to get things done in life. You have to have a plan and work towards it.

I left most of our evenings free as when Dad is home, he doesn’t like us working or tending to things that we can get done in the day time. After dinner, we had free time. I scheduled some bedtime stories and a bedtime routine but nothing set like we did during the day. This allowed us to go outside when he got home, enjoy a game together, or allowed the children free time if Dad was working late. Since most of their days were scheduled and they had a plan, this freed up arguing among them during the day. I have noticed that

when they are bored and having nothing to do, they start fighting and bickering among each other. Being productive and having a plan, kept them happy and diligently doing things throughout the day.