

ON GOALS
by Evalyn Bennett

As every young woman approaches marriage and child rearing, she sets up goals, hoping to make her home a little bit of heaven. As the years roll around these specific goals have to be re-evaluated and changed with the changing times.

My goals twenty years ago included:

1. Keep an immaculate house which would be an ideal setting for the Spirit of Our Heavenly Father to dwell.
2. Read at least one excellent book a month and become well informed about the world around you.
3. Prepare well balanced, attractive gourmet meals, experimenting with at least one new recipe a week.
4. Bear many children who will be well dressed, well pressed and well behaved.
5. Keep an optimistic outlook on life. At the end of every week try to evaluate what created in you good feelings or frustrations.
6. Tell your husband, once a day, that you love him.

The first two years of our marriage, before children, was like a fantasy. I was so organized, orderly and adorable. We ate such creations as Cordon Bleu and capon under glass. Our discussions were stimulating and the house was hygenically spotless, not a thing out of place.

Then came the first child.

With the demands of burping, changing, loving, bathing, rocking, washing, praying some of my goals needed to be modified. I must give up my immaculate house. My revised goal now reads:

1. As you pass a table, blow hard on the top to rearrange the dust.
2. Put the vacuum in the middle of the living room floor so that anyone calling on you will think that sometime soon you intend to get debris from the floor.

Then came the second child.

With the demands of burping, changing, loving, bathing, rocking, washing, praying some of my goals need to be modified. I must give up my reading books.

1. But not my newspapers. I still snatch time for a little worthwhile reading of my favorite funny paper characters, Mary Worth and Dr. Rex Morgan, but only every other day. And who can live without Ann Landers.
2. To keep well informed I rush to the door when I hear the mailman to discuss some pertinent problems: "Has the garbage been picked up down the street yet?"

Then came the third child.

With the demands of burping, changing, loving, bathing, rocking, washing, praying some of my goals needed to be modified. . .

1. Instead of preparing well balanced, attractive gourmet meals, experimenting with at least one new recipe a week, my goals now read "Serve one hot dish a day." This means if you serve hot soup for lunch you can get away with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for dinner. When I do find an extra hour and decide to go all out on a roast, potatoes, gravy, and baked bread, the children ask, "Who is coming to dinner?" or "Is it Thanksgiving already?"

Then came the fourth child.

With the demands of burping, changing, loving, bathing, rocking, washing, praying some of my goals needed to be modified.

1. Instead of reading "Well dressed, well pressed and well behaved," my goals simply read "Dressed." If the diaper is hanging around the knees by noon, my neighbors know that I pinned it properly earlier in the day. I haven't seen the bottom of my ironing basket for three years, and really don't know when I ever will. Praise be for polyester!

Then came the fifth child.

With the demands of burping, changing, loving, bathing, rocking, washing, praying some of my goals needed to be modified.

1. My goals no longer read "Keep an optimistic outlook on life. At the end of the week try to evaluate what created in you good feelings or frustrations." Instead, it says "Keep your voice down until noon. At the end of every week count to see if you still have five children. Check your mind to see whether you have lost it or not. Check your varicose veins to see if your legs will take you through another mad week."

My last goal "Tell your husband, once a day, that you love him," now simply says "Try to speak to your husband once a day." With Cub Scouts, Little League, watching football, basketball, baseball, track, violin lessons, PTA board meeting, United Fund drive, Primary Blazers, Relief Society Visiting Teaching, ~~Bar Auxiliary~~, Law Wives, University Womens Club, chicken pox, roseola, hepatitis, Asian Flu, and tonsillectomies I feel lucky to call out to him as we rush past each other going in and out of the front door: "Golly dear, I am overdrawn at the bank again."

Twenty years later my goals are summed up by reading "Sustain Life and endure to the end."