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# Grandma's Secrets to Saving Time

By Teresa King

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## **"Grandma's Secrets to Saving Time"**

Your day can fly by in chaos. Or it can be organized so that you do have extra time to relax, feel less stress and find more fun moments in your life. It's true.

When my grandmother was alive I used to watch her in awe.

She had a place for everything and everything in its place.

Her house was immaculate. She was a schoolteacher. She had a husband who expected her to serve him. Then to top all that off at 56 years old she had my little sister and me to care for.

We were 8 and 7, old enough to help and young enough to play.

Grandma had a big old farmhouse. Grandma would wash the clothes in the washing machine then take the clothes upstairs to the attic to hang them up to dry.

I did ask her why she didn't have a dryer. I asked about everything, I was most inquisitive. She said, that there were some things in life that you were meant to do the hard way.

She said, hanging up laundry was good for your bones, and kept you strong, and gave you time to relax your mind. It was work to be proud of.

Grandma washed clothes on Friday nights and sometimes a special load on Tuesday night. And, she'd hang them up.

Saturday was cleaning day. The reason the clothes were washed on Friday night was so they would be dry on Saturday.

So, we helped grandma by bringing the clothes down off the line.

That's when the ironing started. Saturday was housecleaning day. No-one went anywhere or did anything until the chores were done, and we had chores. We dusted, picked lint off the carpet, while grandma scrubbed the bathroom and the kitchen floors.

And, got the week's laundry done.

I'd iron grandpa's shirts. Yes, there was a specific way to iron shirts, and grandma taught those things just like she taught her class in school. She'd explain why you did things in order to save you work in the long run.

You see, if you did the back of the shirt first, by the time you did the collars and the sleeves, the back of the shirt would not look fresh and crisp and you'd have to run the iron over it again.

Grandma said, “If you do it right in the first place, then you don't have to do it again.”

Grandma had containers that she kept cleaning supplies in. She had aprons with big pockets. **Everything was portable**, so she could tote things from room to room. This saved time in running back and forth to get supplies.

This work took about two hours for we little ones, and we'd rush out to play like eager little puppies.

But, grandma continued a little longer, then would prepare lunch. We'd eat, clean up after ourselves, and grandma would put things in order. Then we got to go with her to the beach house or the library or to visit the neighbors down the street.

**Grandma took four or five hours off every Saturday afternoon to do what she wanted to do. Her house was clean, the chores were done, and nothing weighed on her mind.**

Saturday breakfasts were always cold cereal, fruit, milk and toast. Lunches were sandwiches, milk and cookies. Dinner for Saturday was always leftovers. Saturday, you see, was go through the refrigerator and see what was what and make sure nothing was ever wasted.

**And, we'd eat whatever there was to prepare that refrigerator for Sunday's grocery shopping day.**

Saturday was a day when the total of all three meals and cleaning didn't take more than 30 minutes of time. Breakfast dishes were quickly put in the dishwasher and lunch glasses and plates went in, then later the dinner dishes. It did not take long at all.

**BUT...**

This **prepared** the refrigerator before shopping so it would be ready for new fresh food, and you'd not be shoving things in to fit and then later smell things that had to be hunted for and thrown out. This all saves time and money, for that matter. If you leave things to dry and get hard, they take more time to wash.

It was great fun for us. The idea of getting in and discovering what fun stuff we were going to put together for a meal, was great.

Saturday's meals were huge timesavers for grandma.

Sunday mornings, were eggs, and pancakes, and any other food that had not been put into the freezer. After breakfast, dishes would get done, we'd get dressed in our Sunday best, and that refrigerator was ready to be filled up.

(The lesson: Waste not, Want not and plan ahead)

Of course, grandma had rules. One was, you always ate at the table. Food in the other rooms of the house was prohibited. Eating food throughout the house leaves crumbs spread around, sticky fingers on the furniture, and spills on the rugs. We did not run around the house spilling our drinks on grandma's rugs.

(This saves more cleaning time)

Sure, there were watermelon days, where you went outside and made a fine mess of things but, we had to put the seeds in the compost pile, or take them up the hillside, where the seeds would not be in our yard space.

Yes, grandma kept a container where all food scraps, peelings and things went in, then taken out to the compost pile, which was rich and black and full of great big healthy worms. And, potatoes grew in that compost pile.

Grandpa would dig them out and we'd be thrilled with our prizes to take to grandma.

On Sundays, we dressed for church. Little girls were never to be seen in pants when they went to town or school. That was not proper and would reflect on how others would perceive us.

She was the organist for her church. Grandma never missed a day of church. After church, since we were in town, grandma knew that the stores would be filled with other Sunday shoppers. (This was before all night convenient stores.)

So, this was the time she'd visit her very good friend. We'd drive over and Grandma would remind us to not get dirty in our Sunday best, and she'd laugh and chatter and visit with her friend and we'd play and not disturb her. It was her time. We knew it.

This was nice to see. Grandma's hands were empty except her cup of tea, and she would have such a wonderful time. It was relaxing with her friend time. It was a special time that the two of them planned almost every Sunday.

Then afterwards, the store had thinned down, and in we'd go. We would get the week's grocery shopping done, and sometimes, if we wanted to stay with her friend's child, she'd let us stay there, then pick us up on her way home.

When we got home, **she'd enlist grandpa** to carry groceries in, then grandma would have her whiskbroom and whisk out the car. This took about thirty seconds. Her car was clean too. It only takes a minute to whisk up fresh leaves, and it takes a whole lot longer to do it once a week and spend time getting out ground in dirt. Grandma kept a whiskbroom in her car. She also kept a spray bottle of watered down vinegar to wash up windows and spills.

And, don't forget grandma and her tissue paper where you got to spit on the tissue so she could wash something off your face. ☺

The funny thing about grandma was that she was so organized that all the above work might seem like a lot of stuff to do. But, in reality, the floors were never really dirty; the house was never a mess. She picked up stuff all through the week, and we made our beds every morning, and at night she'd tuck us in with prayers and home made quilts. (Did I say homemade?) Well, they were, but I don't ever remember that grandma sewed anything beyond watching the six o'clock news and darning socks, or sewing a button.

**(Notice television was watched, but chores were being done during the watching.)**

Grandma was busy. Sure, she had company, and she'd pour everyone coffee and put out pastries, and she'd laugh and enjoy her moments of having company. Then, afterwards she would clear the table.

Things that could be saved would be saved. New things were not purchased until the old things were no longer serviceable.

Grandma did not use credit. If she wanted something, she would carefully save for it. Then when she got it, she appreciated it more for the long waiting. Because of the value of getting something you wait for, you learn to take good care of what you have.

I loved Saturdays when grandma took us to the beach house.

We'd run around and play and have a glorious time and I was a kid full of questions, and she'd answer them while she dusted and then I'd run down to the red pump and bring her water. I loved it.

**What, she dusted?** Yes, you see, since she only went to the beach house a couple of times a month, she liked to check everything out. **So, she figured while she was checking things out and walking around, why not dust?**

**This gets two things done at one time.**

Then we'd all go down to the beach and lift up rocks, and dodge sand fleas. Grandma would sit and watch us, or she'd walk along the beach and enjoy the fresh air and exercise like we did. Or, she'd bring a book that she wanted to read, and we'd skip rocks, and wear ourselves out for as long as we could.

On days when there was no sun, we had boots that we wore to protect our shoes and those boots were never worn in the house. When you finished with your boots, you wiped them down and put them where they belonged!

When grandma cooked, she'd clean as she went along. It is totally overwhelming to bring out everything, leave everything out and try to cook in a cluttered workspace.

All you have to learn are things like take the flour down, use it and put it back. By the time dinner was ready for serving, grandma would be down to three or four glistening pots of food on the stove. We'd be served. There was no mess in the kitchen, except those pots and the bowls with our fresh vegetables and condiments on the table. NOT a dish was dirty in the sink.

In fact, at grandma's house, dishes were rinsed immediately by the person who used the dish. Perishables were put away and the table wiped down.

Then she would relax.

**Does this save time?** You bet it does. When you are cooking, you generally will be doing 20 minutes of work, and several more minutes of waiting. You gather your ingredients and while they are simmering, you put stuff away.

If you don't, you'll be standing around over the stove. When dinner is done, you serve and then you have a whole lot of stuff to put away. Wasting 15 to 20 minutes of your time you could have used during the cooking time.

Plus, dishes that you mixed things with start drying up and they become harder to wash, and when you get the after dinner dishes along with the stuff you didn't put away, you have clutter. Clutter is overwhelming. Being overwhelmed results in frustration.

Grandma also planned her meals so that when she cooked one night, something was doubled in size, so the next night it would be served with something else for variety. She'd save time many times with the recipes she chose to cook, also.

**So, what have we learned in this story so far?**

- ? Grandma was crazy?
- ? Grandma was a workhorse?

**Or...**

Grandma planned and organized her whole life so that her time was never wasted. You see grandma knew to never put things off, because if you did, you ended up in chaos. The more chaos you have, the more time you waste.

She knew that appearances in this society were important and that no matter how poor you were, soap was cheap and elbow grease was healthy.

She knew how to delegate. (**This is a huge time saver.**)

She knew how to plan her shopping so that it was done once a week.

She knew how to plan her trips into town and accomplish more than just one thing. She knew to have a list so that nothing was forgotten.

She knew credit was a working person's worst enemy.

She knew that time was valuable.

And, she knew how to have fun and **relax**.

**WAIT, did I tell you about grandpa?**

Grandpa had a shop. When you walked into that shop, it smelled so good. I don't know why. There is just something about the smell of a man's shop that makes you feel safe and secure.

Grandpa's shop had a place for everything and everything in its place too. His shop had pegs on the walls, where each tool was shining. Some of his tools were 50 years old.

It was always so very carefully taken care of. Everything that was ever used was wiped down before he put it back.

When he used a hose, he rolled it up. When he pruned the trees, he took the prune tool back into the shop and wiped them and hung them up in their proper place.

You did not see tools all over the yard that were not being used. You did not see the lawnmower not put away. You did not see that old farmhouse in disrepair. Grandpa planned what he was going to do with his time, after work, and on his weekends.

His tractor was a fine red machine. I loved the tractor.

Grandpa would take us to the top of the hill where he would take us to the spring where we had fresh cold water. It was so good. Up there on the acreage where the frogs leaped in the pond and the raccoons and deer wandered, it was all as nature intended, but grandpa, always kept the path to the spring, weeded down.

Grandpa decided to grow fig trees. It was my job to trudge up the hill with a bucket of water. Three trees, three trips.

One day, I didn't feel like it. Grandpa looked at me and said, "Teresa, two things can happen here. You can let the trees die, or you can expect that someone else will do your chores for you and lose your own self-worth."

That was all he said. He did not raise his voice or order me. I knew I could run off and play and not water those trees. But, he was very right, you know. You can do what is expected of you, take care of what you have, let your irresponsibility hurt something, or you can be lazy and let others do your work for you. There was no self-respect in any of those choices.

So, up the hill with the water I went, and later that night, I expected grandpa to tell grandma of my shameful rebellion. He never said a word.

After nine months, my sister and I were sent back to live with our mom. The difference in lifestyle was amazing. We had been thrown back into chaos. I loved mom, too. But, I will tell you living with grandma was one of the best times in my life.

She taught me so many things. She gave me a sense of purpose and a sense of pride and she gave me a safety net full of responsibility, spontaneous hugs, and faith.

I try not to tell others how to raise their kids. However, there is one strong tidbit that I tell everyone.

**Children need consistency. They need it!**

They need a schedule, and expectations and they need chores so their hands help create a family environment where everyone is needed and all part of something special.

When you have consistency for them, you'll have more time, because they respond to responsibility way better.

This helps you get the chaos out of your life, it teaches you to learn to delegate chores to others and teaches your children responsibility. It also gives a child a strong sense of security.

The secret of all successful people is simply that they are organized and do not waste time.

Think about it. Review your own activities, and then see if you can't find extra hours in each day for more constructive accomplishments.

- ? How many times have you misplaced your glasses? Or, seen others misplace their glasses?
- ? Can't find a pen?
- ? Have you ever searched frantically through your purse or for your purse?
- ? Can't find that vase that you just knew should be at the far back of the cupboard, and it isn't there?
- ? Now, where'd you put that book of stamps?

Time spent searching for something is a lot of wasted time.

It really adds up. How many times have you lost the Remote Control for the television?

How about searching for that can of peas, you just know are somewhere on the shelf with other stuff. There's tomato sauce, a bag of sugar, corn, soup, a can or two of tuna, where are the peas?

How about the mail that you dropped on the table when you brought your groceries in? Well, at least, you think you dropped it on the table by the door.

Or, how about the bill you absolutely forgot to pay?

Where are the spare light bulbs?

Did you run out of toilet paper again?

And the lights go out and just where is that flashlight or the matches and the candles?

The bill that wasn't quite time to pay, so you set it aside to only get a late fee and a mark against your credit. If you were organized, that would just not happen to you.

Oh, no, a navy blue sock and a black sock, where is a matched pair?

Now, where'd I put my running shoes? Did I leave them in the bathroom, the computer room, the living room, or bedroom? **This means more hunting time.**

I know I had another set of sheets to fit the guest bed. Where did I put them, let's see?

**More searching time wasted.**

These are just things, that all take away more time, than if you had put them in their proper place in the first place.

Yes, it seems like, you would rather not put all the groceries away at once, and you have a few bags out, you get busy, and the next thing you know you are eating the cauliflower that you were going to have for your company, four nights hence, but instead, they mysteriously thawed out, and now you have to cook them!

Efficient time management is planning what you're going to do.

You can begin by making a list of the things you want to do by a certain time. Write it down. Schedule the time you will go shopping, try to choose a time when the stores are not going to have long lines.

How many times have you waited in line for the few things you needed for the house or dinner, after you came home from work, in line with all the other people who didn't plan for what they needed?

Organize your trips to take care of as much as possible.

If you like to talk on the phone, great, get a phone that you do not have to hold in your hand, and get your dishes done, or dusting, or folding laundry. Don't waste that time!

For a man, you can polish your shoes or get your clothes ready for the next day. Or, you can talk and clean out a junk drawer, or fix something that needs fixing.

Yes, I know, they say most men can't do two tasks at once. But, I believe many can talk on the phone and fix a fishing reel, or clean out a tackle box.

If you have friends that take up too much of your time, tell them how much you care about them, but would prefer to plan the phone call more on your schedule than their whim. This way, you can plan to call, and plan to talk and plan to straighten out a drawer while you are talking!

Keep your desk organized. And, though grandma never had a computer, I'm positive she'd have a folder for everything. A desk area should have an in-basket, out-basket, a pending basket, and a big garbage can. When letters are opened, you throw away the junk. Don't bother looking at it. It just takes more of your time. If you like to look at those things, then sure, have a special place for unimportant things that you'd like to look through.

Schedule chores. Don't run out right now and try to do them all. Simply plan to put in time each day to do something. Soon your house, your lawn and your garden will be the envy of the neighbors.

You should have a calendar. It's very important. You need to have it in a place where you will look at it every day, so you know what you have delegated to be done.

Answer your letters the same day you get them. If you cannot, put them in the pending box, but mark it on the calendar on your to-do list.

Especially email. If it is business email, it is too easy to look at it, put it in the back of your mind, and forget about it.

Pay your bills when you receive them. If you can't, put the date in pencil on the envelope for the mailing date, and keep these where you can see them and know they are pending.

Learn to say, "No." If you work at home, learn it faster!

Many people think that just because you are home, you can watch little Tommy for an hour, or run to the store for them. Don't get caught up in that. Sure, if you are going to the store, you can pick up some milk for someone, but make sure you keep what needs to be done on YOUR time, not someone else's.

Plan your time efficiently, don't let time wasters steal your time. Delegate chores, stay prompt with the papers that come into your house everyday, AND, be sure to make time for your family and friends and just kick back and relax. And, believe me, when you are organized, you can really relax and enjoy your time set aside for you.

***Teresa King***

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