

Morganton News Herald – Sunday, December 25, 2016

Generations



## Home Economics for 2017 versus Lessons for 1950s

By Peg DeMarco - Special to The News Herald

Many thanks to my good friend, Marsha, for posting on Facebook an extract from a 1950s Home Economics Book entitled, “Tips to Look After Your Husband.” This was truly a “period piece!”

I would have been three years old in 1950, so this might have been more for the generation before, perhaps taught in my Mother’s Home Economics class.

At any rate, updating its content to reflect more realistically what a husband might expect from his devoted wife, at least in the DeMarco household, might mirror your household as well.

Number one was, “Have dinner ready by planning ahead, even the night before, as a way of letting him know that you have been thinking of him and are concerned with his needs.” My “planning” consists of removing some ground round from the freezer that morning, sticking it into the microwave’s turbo defrost, and trying to decide between meat loaf, meat balls, or just plain hamburgers for dinner.

Number two was, “Prepare yourself and take 15 minutes to rest so you will be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your makeup, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh looking.” These days, my husband considers himself lucky to catch me dressed in something other than a caftan and not using his hairspray because I’ve run out of my own.

Number three, “Clear away the clutter,” including running a dust cloth over the tables. My husband’s expectation is, “Can I write my name in the dust or not” and, if not, something must have brushed against it, most likely one of the dogs.

Number four, “Prepare the children,” doesn’t apply to us these days, but we do have four dogs who know the word “mailbox” as a means of getting out the door and running the length of the fenced in yard (they even know the word when we spell it). So, to identify with this tip, I’ll try and sneak out the door and run down to the mailbox, remaining mute the entire time so as not to alert the pack.

Number five, “Minimize the noise,” would be a tough one with four barking dogs and a dishwasher that is on its last leg that sounds like gears grinding for 45 minutes. Every time I show my husband a Lowe’s sale, his response is, “But it still works, Peg,” so we’ll hang on to it until the

day comes when it is filled to capacity with dirty dishes and no longer turns on. I've had that nightmare happen to me before.

The next tips were "Some Don'ts," beginning with "Don't greet him with problems or complaints." So, I figure the next time I turn on the kitchen faucet and nothing comes out because the well has decided to act up, I'll keep it to myself until he goes to wash his hands.

Another don't was to make him comfortable by arranging his pillow, taking his shoes off and speaking to him in a low, soothing voice so he can unwind. I'm okay with that one if he promises to stop telling me that I need a hearing aid, which I don't. I just use "cognitive" features of what I want to hear and what goes in one ear and out the other.

Listen to him was also a tip, including letting him talk first. That's often difficult with a dachshund in the house because she's Daddy's girl and five minutes have passed by without a couple of kisses right on the mouth.

In summary, the 1950s Home Economics Tips says, "Make the evening his, never complain if he doesn't take you out to dinner or to other places of entertainment. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure, his need to come home and relax." Uh-huh ... so the twice a year dinner date is off unless I get out the AMEX?

Last was the Goal: "Try to make your home a place of peace and order where your husband can renew himself in body and spirit."

Heck, if he was able to do that, he'd swear he had walked into the wrong house, so I'm proud to say that the DeMarco household will welcome 2017 pretty much the same way we welcomed the last 17 years of marriage.

Happy New Year's to all!

*Peg DeMarco can be reached at [pegdemarco@earthlink.net](mailto:pegdemarco@earthlink.net).*