

IN MY OPINION

Caroline Porter

A woman's work is never done – or is it?

If anyone ever doubted the changes in women's and men's roles in the last 50 years, consider the hilarious tidbit I received on the internet this last week. "The following is from a 1950's Home Economics text book intended for high school girls, preparing them for marriage."

1. Have dinner ready. Plan ahead even the night before, to have a delicious meal ready on time. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospects of a good meal are part of the warm welcome needed.

2. Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so you will be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair, and be fresh looking. He has been with a lot of work weary people all day. Be a little gay and a little more interesting. His boring day may need a lift.

3. Clear away clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives. Gather up school books, toys, paper, etc. Then run a dust cloth over the tables. (This after freshening up?) Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order and it will give you a lift too.

4. Prepare the children. Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces if they are small, comb their hair and if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part.

5. Minimize the noise. At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of washer, dryer or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet. Greet him with a warm smile and be glad to see him.

6. Some DON'TS. Don't greet him with problems or complaints. Don't complain if he is late for dinner. Count this as minor compared with what he might have gone through that day."

There are further suggestions, but we get the point. I remember my mother always combed her hair and put on fresh make-up before my father walked through the door. She was a busy lady, but she did not work outside the home. In fact, I was a fulltime housewife for 12 years, going to work outside the home when I had to, as a single parent.

These are wonderful rules for BOTH



husband and wife, just basic consideration and respect for each other's jobs and trials of the day. When I would breathlessly arrive for work in the morning, I would have fixed breakfast for the family, done a load of wash, made three lunches and taken some of the children and neighbors to school. The men in the office had dressed, eaten breakfast their wives had prepared and come to work.

Nowadays parents share responsibilities, acknowledging that a full time housewife and mother may have the most difficult physical and mental job of all. And for women to try to do it all, alone, is darn near impossible.

One of my favorite jokes is about the woman who accompanied her husband to the doctor's office. After the check-up, the doctor took the wife aside and said, "If you don't do the following, your husband will surely die. Each morning, fix him a healthy breakfast and send him off to work in a good mood. At lunch time, make him a warm, nutritious meal and put him in a good frame of mind before he goes back to work. For dinner, fix an especially nice meal, and don't burden him with household chores. Have sex with him several times a week and satisfy his every whim."

On the way home, the husband asked his wife what the doctor had said.

"You're going to die," she said.

A recent wedding anniversary notice in the newspaper stated the husband had retired from a career. It noted the wife was a "retired homemaker." Now that's progress.