renew you

Memorising a magic morning

THE ART OF THE ABSOLUTE MORNING

1. Chaos to calm
2. Hectic to happier
3. Disorganised to super organised

Hi, I'm Helen Efstathiou & I'm a Contentment Coach. I help busy working mums feel in control, clear headed and more capable.

My passion is to help busy working mums feel contentment. As a working mum myself I have experienced being in the space of chaos where life feels hectic. However, I have found that life doesn't have to be this way. I would love to share how I have found contentment in the chaos.

Do your mornings make you feel overwhelmed, time poor and anxious? Then you're probably making the 3 common mistakes most mums make in the morning:

- No planning
- Doing it all on your own
- Not giving yourself time before the family wakes

Running around from task to task in the morning and trying to remember to grab everything you need is exhausting. As mums we need to take more control of our morning routine. It's so common for mum's to wake feeling refreshed and then by the time you leave home for school or work you we so depleted and have no energy for the day. Imagine that you were able to balance your time. Imagine that you were able to create **"me time"** in the morning.

Imagine getting support from your family every morning. Mornings can be magical and this guidebook will help you to know the 3 key things that are needed to take your morning from chaotic to contentful:

1. Time management
2. Me time
3. Support from family

I follow this advice to make my mornings run smoother because if I don't take control, nobody else will and I find I will have a hectic day.

If we are organised, then we will feel in control and therefore content. The morning sets up our day and can help it run smoothly from the start.

Wake up to the new routine, renew you, renew your household.

With love, Helen xx

ME TIME MAGIC

1. Getting up early

As a mum, you probably are or should be up, be up and awake and out of bed before the family. Even an extra 15 minutes can make things run more smoothly.

Work out how much time you need to get the family up, fed and dressed, then set your alarm for 15 minutes before that or even earlier. This will allow for some "me time" to have a cup of tea, meditate, gratitude, visualisations or listen to a podcast.

Waking up earlier allows you extra time in case the morning is out of regular routine with any humps or bumps.
Be in a good mood all day by playing background music to uplift the energy in the household in the morning. Music is able to make us feel uplifted, more content and it can improve our wellbeing.

Ask yourself:

- How do you want your mornings to look?
- How do they look currently?
- What needs to be changed to bring about contentment to your magic morning?

Mistakes and benefits

The mistake most mums make is "let me sleep a little extra as I need to rest". Yes you need to rest but get to bed earlier and be up early to get organised and most importantly "me time".

There are a lot of famous people who attribute much of their success to the habit of getting up early (usually around 5am) from Ben Franklin to Richard Branson. It was Franklin who wrote the famous limerick: "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise". But it also helps to have something that you LOVE to do, to get you motivated to get up that early in the morning.

The first hour or so of your morning sets the tone for the rest of your day. A study conducted by Dr. Joerg Huber of Roehampton University in London found that "Morning people tend to be healthier and happier as well as having lower body mass indexes."

According to Christopher Randler, a biology professor at the University of Education in Heidelberg, Germany, "Morning people also anticipate problems and try to minimize them." Randler added, "They're proactive. Many studies have linked this trait, proactivity, with better job performance, greater career success, and higher wages."

TEAM TIME MAGIC

1. Making everyone help

Give the whole family some of your duties/responsibilities so you can free up some time or get children to do what they need on their own. Get kids to make their own bed, get dressed, pack school bags, grab lunch, etc. and attempt to have lunches and bags packed the night before.

Mistakes and benefits

Most mums make the mistake of not receiving help as they have the mentality of nobody else can do their job better than they can or it's just easier if I do it, so their list keeps growing. If only they would let go and allow their partners and kids to help take some of the load. Mums would be surprised with their children's capabilities and how responsible they can be and how your load will lessen.

Here are eight tips for teaching kids to be more independent:

1. Give notice. Get your child on board by encouraging them to help you.
2. Identify opportunities. Make a list of things they could be doing themselves.
3. Target priorities.
4. Make time.
5. Negotiate compromise.
6. Forget perfection.
7. Praise something.
8. Consider circumstances.

TEAM TIME MAGIC

2. Tag-teaming

If two parents, then each one can be doing separate chores to double up to save time. Even get siblings to tag-team and help each other out getting things done.

If you're a single mum with younger children who cannot help, just allow for more time in the morning to help things run smoothly.

Mistakes and benefits

The mistake most mums make is to not allow their children to help them. By working as a team, things get done faster and it teaches children how to work in a group environment.

It has been said by Michael LaRowe, author of Working Mums 411, that working spouses that tag team parenting responsibilities are most likely to have households that run smoothly. It is important that your spouse is behind your decision.

TEAM TIME MAGIC

3. Encouraging independence

If you have a toddler, you have a child old enough to follow simple directions. Could you ask the eldest to watch the youngest or allow the children to take more control and do things on their own.

Mistakes and benefits

If you keep doing everything for your child they won't learn to look after themselves and to help you. Teach them to be independent.

As a single parent, you may feel that you'd like to "do it all" for your kids, but it isn't always possible. Instead of feeling guilty about this, consider focusing on the opportunity that exists for your children to develop a healthy sense of independence, as well as the essential skills they will need to succeed in life. Said by Jennifer Wolf who writes about encouraging independence at any age in children.

3. Give two-minute warnings

Giving two-minute warnings to the children to keep moving and get ready is helpful. Remind all that if they are given a warning they must start their task within two minutes to give them time to start without being overbearing. Explain the concept of time to your children and how it effects the day and your emotions as well as theirs. Time is the label we place on different moments in our day or life.
These moments of time are like pages in the book of the universe that you create. The ability to dress yourself builds confidence, independence and a sense of achievement - and once your child has it mastered, it's one less thing for you to do in the morning!

ROUTINE MAGIC

1. Making every minute count

Quality time is any time you and your kids are in the same place/space. Make every minute count and enjoy time with them as they grow up too quick. Enjoy your magic mornings with them.

Mistakes and benefits

Make the most of your time with your kids as they are the most important people in our lives. Don't make the mistake of taking time spent with them for granted - by the time you blink they will be on their own. Cherish every moment and value time spent with them.

"I think a lot of us have this idea that we need to create big moments of togetherness, but we saw so many times that families had opportunities to connect throughout the day that they weren't aware of," Kremer-Sadlik says. Those small moments might be the 10 minutes you spend braiding your daughter's hair or your time spent cheering on your son at his Little League game.

ROUTINE MAGIC

2. Getting dressed

Make sure the uniforms have been put out the night before and are ironed ready to put on and lunches in the fridge from the night before to create space for quality time supporting each other.

If you don't need to wear a uniform, choose to wear colours that make you feel happy and raise your vibration. Colour evokes certain emotions within us and may cause us to feel warm and happy instead of angry. Brighter colurs make us feel happier.

Blue: calm
Purple: spiritual
Pink: kindness, relaxing
Red: powerful
Green: nurturing

Mistakes and benefits

Teach your kids to get their own clothes and dress themselves in the morning and teach them to have respect for their space and keep it tidy and clean. Don't make the mistake of getting their clothes/uniform ready for them or dressing them when they are at an age to be independent.

Why your child needs to learn how to get dressed

It's the usual morning rush - you were supposed to be out the door five minutes ago, and your child is still putting on his socks. It's no surprise that dressing your child yourself seems like the easiest and quickest option. But your child needs to learn how to do it. The ability to dress yourself builds confidence, independence and a sense of achievement - and once your child has it mastered, it's one less thing for you to do in the morning!

Getting dressed is about more than just putting on or taking off clothes. It helps your child develop many other skills, including:

- Fine motor skills as he/she learns to fasten buttons and zips.
- Gross motor skills as he/she stands on one leg to pull on a pair of pants.
- Cognitive skills as he/she remembers what bits of clothing go on first, and builds the patience and attention to finish the task.
- Language as he/she names types of clothes, colours and sizes.
- Awareness of time and space as he/she learns to dress for certain occasions and weather conditions.
- Learning how to get dressed needs patience, persistence and practice from both you and your child.
- It also involves getting to know the things you have to do to get dressed, for example picking out clothes that are right for the time of day, the weather and what you're doing that day - the tutu might not be the best thing for a bushwalk!
- Deciding what to wear - the dinosaur t-shirt or the truck t-shirt today?
- Doing up buttons or zips, getting collars and waistbands comfy, and getting socks and shoes on the right way around.

ROUTINE MAGIC

3. Breakfast

After finishing breakfast encourage everyone to take plates to the sink and help with washing up. Eat a nourishing breakfast yourself to raise vibration and don't skip this meal. We eat to generate energy, so proper nutrition is required as it's been hours since you have topped up the fuel in your body. Food turns into energy, which affects you physically and emotionally. Eat more real foods rather than processed as the energy dividends will pay off. A great tip is eating what is in season for fruit/vegies.

Mistakes and benefits

Don't make the mistake of preparing breakfast by yourself, get them involved in the the process if they are old enough, or else it will be always expected from you.

Even the littlest hands can help out in the kitchen and involving your child in meal preparation is an important lesson in responsibility and self-sufficiency. With just a little prep ahead of time from you, these simple ideas allow your child to make a complete breakfast all on their own – great for those busy school mornings when every minute counts!

ROUTINE MAGIC

4. Chores

Fill out the forms on the following pages each night with your kids and follow them in the morning. This will help so you know how early you need to be up before the family.

- Follow list A.
- Review list B to cross-check what needs to be done.

Mistakes and benefits

Don't make the mistake of teaching your children how to do chores by doing everything in the household on your own. Give them some responsibility. Do this via a weekly roster that everyone takes part in creating. Make it routine. Kids thrive on routine. If you want doing chores to stick when they're young, make it a routine part of life.

Intrinsic motivation leads to a greater sense of well-being and is fed by the fulfilment of 3 needs:

Competence.
Sense that you can control the outcome of something and the feeling of mastery.

Relatedness.
The desire to interact, connect with and care for others.

Autonomy.
The feeling of being the director of your own actions.

Paying kids money to do chores does not meet these needs nearly as well as expecting them to do chores simply because they are part of the family and need to be a contributing member of it.

Research suggests it helps them to become industrious and responsible adults. Studies show that children in the West spend little time helping around the house. While children a century or two ago were expected to do many things to keep the household running, especially if they lived on a farm, according to the Maryland Population Research Centre, today's 6-12 year-old child spends only about 24 minutes a day doing chores. This represents a 25% drop even since 1981. When kids do help around the house, it's frequently done under duress. Parents often have to plead, bribe, and threaten to get their children to do basic things like taking out the trash or cleaning up after dinner.

LIST A:

DAY	DUTIES	WHO	DURATION
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thur			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

LIST B:

DAY	SHOPPING LIST	TO DO	REMINDERS	THINGS TO TAKE	NOTES	WHO	WHAT IS NEEDED BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL
Mon							
Tue							
Wed							
Thur							
Fri							
Sat							
Sun							

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