

# TAKING TIME

by Rebecca Escott

Penn State  
Extension Home Economist  
For Lehigh County



the important aspects in our lives. He cautions that we not let urgent demands distract us from important goals. How are you doing keeping your first things as a top priority?

Researcher Joan Kofodimos studied many working adults and developed worksheets to help them see if they had balance in their lives. Here's a portion of one quiz that she used to measure if a person is spending an unhealthy amount of time focusing on work. How many of the following questions would you check off?

- I put more thought into my work than I do into my personal life relationships.
- I eat on the run.
- I find myself thinking about work (farm operation) while I'm doing leisure activities.
- I keep promising myself that I will cut down on working, but I don't do so.
- I work (farm) harder when things are not satisfying in my personal life.

from reaching the goals we have set. Now, of course, we're not on a quest to find a witch's broom, but we are on other quests. Your quest may be finding a new job or spending more time with a child who lacks confidence. It may be to run for a school board seat or to quilt a blanket for a new grandchild.

Whatever the goal, flying monkeys have a way of swooping in and taking us off track.

In his book, First Things First, Stephen Covey talks about the importance of devoting energy to

• I don't spend much time in conversation and interactions with family and friends.

These are a few of the statements that indicate someone is having difficulty balancing time and energy between personal and work responsibilities. Unfortunately families suffer and marriages suffer when this occurs.

In order for marriages and friendships to survive and thrive, people must commit time and energy to them. So often we see work as an unavoidable obligation, but our "job" as a mom, friend, son, or husband are not treated with the same seriousness.

If you really want to make your commitment stick (in spite of the flying monkeys that attack and try to pull you off track), Kofodimos suggests that you make the commitment public. Tell others. Specifically schedule time for the chosen priority; make

this a non-negotiable calendar item. You may actually want to create an activity that would force you to fulfill the time. For instance, I like to host a "Ladies' Day Out" at my home which forces me to spend some time with girlfriends that I enjoy. If I didn't schedule the "event," my time would slip by without a visit.

Finally, spend time with people who will encourage you to stick to your priorities. If you spend time with workaholics, you'll probably start to behave like them. If you share ideas with people who do special things with their families, you are likely to do those same things yourself.

Keeping first things first is a challenge. Take some time this week to ask yourself hard questions about whether the things you say you value are really getting the best you have to offer in time and energy.

## Natural Childbirth Program Offered

QUARRYVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — Birth Care and Family Health Services will offer a free program "Alternatives in Natural Childbirth" on Thursday, October 27 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Topics of discussion will include Birth Center, home and hospital birth options, safety statistics, insurance reimbursement information, and more.

Birth Centers were found safe for low-risk women in a recent national study and the cost-effective care offered by nurse midwives is receiving favorable attention from insurance providers.

Speakers will include Certified Nurse Midwife Rita Rhoads Martinez, founder of Pennsylvania's first Birth Center, Birth Care nursing staff, and clients who have experienced a variety of birth options.

Tours of the Birth Center will be given from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served and door prizes awarded. The program will start at 7:00 p.m. and will be followed by an informal discussion and questions.

The Birth Center is located at 1180 Dry Wells Road, Quarryville, Pa. For more information or directions, call (717) 786-4010.

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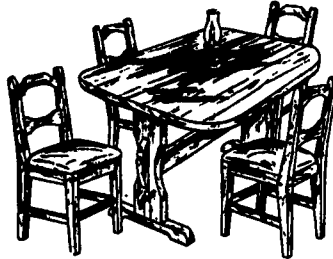
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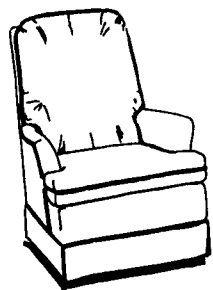
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