



Secrets
to **Getting**
More Done

in Less
Time



Donna Otto

*Words of Praise for
Secrets to Getting More Done in Less Time*

If I drew up a list of people I know who are tops at helping you get organized and on track, Donna Otto's name would be right with the best. Donna has been a good friend for years, and I know she has a rock-solid commitment to Christ, her family, and to helping others gain control of their "hectic" lives and schedules. IF YOU'RE READY TO GET BACK TO DOING THE IMPORTANT THINGS—INSTEAD OF SEEING ALL YOUR TIME SWALLOWED UP BY THE URGENT—THEN GET *SECRETS TO GETTING MORE DONE IN LESS TIME*.

John Trent, Ph.D.

President, Encouraging Words

SECRETS TO GETTING MORE DONE IN LESS TIME WILL GIVE HOPE TO WOMEN WHO DESIRE ORDER IN THEIR LIVES—lives often lived in fragmented, high-stress situations. Donna puts new meaning to the idea that there truly is a "time for every purpose under heaven"—and she does it with flair.

Daisy Hepburn

Heritage Ministries

Donna Otto's writing and teaching have been such a wonderful tool in my life. I have been listening to Donna teach for more than 10 years, and I ALWAYS TAKE AWAY SOME WISDOM THAT HELPS ME TO HAVE A MORE ORDERLY AND PEACEFUL HOME. I have come to understand that the truths that Donna shares are straight from the heart of God, who desires for us to have orderliness and consistency in our lives. Thank you, Donna, for helping me to be the wife and mother God created me to be.

Debbie Domenico

I've always considered myself a pretty organized person, so I was curious to hear what tips I could pick up from Donna. When I heard her talk on the "perfect white box" concept, that literally changed my life! I can't even describe the peace I feel inside, knowing exactly where everything is in our home. Even my family members come up to me and say, "What number box is this or that in?" Plus, the boxes look so neat and "Pottery Barn" style, even in our attic. THANK YOU, DONNA, FOR THE PERFECT IDEA TO ORGANIZE OUR "STUFF."

Lorri Healing

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HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS

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With deep devotion I dedicate this book
to the most valuable person in my life...
my steadfast husband, David.

Acknowledgments

My thanks to Betty Fletcher, an understanding editor. Can we go sailing now?

I also want to thank the rest of Harvest House staff for the work they do on my behalf.

Get More Done in Less Time



When I first met Donna Otto I knew we were kindred spirits. Our organizational hearts just seemed to bond together, as well as our “fun stuff”!

To be in her home is like spending time in the comfort of a charming, warm, loving bed-and-breakfast. You can feel her love for the Lord in all her organization skills. She moves freely, finding whatever is needed. It is as though I cannot see her working at her home and yet everything seems to get done in less time and with less effort. This creates time to enjoy each other’s fellowship and do the things that give our friendship the pleasure of our kindred spirits.

You will so enjoy this book and be thrilled when your family sees the results of how little time her plan takes. They will enjoy seeing Mom once again—and enjoy the “fun stuff” in life as a family and with friends.

Donna has a heart for happy women, happy homes, happy children, and happy husbands.

Let her writing enter into your life and home. You will be so excited you’ll want to try all of her ideas for creating more time.

Thank you, God, for Donna Otto, my speaking colleague and friend.

—Emilie Barnes, author
Cleaning Up the Clutter

*The Common Begin,
the Uncommon Finish*



There was a problem worrying the female population of Phoenix, Arizona. I mean, there had to be. I was asked to teach a three-evening workshop at a local college on “Home Management for Housewives.” I had been assigned a seminar room capable of holding 15 people comfortably, but more than 275 women showed up to attend the first session. The college officials were overwhelmed. They transferred us to the campus auditorium. As we walked to the auditorium, I studied the faces of the women in the crowd.

You might have been among them; if not literally, then in kind. They ranged in age from 17 to 81. Some were well-dressed; others were making do. A few were smiling, but most were tired and weary looking. They had problems.

“...and she’s supposed to be good,” I overheard one woman say. “She’ll have to be to keep me awake after the day I put in. All three of my boys had ball games scheduled for...”

I lost the rest of the conversation as we entered the auditorium. Mrs. Graham, the campus director for evening studies, met me at the door.

“Oh, Mrs. Otto,” she said. “I...I had no idea there would be so many. I’m so terribly sorry.” Her hands were actually trembling.

I smiled. “They’ll probably give you a raise, Mrs. Graham. This is a wonderful turnout. Really.”

She began to twist a handkerchief in her hands. “Well, I...I never meant it to get so out of hand. It’s just that when the Women’s Club canceled its monthly meeting tonight so that its members could come here and...”

“It’s okay, it’s okay,” I cut in. “No problem. You can do me one favor though. Here are the keys to my car. Please have someone open my trunk and bring the two full boxes of handout materials here.”

Mrs. Graham’s mouth fell open. “You mean to say that you came with enough handouts for everyone? *Everyone?*”

“This isn’t the only seminar I’m scheduled for this week,” I laughed. “My trunk is filled. We’re going to be just fine tonight.”

“Yes, yes, I can see that now,” said Mrs. Graham, calm finally coming into her voice. “Thank goodness you practice what you preach. If I had been prepared the way you always are, this wouldn’t have...”

I patted her shoulder. “Just get the handouts, Mrs. Graham. Things will be fine. I’ll get started.”

As I made my way to the podium, I again caught snatches of conversations:

“...just help me control my laundry, I’ll be happy...”

“...so Tom hasn’t had work for six months, and I’m on third shift...”

“...could just make two of myself, then I’d be able to...”

“...said she was from Chicago and moved out here more than 25 years ago.”

I stood before the large gathering and waited for the room to get perfectly quiet. I held back a few seconds in order to rivet everyone’s attention on me. Then I began.

“My name is Donna Otto, and I’ve lived where you live.” I paused, then added, “Now, I want you to be able to live where I live.”

The room remained silent.

“I came from a broken home. That was a life I didn’t want for myself,

or my children, so I vowed to try to be the best wife possible. I've kept that vow."

I waited a moment, then continued.

"I was a single career woman who paid her own way by working at a boutique, directing a private school, selling real estate, and managing properties. The only real college training I ever received were the lessons I gained from the School of Hard Knocks. But I learned well. Today, I am an author, lecturer, and consultant in life management.

"I've lived where you live. I know the burdens, the problems, and the heartaches of living there.

"But I've moved away from that. I'll never move back. And tonight I want to begin showing you how I made that move.

"Then you can move too. Here, now, is my story...."



My parents married very young, and I was the firstborn. My mother's family was from Persia. Mother was cool, protective, and a taskmaster. My father was Italian—passionate, energetic, and very protective—especially of his daughter, whom he considered beautiful despite a nose that did justice to my Persian-Italian heritage. Once when a teenage boy said I looked like a cross between Pinocchio and Jimmy Durante, my father, who happened to overhear the taunt, asked, "Are your hospitalization benefits current?" That ended further teasing!

My dad restored my self-esteem during those moments, but he was too strict and kept me at arm's length from the warmth I really needed. After a stormy marriage, my parents divorced when I was 12.

My mother, my brother, and I moved from our large frame house to a one-bedroom apartment and started over from scratch. Mother went to work full-time in a candy factory, and I was left with a list of household chores and rules of housekeeping. (A daily job, for example, was to wash

the top of the refrigerator.) I had to clean and cook by myself on weekdays and assist my mother's vigorous attacks on the tough dirt on weekends. I was taught responsibility and duty under my mother's reinterpretation of the old cliché "Cleanliness is next to godliness," which was "Godliness is next to cleanliness."

A tough taskmaster can make a terrific teacher. Even though I didn't enjoy the discipline, boy, did I learn!

As a married woman and mother, I have discovered that organization, love, and hospitality are the time-tested attributes that husbands and children respect most about wives and mothers. Many women have no understanding of how to lead an organized life. After all, we learn good or



bad habits from our moms. We don't take Home Organization 101 in college. What I learned from a mother who by necessity *and* choice was organized has led me into a career as a teacher and advisor on life management for women.

Husbands have called me and made comments such as:

"For eight years I've said to my wife, 'You should get up early enough to have breakfast ready. You should set the table the night before. You should schedule daily activities.' She ignored everything I said. Then you spent three hours with her, and she's begun to do all these things. I don't know why, and really, I don't *care* why. I'm just grateful."

I've had women say, "After your classes, I wanted to organize my love, as you suggested, before I organized my home. But I listened to your word of caution: 'Home organization must come first.' I got my house in order.

"My husband says this is the most genuine act of love I could have ever shown him. Learning to be organized is not an act of selfishness, it's a discipline of love."

Early Influences

At every stage of my life, my father honestly believed I was Miss America. But I was an ugly duckling. I was too skinny, too tall, and had hair that was too thick and too bushy. I was the brunt of every nose joke ever created, like “Are you growing another arm in the middle of your face, Donna?”

But, as usually happens as we are growing up, we find one area of life that distinguishes us from everyone else. It may be our appearance, our athletic skills, our musical skills, our leadership skills, or some other talent that earns us a pat on the back from friends, teachers, relatives, and bosses. The awkward, skinny Donna Centanne found that her status symbol came from being “Miss Organized.”

When I started high school, I bought a small spiral notebook, to which I attached tabs. I had a little section in one of my desk drawers that had files, also with tabs, to keep my papers organized. At first my classmates teased me about being so organized about everything.

“What else do you put in there besides your homework assignments?” the kids would ask as they pointed to the black notebook. “You don’t have that great a social life. What are you doing?”

Some hotshot would then quip, “You training to be a spy or something?” And another would add, “What a bookworm!”

Their voices changed, however, when it came time to elect class officers or club leaders. “Let’s make Donna treasurer,” someone would shout. “She’ll keep track of our money.”

Whenever there was a party or social, a school fund-raiser or a special Christmas dance, I was asked to help organize it.

I didn’t think about long-range planning until I went to work part-time in my father’s real estate office during my mid-teen years. My father based his activities on a seven-day planner: a binder with legal-size paper, each sheet being divided into seven days. Across the top of the page, Dad wrote his appointments and the jobs he needed to do that week. He gave me one of those books right away.

Teenagers always have trouble taking orders from their parents, and I was no exception. I resisted using Dad's planner. After all, I had my little steno pad, and I always kept the appointments I made. My father was trying to stretch me, however, and eventually he won me over.

Learning basic organizational skills helped me in the job market too. One summer during a lull in my father's business, I took a part-time job in a clothing boutique as a salesclerk. Mrs. Rubel, the owner, let me use part of her desk as a place to tally my orders. Within a week on the job, I had the desk cleaned and organized. Mrs. Rubel was so impressed by my initiative, she assigned me to work the cash register and help keep the account records. I logged extra hours and drew extra pay because I evidenced good organization.

Developing a Planner

Later I went to work for my father as a licensed real estate agent. I was still using a notebook planner augmented by my father's long-range planning sheets, but I found it too limited for my new needs as a working adult. So I experimented with a variety of 3-ring, 6-ring, even 12-ring notebooks, which I customized with divider tabs, notecards, and folders. They were good—even functional—but never exactly right.

Finally I saw an ad for a three-ring binder just for real estate agents. Each day page was marked so you could record appointments and expenses. Another section had forms to record properties listed and sold, interviews made, and contacts with bankers. Amortization and commission schedules were in the front of the book. The book was two or three inches deep, which was much too bulky, but I used it faithfully.

I ran into trouble, however, when I used my real estate planning book to record personal things—shopping lists, friends' telephone numbers, and my household budget. The book was not designed for that, and so it became a maze of scribbles, color codes, and dog-eared pages.

I searched bookstores, stationery outlets, and gift shops in a diligent

effort to find a planner that could fit both my personal and business needs. There was no such thing. Necessity proved once again to be the mother of invention. I went back to buying notebooks and creating my own customized planners. I modified them as each month passed. I began to get closer and closer to my dream planner.

Accepting the Challenge of Change

After I married David Otto, I continued to sell real estate. As part of my ongoing training, I took classes in time management, salesmanship, and business organization. I continued to modify my planner, which I have always called my “daybook,” to fit new needs.

A career opportunity opened up for David in Arizona, so we moved there. Now I had the opportunity to apply everything I had learned about life management to my housekeeping. I created an efficient kitchen, a labeled and organized pantry, an entertainment schedule for guests, a chores list for our daughter, and a variety of other helpful and useful procedures. I had previously shared organizational tips and aids with one or two friends and a couple of women’s groups. Now more and more women’s groups began to call on me to speak at their meetings. Soon I began to teach “More Hours in My Day” classes on home and family organization with a new friend, Emilie Barnes, who is the originator of this seminar.

My planner had become so essential to me, I decided to manufacture my daybook and market it under the trade name of *Donna’s DATES and DOs*. Once I discovered the overwhelming costs involved in such a production effort, I gave up. I knew there was a crying need for such a product, but it was just not within my means to manufacture, publicize, distribute, market, and sell it.

During this time, David reminded me of his favorite saying: “*The common begin, the uncommon finish*. Keep your planner. Wait for an opportunity. Be ready.”

Well, I did keep the planner and I did wait—for years. When I made

“Accept the Challenge of Change” my goal statement one year, I didn’t know why. The line just came to me one day as I was thinking about my future goals, as I do once every year. This challenge of change exceeded all my expectations, for not long after, I received an invitation to write a book that would help women learn to organize their lives.

I struggled with that offer for some time because I had never written a book and doing so would require a lot of adjustments in my life. I must confess, even though I had chosen “Accept the Challenge of Change” as that year’s goal, I still hated to change.

For years my family has called me a “stick in the mud.” I am a woman who uses a fountain pen and carries bottles of ink with her. Oh, I know. I can get the cartridges. But the cartridge ink is not quite as nice or as rich in color as the bottled ink. So I use bottled ink. I am also a woman who still starches her husband’s shirts by dipping them in boiling starch water and letting them dry until they become like boards. No, like most people, I don’t like to change.

Nevertheless, I’ve learned that we must seek change for ourselves. We must adapt, advance, and progress. Donna Otto must *expect* to be different a year from now, just as you must expect that of yourself. And so I wrote the book. I accepted the challenge of change.

The Real Thing

You have encountered many deceptive things in your life. There never was a real Betty Crocker or a real Miss Lonelyhearts or a real Aunt Jemima or a real Uncle Sam. They were all manufactured to create a human element of credibility for marketable products. But, folks, there is a *real* Donna Otto.

I have spent time in this opening chapter introducing myself to you because I want you to know that the plans and systems and ideas in the following chapters were devised by a *real* woman. I’m someone just like you. I too have a household to run, a husband to love, and a speaking and writing

career to manage. I also have a daughter, a son-in-law, and a grandchild. I have dishwasher hands (if I'm not careful) and some gray hairs. And I too must fight the battle of the bulge.

When I've failed, I've learned from it. When I've succeeded, I've capitalized on it. I've taken the seeds of organization given to me by my mother, my father, education courses, my friend and colleague Emilie Barnes, and the thousands of students in my classes and seminars, and I've added my Aunt Pat's love of hospitality (you'll meet Aunt Pat in the next chapter). I've planted and nurtured the best of these ideas until they grew into this book.

And so I put it to you now: If you too are willing to accept the challenge of change, then read on.

Remember, "The common begin, the uncommon finish."

2

Master Time and Make the Most of It



My friend Karen has three children, the youngest of whom is two-year-old Natasha. Recently, little Tasha had a nasty cold, which made her eyes red and her nose runny. She was miserable. While grocery shopping, her mother noticed an orange-juice machine, squeezing fresh oranges at full speed. *That's what Tasha needs*, she thought.

Back at home she poured the juice into the baby's sippy cup, put the top on, gathered Tasha in her arms, and handed her the cup. Tasha's eyes lit up as she began to drink. Karen was happy. Then, after just a few swallows, the little girl began to cry as if her heart would break. She refused to drink any more. Karen kept giving her the cup, coaxing her to drink it because she needed the vitamins. The more she tried, the more intensely Tasha resisted.

Karen was puzzled. Tasha had always loved orange juice. Perhaps it was spoiled. Karen took off the top and sipped it. *Tastes great!* she thought. But when she tried to give the cup back to Tasha, she wouldn't even take it. Throughout the day, the baby drank water, apple juice, and a little ginger ale, but never the orange juice. At day's end, Karen, in frustration, took the

cup to the sink, threw out the juice, and began to wash the lid. The three tiny holes in the lid of the cup were clogged with orange pulp! No wonder the baby became so frustrated.

Karen felt like an idiot. *Three kids and I never thought to check the nozzle!* she chided herself. She is a thoughtful and loving mother, but she had not taken the time to analyze Tasha's problem carefully enough.

Before you can be organized, you need to take the time to learn the skills of organization. Throughout this book, we will be talking about the "how-tos," the "whys," and the "advantages." You may decide to use every suggestion, incorporating each one into your life. That will make you more *efficient*. You will only become more *effective*, however, if you dispense your efficiency with kindness and goodness. Love is like vitamin C. It makes people feel better, it heals their wounds, it gives them strength.

My Aunt Pat taught me how to season my mother's efficient methods with love, which is the main ingredient of a rich life. Aunt Pat knew when to let a few crumbs go unnoticed, and she valued the spontaneity of friends who knew they were always welcome. Her house always smelled of fresh bread or her special pound cake. She knew all about giggles and belly laughs. I spent every minute I could in her house. Now, food and fun in the Aunt Pat tradition are a regular part of life at the Otto house.

I know there are special people, mentors like my Aunt Pat, in your life as well. You know who they are. You will never forget them—or their influence. And you may be such a special person to someone else. Perhaps a son or daughter or a niece or nephew. Perhaps a neighbor. What a responsibility, but what an opportunity! The purpose of this book and its concept of organization is to help you become more efficient so that you have the time to become a truly joyful person who is a blessing to others.

Common Denominators

You may be thinking, *How can Donna Otto tell me how to organize my life? She doesn't know me. She doesn't know my circumstances.*

Well, that's true. I don't know you. But as women, we all have certain responsibilities and identities in common. My situation is not all that different from yours.

In my classes I always ask, "How many here are women?"

Everyone raises a hand.

"How many are managers of a household?"

A few hands begin to go down, until I remind the ladies, "All women are managers of a household, whether we live alone, room with another person, or keep house for our husbands and children."

Now every hand is raised.

"See, you're not so different from me after all," I say. "All women share two common denominators."

Then I ask, "How many here are wives?"

Most of the women in the room raise their hands.

"How many are mothers?"

A few hands go down, but many remain up.

Finally I ask, "How many work outside the home? Full-time? How many work part-time? How many do volunteer work?" By now most of the hands are back up in the air.

Then I say, "Many women share these additional denominators. We can think of these five common denominators as hats. We all wear the first two hats, as females and managers of some kind of household most of our lives." I place one huge wide-brimmed, black-and-white hat on my head, then add a smaller cleaning hat on top of the first hat (Illustration 1).

"Some of us may wear one or more of the next three hats: wives, mothers, employees." You guessed it, I pile two more hats on top of the first two. "These hats vary. At times in our lives, we wear some hats less than others (our children grow up so our role as mother diminishes), and we put another hat on (we go to work or do volunteer duties)." Off comes the tiny hat on top with the veil, and on goes the hard hat. All the ladies are laughing, but they're also listening. "Sometimes our job may be a position we held before we were

married, so we put on a hat we had taken off years ago. Our lives constantly change, so we must be continually preparing for the future. Wearing these hats one at a time would be great. ‘Don’t cry now, honey,’ you might say to your child, ‘I’m being a wife.’ Or you might respond to your husband’s call to the office, ‘I’m sorry, dear, but I’m an employee now, not a wife.’”



Illustration 1

As the laughter ebbs, I take off all the hats.

“I *can* help you organize your lives, ladies, in the areas we share in common. That’s what life management is all about. But I also understand that we are all alike, yet different. The way we approach these five common denominators is what makes us individuals. In this class we’ll also talk about the things each of us can do to preserve our individuality.

“The food you like to eat and cook is very different from that of your neighbors. You are an individual.

“The clothes you wear and the house and car you buy are different from your neighbors’. You are an individual.

“Although as women we face many of the same daily situations—shopping, traveling, exercising, working—no two of us behave identically. And

that's great. I'd hate to think that the world was filled with Donna Ottos, all driving too fast, waving their arms as they speak, teaching classes, and leading Homemakers By Choice. If it were, there would be a lot of things left undone in this world."

You have your own set of strengths and weaknesses, your own supply of talent, intelligence, and creativity. Allow your creativity to grow. Knit a sweater. Weave a rug. Stitch a quilt. Enroll in a computer class. Of all things, don't allow your best friends' interests to affect your individuality. Not one of us is a mistake. We are here for a purpose.

In order to fulfill your personal needs, enhance your life, and reduce your frustration, we are going to begin with some key elements of life management that will start you thinking about ways your life can be improved now.

Organization

We all have a basic need to be orderly. Every woman—those who are involved primarily in their homes as wives, mothers, and full-time household managers and those who work outside the home—will be able to benefit from bringing her life under control. The woman herself will be the one who will reap the rewards of being organized. She will feel better, have more energy, reach goals, and be relieved of many of the pressures she has always had to cope with. She will discover a freedom she never had before: the freedom to use her mental energies to be creative and to have fun.

No woman puts forth a great deal of effort for something unless she has the proper motivation. Organization helps you complete the tasks you start, to seize opportunities instead of missing or not recognizing them. It writes *Achieved* across your goal page, *Finished* across your project page, *Well done* across your checked-off to-do list! I want you automatically to plan for accomplishments in all that you undertake.

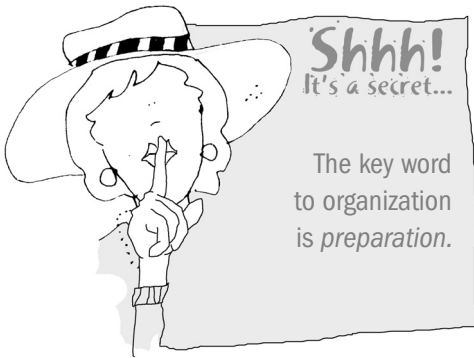
Being organized is a discipline, but it can also be fun. For instance, I hate exercise. But I've found that exercise is more tolerable—and even

fun!—if my water aerobics class is fun. I begin to enjoy the leg kicks if the music suits my taste (a John Philip Sousa march, rather than jazz). If there is camaraderie among my fellow classmates—if we all come regularly and begin to tease each other about our weight problems, “Hey, Sue, did you have too much pizza over the weekend?”—then I don’t think up ten good reasons why I should not go that day. Exercise becomes fun as well as beneficial to me. And experiences that are fun and at the same time bring results are easily repeated.

I am exhilarated when the pounds begin to vanish. Organization, like exercise, can be both a discipline and a fun activity.

Preparation

The key word to organization is *preparation*. Webster defines *preparation* as “the process of getting ready for a specific purpose or occasion.” What events do we prepare for? Weddings, anniversaries, the arrival of a newborn baby—the Big Events.



But we don’t prepare for breakfast, which comes every morning, rain or shine, and laundry and marketing, which must be done every week. That’s all wrong. Preparation is a primary element to *every* activity.

We elect a president in November. Yet by constitutional law he doesn’t take office until

Jan-uary. Now I admit more preparation is needed for this high office than a couple of months, but obviously our founding fathers knew these months were necessary to prepare a smooth transition between outgoing and incoming presidents and their staffs. In every walk of life we see preparation as a key element.

Reasons to Organize!

- *You will have time to enjoy life.* You will know how to schedule personal time for yourself, whether it is an evening art class or an hour of reading.
 - *Your physical and mental health will improve.* You will have a confident attitude. You won't have the guilt of procrastination, the stress of time pressure, or the anxiety of mismanagement. Erma Bombeck said, "I don't have stress, but I'm sure I am a carrier." The pressure points that create stress are eliminated when a person is organized.
 - *You will be in control of both big and little things.* Whether it's a large wedding six months from now or a backyard barbecue next Saturday, you will have a plan for making sure that everything comes together on schedule.
 - *You can say no without guilt.* You will know your obligations and commitments months in advance. With this information, you can decline additional requests and explain why you must say no for now.
 - *Your life can become less complicated.* Organized closets, purses, cupboards, and laundry rooms will save you steps, energy, needless repetition, and frustration.
 - *You can be a caring person.* You will not only have a system for remembering birthdays and anniversaries, but also the time to send cards and do things for friends and neighbors.
 - *You can save money.* A disciplined budget and a dependable record-keeping system will allow you to control cash flow and take advantage of sales.
 - *You can reach goals.* You will become task-oriented and accomplishment-minded. You'll make daily progress on projects and finish what you do.
 - *You can make wise choices.* A home or business that is under control serves as a comfort and support during times of challenge, career redirection, and uncertainty.
 - *You can please others.* Your husband will praise you for meals served on time, and your children will appreciate your being able to attend their sports events and activities at school.
-

We have accepted this concept for the office, for the club or service organization, but not for our homes and neighborhoods. That is a serious oversight. We need to organize everything in our lives so that we can be prepared for both large and small tasks.

Good preparation is rising in the morning knowing what you are going to serve your family for breakfast, lunch, and dinner that day. A woman who is prepared is confident. She is not afraid to face the future, not only in her work, but in the day-to-day occurrences of her personal and family life. Throughout this book I will be suggesting how you can be better prepared.

Space and Place

When I speak to a group of church women, I often read the following memo. The women look at each other as if to say, “Where’s this weirdo coming from?” But I assure you this memo has more to do with organization than you might think.

TO: Jesus, Son of Joseph
Woodcrafter’s Carpenter Shop
Nazareth 25922

FROM: Jordan Management Consultants
Jerusalem 26544
(Via Dr. Bryan Crenshaw,
Greenville, SC USA)

Dear Sir:

Thank you for submitting the résumés of the 12 men you have picked for managerial positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our battery of tests, and we have not only run the results through our computer, but also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant.

It is the staff opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education, and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capacity.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. We feel that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind, and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious, and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your comptroller and right-hand man. All of the other profiles are self-explanatory.

We wish you every success in your new venture.

Sincerely yours...

If you are a Christian, you believe that Jesus, the son of Joseph, was the Son of God. If you are Jewish, you probably believe that Christ was a wise prophet who had a great impact on man. If you are an agnostic, you will probably admit that this one man and His small band of followers began a movement that has grown and endured for more than 2000 years. Not a bad organizational accomplishment.

I realized an important concept when I first read this memo. If the God of the universe could have chosen 11 of the most unlikely men to carry out a task that changed the world, I am convinced that the same God has given me the right husband, the right house (it's not too small, it's not too big), the right child (she's not too slow, she's not too fast),