

Finding Your Inner Domestic Goddess

Contributed by Anita Dobin

Before Martha there was June, June Cleaver that is - she knew how to live the life of the domestic goddess. Her home was always sparkling clean; housework was done in heels and a pearl necklace. She baked cookies in a frilly apron and was perfectly coiffed. We never actually saw her working but she must have been very organized because she always had a home-cooked meal waiting for Ward and the children. But that was then. Could it be now? Although the "domestic arts" seemed to have disappeared into the past there is a certain nostalgia in reviving them - think Martha Stewart and her "good things". While it is true more women are in the work force, there are still a good portion of stay-at-home moms. We're always hearing about how stressed they are by their all too busy lives of car pooling, helping the children with homework, cleaning, shopping, maybe cooking. With all that it seems that their mothers' never handed down the "art" of domesticity. Make no mistake it is an art. The art part comes in to play when you are able to handle your daily activities without upping the stress factor. What makes today's desperate housewives so desperate? The home environment should be a haven for those who live there. Where there is chaos, clutter and a lack of organization you will find a high level of anxiety and stress. High frustration levels make it difficult to function efficiently. When you are late for an appointment because you can't find your keys or locate one shoe there is no serenity. Think of how relaxed you feel on vacation and all your needs are being met. There is no reason why every day can't have that "vacation" feel, all it takes is a little planning. Today's domestic goddess needs to be one part manager and one part administrator. She is the CEO of the family and home. Organization and scheduling are the keys to handling the day-to-day. List making (and subsequently following it) serve to focus your goals. Even if you don't accomplish everything in one day, you will be able to cross some of the things off your list and that's pretty satisfying. Once you have written it all down, you will be able to map out your route and consolidate your stops. Start with the furthest point and work your way back. You might want to set aside time to do the traveling errands in the morning when there is less traffic and more parking use the afternoon for your inside chores. Learn the rhythms of your neighborhood and make them work for you. For instance, food shopping is better during the later part of the week, before the weekend rush. Be flexible - the weather may be a factor in choosing which type of errand you do when. Take your children's schedule into account. If there are small children do your driving errands in the morning before they get tired. Take advantage of their afternoon nap time to do some work in the house. Working off the list will keep you from forgetting the things you need to do. You can divide your list in any number of ways depending on your needs:

- housework (e.g. cleaning, laundry, bill paying, etc.)
 - outside errands (e.g. cleaners, shopping)
 - special days or personal time (doctors appointment, meeting friends) Try to schedule some "me" time into your day. Learn to relax and enjoy your life and you too can be a domestic goddess.
- Anita Dobin is a professional organizer, whose company Super Organizing Solutions helps clients take control of their lives and make the most of their personal space.