

Balance Your World

Healthy Focused People
Attaining Sustainable Results.

with *Lynn Fraser*

www.lynnfraser.ca



“Domestic Diva Just Not In Me”

By Lynn Fraser, The Practical Life Balance Expert

One of our local TV anchors recently wrote in her weekly newspaper column about starting a support group for women “who’d rather stick a fork in their eye than spend a Saturday afternoon whipping up a batch of homemade cookies, or defrosting the freezer.” It’s called **TAMMONA**. The Anti-Martha Movement of North America.

You can join by answering a five point qualifying questionnaire:

1. Do you own a full or partial set of china?
2. Have you ever baked a pie from scratch?
3. Do you own any of the following appliances? a) food processor b) crock pot
c) blender d) coffee bean grinder
4. Is someone paid to clean your house?
5. Have you hosted a dinner party in the past three months?

Score one point for each YES and a bonus point if you own all four appliances in question number three. If your score is four or higher you DO NOT qualify to join TAMMONA.

You Would Expect Me To Be Offended, Right?

I scored six points; five points plus one bonus point for owning all four appliances. In addition, I have children, which ranked me even higher on the scale and DEFINITELY put me out of the club!

Instead of feeling offended by the reporter’s viewpoint, I LOVED IT! Screw the qualifying details; SIGN ME UP!

Time For A Poodle Head Tilt

Let’s do a head tilt (as my standard poodle does) and look at the whole “Domestic Diva” concept from a different angle.

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The reporter states, "It's not that I'm lazy. I just don't care about this stuff. It's domestic drudgery, and I have other things I'd rather do when I'm not at work ... like talk to my husband, go to the gym, read a book, do volunteer work, phone friends, go shopping, or nap."

Girlfriend, I agree with you fully on this point. Housework, laundry and the relentless everydayness of dinner can be 'domestic drudgery.' The faster I can do it myself with a time-saving tool, delegate it or hire it out, the better! My husband and teens do their own laundry, plus help with groceries, meals and housework. I hire a housekeeper to do a more thorough cleaning once a month. I've been known to drop off items at the seamstress that I can mend myself. In addition to having a university degree in clothing and textiles, I own a sewing machine AND a serger. But for \$12 ... why would I? My time is better spent with my husband, kids, friends or going for a walk with my poodle puppy! You bet he stares me down if I DON'T walk him daily.

Pleeease ... Let's Leave The Betty Crocker Image Back In The Fifties!

According to Statistics Canada's Women in Canada 2000 report, 55% of all women age 15 and over have jobs, up from 42% in 1976. (And up substantially from the slim minority who worked outside the home in the 1950's) Many of us can relate to coming home from work tired, stressed and hungry with the phone ringing, stacks of dirty dishes, piles of mail on the table and pet's, husband's and/or kids' needs to attend to. Rarely (actually NEVER) is there anyone in our house (never mind a cheery, apron-clad Betty Crocker) waiting to "attend to my husband's every need."

The Question I Love To Hear

So Lynn, how do you handle everything on your plate without feeling guilty about not being "equal parts gourmet cook, maid and masseuse," plus bring home your share of the "bacon?"

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How To Streamline The Work So You Can Still Have A Life:

- 1. Inquire about job sharing; flex time, compressed work weeks or telework options.** A 1999 study by Duxbury, Higgins and Johnson found that employees with high work-family conflict missed an average of 13.2 days of work per year – over a week more than the 5.9 days missed by employees with low work-life conflict. Keep asking your boss for more flexible options and reassure him that with a more family-friendly workplace he can reduce the cost to the bottom line by decreasing lateness, absenteeism, missed meetings, poor morale, lack of focus and higher turnover.
- 2. Delegate both tasks and responsibility.** Use the team work approach both at home and at work so you don't have to be Superwoman. Yes, it takes MUCH LONGER at the beginning to train someone else to do what you can do in minutes. But we want our husbands, kids and co-workers to be able to function independently. No one is indispensable. Not even YOU!
- 3. Use tools.** Use a timer to chunk down your time, both at home and at work. The key is NO INTERRUPTIONS! Send your calls directly to voice mail and either put a "Do Not Disturb" sign on your office door or cubicle OR get away to a coffee shop, library or even in your car to get started on those tasks you intend to "get around to" but haven't been able to yet. You'll be surprised at how much you get done with 15 – 30 minutes of uninterrupted time!
- 4. Plan meals ahead.** Eating out is not only tough on your pocketbook; it's hard to keep your weight in check. There are two Alberta based companies who offer great meal planning systems. Check out "The Healthy Family" by Sandi Richard at www.cookingfortherushed.com. You could start with Week 7, the "survival week" for when you can't even imagine thinking about dinner! Or "The Big Cook" by Deanna Siemens, Lorelei Thomas and Joanne Smith at www.thebigcook.com. These authors cook and shop together and then freeze their creations. Dust off that crock pot! Let dinner bake, barbecue or microwave while you chat about the day with your husband, kids or friends.

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- Hire services.** If you find cooking and cleaning tedious, let your fingers do the walking! Ask your friends for a recommendation. There are at least two services in Edmonton where you can spend two hours preparing a dozen family-sized meals for your freezer. Look into Dinner Revolution at www.dinnerrevolution.com or Cooks Corner at www.cooks-corner.ca. Free up time for you AND still eat healthy!

One thing you know for sure, girlfriend, no matter how much of a career woman you are this guilt about “shirking your domestic duties” is bugging you (as it bugs sooo many of us). As in enough to write a column about it! Choose one of the above steps and start using it in your life in the next 7 days. You’ll be surprised at how you can focus more on what’s important in life: working out, talking with your husband, shopping and making a difference in people’s daily lives through the stories you research and present. Which reminds me... I have a poodle to walk!

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About the author: Lynn Fraser, The Practical Life Balance Expert, invites individuals within businesses and families to wholeheartedly lead enjoyable, healthy & focused lives. Visit her website at www.lynnfraser.ca

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