

Focusing on Management in the Family:

RESOURCES

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RESOURCES:

Time

Managers manage resources. At times we all have probably needed something we haven't had: time, money, or skill.

Resources are those materials and human attributes that satisfy our wants, and generally they are scarce. At least we think they are.

Lack of resources can make us feel, in a sense, "poor" or uncomfortable because our house isn't so nice as our neighbor's, uneasy because we aren't so organized as our peers.

Space

Sometimes we set our expectations too high. Feeling "poor" results from a resource gap.

Human

RESOURCE GAP

- our standard of living (where we want to be) and
- our level of living (where we are)

• energy

Even families with annual incomes of \$50,000 may want more things than they can afford. All of us, regardless of our income or other resources, can feel this need.

• knowledge

What can we do about it? Assume you feel "poor" in your present housing facilities. How can you reduce the gap between your level of living and your standard of living?

• abilities and skills

Narrow this gap by:

- getting more resources (push the level up)
- making your resources more productive (push the level up)
- lowering your standards (bring standard down)

• attitudes

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The Browns, an urban family, are considering the purchase of a new piano for their 9-year-old daughter. She has shown strong interest and ability in music. The piano they want costs \$1,400, a substantial sum for a family living on \$6,000 a year. What can they do?

- character

1. They can get *more resources* by mother and/or other family members working or by Dad changing jobs.

2. They can *use resources more productively* by considering joint ownership of a piano with relatives or by renting the piano.

3. They can *lower their standards* by buying a used piano or by indefinitely postponing the purchase.

- personality traits

Mrs. Smith, a homemaker, has been ill the past year and isn't quite "on her feet" yet. But Christmas is coming, and she feels she must find energy for traditional decorating, entertaining and gifts. How can she close the energy resource gap?

- status

FILLING THE RESOURCE GAP

Assume time is scarce. How do we close this gap between the time we have and the time we'd like to have:

1. *By getting more time*

We can "buy time" by substituting other resources for it. Send your husband's shirts to the laundry or select box-mixes at the grocery store.

Material

2. *By making time more productive*

Planning *when* to do something is no more important than deciding *what* to do and *how* to do it.

- money

Crossing off unimportant items on your list may save far more time than all the scheduling you could ever do.

3. *By lowering standards concerning time*

For this, focus on your values. After crossing off the unimportant, are there still more things on your list than you can do?

- community opportunities

Where do you trim? Do you play with your children less or give up the weekly bridge club? That choice, of course, is up to you. But you must decide whether to change

- natural resources

- the kind of activities engaged in
- the amount of activities engaged in
- the quality of activities engaged in

Listed are specific items to illustrate further how to close the resource gap. Add your own ideas to this list.

TIME

Get more time

Hire baby sitter
Buy dishwasher
Buy wash-and-wear shirts

Use time better

Get up earlier
Break big projects into smaller, more manageable ones
Cut out clubs you don't enjoy

Lower standards

Quit fixing elaborate Sunday dinners
Watch TV less
Quit worrying about house clutter

ENERGY

Get more energy

Let children do more errands
Buy floor polisher

Use energy better

Accumulate several things before a trip upstairs
Do at least one "fun" thing each day to avoid psychological fatigue

Lower standards

Entertain less
Accept dirty windows

TALENT, SKILL

Get more knowledge

Enroll for adult night school classes
Attend Extension meetings

Use knowledge better

Practice piano enough to keep talent alive
Develop home filing system for magazine articles and bulletins saved for future reference

Lower standards

Settle for being a mediocre singer
Refuse to be club president

MONEY

Get more money

Put Mother to work
Get children jobs

Use money better

Plan and follow a budget
Investigate items before buying

Lower standards

Don't expect a new TV
Less steak — more hamburger
No car

RESOURCE MIX

One resource may substitute for another as shown above, money for time, energy for money, time for energy.

Decide what "resource mix" is best for you, so you can use your resources more effectively.

Some say "time is money" or "money is time." For a person working a 40-hour week at

\$3,000 a year — his hour is worth — \$1.44

\$5,000 a year — his hour is worth — \$2.40

\$7,000 a year — his hour is worth — \$3.37

\$14,000 a year — his hour is worth — \$6.73

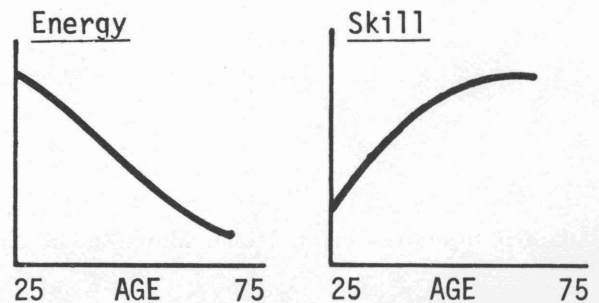
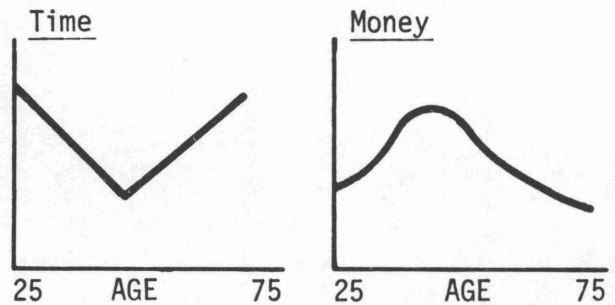
How much is the homemaker's hour worth? This depends on how she uses her time. Some homemakers may be worth several dollars an hour.

Talent and energy can also be substituted for money. For example, if you are painting the living room walls, you know it saves dollars but takes time, energy and skill.

RESOURCES CHANGE OVER LIFETIME

Resources change during the life cycle. For instance, the family income may increase until the bread-earner is middle-aged, then decrease, dropping suddenly at retirement.

These graphs show the pattern of resource availability during a homemaker's married life:



OTHER RESOURCES

Space is becoming a more limited and valuable resource. Parking lots are going up instead of out. Industry is moving out of the cities to towns offering room for expansion. Cities are squeezing farther and farther into farming areas. Farmers are using narrow row equipment to get more cropping into fewer acres. Homes are becoming smaller and more compact.

Attitudes, character and personality traits are also resources. These may have more influence on a person's success than his time, money, energy or even knowledge.

EVALUATE YOUR RESOURCES

You may find your resources quite different from those of your spouse or neighbor. The important thing is to spend your resources in a way consistent with your values and goals.

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