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TABLE TALES

By Arleen M. Kaptur

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Setting the table used to mean placing the forks, knives, and spoons in the exact same place where your grandmother and your grandmother's grandmother placed theirs. While there is absolutely nothing wrong with tradition, does setting the table today carry the same meaning as it did in past generations?

When your children are small, you prepare the family meal, and then use place mats, your eating utensils and assorted bowls and platters. Kids don't seem to mind if there are no flowers on the table or crystal water glasses. They seem to enjoy their food with these amenities or without them.

On special occasions, when your in-laws visit, the preacher comes visiting, or your child's favorite teacher comes for brunch, you try different ways to present a table that is not only laden with the best in culinary delights, but also your very best china, silverware and linen.

In all the different phases of life (single, newlywed, bringing up family, empty nest, retired, or living alone once again) people go through the simple, very elaborate, kind of trendy, and then back to very simple. Of course, time, money, and family ideas and needs are all different, except for one. People eat better when they are treated with charm, dignity, and special little details designed for their comfort and enjoyment. When eating alone, why bother setting the table? You are setting it for a very special guest – you. Your thoughts and ideas are paramount to the conversation, and your mealtime needs to be stress-free and well-appointed. You will feel better for it, your digestion will thank you, and you will leave the table feeling good about yourself

Small children – they learn from our example more than they learn from our words. If we treat family meals as special times, they will learn to feel the same way about sitting down with everyone sharing, caring, and being attentive to each other. Of course,

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this would be the ideal situation. Family squabbles, fighting, spilling, and other added features will occur during mealtime when you have various ages gathered at the table. Welcome these annoyances, deal with them appropriately and carefully, because the message you convey carries a lot of baggage. It imprints on a child the fear of being careless, and a bother, or it will boost self-image and creativity. How – your child will see that you deal with disruptions in an orderly way, clearing the mess as cheerfully as circumstances permit. They, in turn and maybe not right away, but they will deal with their peers and their elders in mimic of you. How would you like their imitation of you to be projected?

Newlyweds and empty-nesters, you are just beginning a life together or you are returning to having more time for each other. In either case, setting the table a little more elaborately, with a touch of whimsy, and a serving of elegance, will soothe souls, and invite both of you to a time of partaking of food leisurely and with a much higher degree of appreciation for taste, texture, and those other nice little "you really did notice" points. You can savor the food, admire the surroundings, and be a participant in the witty conversation and the warm embrace of sharing time with someone you care about.

If the time should come that you return to eating as a single person again, you have learned the finer points of entertaining. You are no less a guest than if you had invited someone else over to share your meal. Enjoy yourself, relax, and know that a meal is and always will be a time of rejuvenation, and soul-growth.

So bring out the candlesticks, the lacy tablecloths, and the gravy boat and have a meal fit for royalty. Setting the table should be paramount of every meal when possible. Let your table shine – for royalty are about to sit around your table.

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The Many Advantages Of Having A Baby Changing Table

By Kelly LaRose

Many shun baby changing tables as rubbish. Even I used to think that it is useless and just adds the number of useless objects in my house. But how wrong I was! I only took it for granted when my husband bought it one day. I reprimanded his decision of buying it. I rebuked him for wasting the money. However I made use of it thinking that I use it just for the sake of using it. But when we went for

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vacation I realized how much indispensable the changing table was. My husband insisted on carrying it. But I refused telling him the bed was good enough to take care of our baby.

And when we finally reached our destination, it didn't take me many hours to understand that I had made a grave mistake. I never thought that I had got habituated with it while caring for my kid and it would be so difficult to replace it with bed. The premier thing that struck me was the height of the bed. Being used to the perfect height of my changing table, I did not have need to bend over to change diapers of my baby. Now I my child lying on the floor had to bend all over just to do that.

And after just a couple of diaper changes, my back began to tell tales. I immediately understood I never anticipated I could be prone to backache when I did not have the convenience of the impeccable height of the changing table staying back home. I took the baby in my arms and put him in the bed. It's much better now. Still I couldn't find the comfort I had while taking the service of the table.

With the problems of my back cropping up, I cherished the thoughts of my `dear' changing table. I never gave a thought about its utility. I never acknowledged how it serves as a storage area. Now I remembered all my much needed items were stored in it, the necessary objects for the babies daintily arranged in its cupboards. I had all the items associated with my baby right at my hand. I did not have to move even a bit when I was changing the diapers of my kid. All his clothing was near me in the closets of the table.

The backache was unbearable and it increased every time I bent over to change the diapers of the child. So I handed him over to my husband and we started alternating the duty of changing diapers. And when the vacation was finally over, I was relieved! It's time to go home and get the service of changing table!

Kelly LaRose is a day care owner and mother. See more of her articles at



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