

# village view

by Andrea Leonard

"It's the little things in marriage that really count." It's the little things in any life-experience that really count, not only in marriage.

Our entire lives are made up of a seemingly endless series of little things that either please or irritate us. It's these, not war or famine or flood or other crises, that comprise life.

Most of us, if we gave it some thought, could make a daily list of things that strike us right or wrong and, taken singly, no one would amount to much. When taken together, though, they affect our general outlook and behavior, and are reflected in our personalities.

Recently we've seen advertised notepads with a cover or heading, "Dumb Things I've Gotta Do." It seem there should be another list headed "Dumb Things that Drive Me Up a Wall" and a third, "Little Things that Make My Day."

These, too, are well-worth listing.

In the Drive Me Up a Wall notebook, I'd have to enter soggy soap at the sink. And cars designed to splash water all over their own windshields when going through small puddles. Itches. People who don't use directional signals, or who let them continue to flash when they're not planning to turn.

In the Make My Day book, I'd enter things like sunshine and moonlight, a hug from a friend, blue jay taking a bath in a roadside puddle, swamp maples turning scarlet in the fall, dog leaning lovingly at my knee, a child's kiss, chickadees at the birdfeeder, the first crocus blooming through the snow in early April, receiving a letter full of good news, a chipmunk gnawing an acorn, warmth of a wood-burning stove on a chilly evening, discovering the plant cuttings are putting out rootlets, being presented with a baby holly tree ready to plant.

The Dumb Things to Do notebook would be filled in short order, but the other two would be almost like diaries; as such, they'd be kept as reminders of past pleasures and pains.

Without lists of things to do, organization of this household would be out-the-window. What's needed is tiny scraps for shopping lists, bigger scraps for noting seasonal chores, and a calendar so appointments don't conflict.

Another need, of course, is a good place to keep all the notebooks so they'll be handy when I want to make an entry. Calendars are indispensable near the telephone; it's usually over the 'phone important meetings are arranged.

Shopping lists are mentally added to from all parts of the house. Sometimes I've wondered if I shouldn't hang pad and pencil around my neck since half the time when I think of something to add, I'm in the middle of cleaning the bathroom or washing bedroom windows. By the time I get back to the kitchen, I find the pad listing bread, milk, butter, tea, celery seed, onions and potatoes, I've forgotten weatherstripping or sponges.

When actually using the flashlight is the moment I notice its beam is getting weak and try to remember to add batteries to my shopping list. But most times a flashlight's needed, I'm far from that list and have more important things on my mind.

"Where in the world is that roof-leak originating?"

There I crouch on my knees in the attic while the rain drums rhythmically on the shingles a few inches above my head and my neck gets achey from craning around all the angles of the rafters and trusses. Batteries? Who remembers to write it down? It's the same with light bulbs. Who thinks of them except when the lamp doesn't light when you snap the switch?

Perhaps there should be a fourth booklet titled "Why not?" Why not design soap dishes with ridges like the old-fashioned china ones that allowed soap to air dry instead of turning to jelly?

Why not suggest Detroit test cars on rainy days so windshield splashing might be eliminated? Why not invest in bath oil to help eliminate itches? (Answer: because oily bathtub rings are so hard to scrub away.)

Why not install buzzers to remind people to turn off directional signals? The buzzers could activate after a 60-second delay. Or it would seem engineers are smart enough to rig timers into levers so they'd automatically return to neutral after a minute of flashing.

Why not take one hour a day to appreciate something that inspires an entry in the Make My Day book? Getting up an hour earlier than usual, now and then, could make the difference between the thrill of seeing the sun rise, or never experiencing a dawn. Most people live their entire lives without ever watching the sun come up. They miss something special.

Why not set aside a couple of hours a month to do something with a child? If it's your own child, and you feel he gets plenty of attention as it is, ask yourself: when was the last time you and he spent a couple of hours together without being interrupted?

If it's someone else's child, you might be startled to find a seven-year-old can beat you at checkers or is able to help grease pans and chop walnuts when you bake a batch of brownies.

Why not plant some bulbs this fall? In the spring the blossoms will dance in the breeze during the month of May. Why not write the letter you haven't found time to answer? work, wood carving, needlepoint, oil painting, crewel, knitting, rug braiding or hooking, chair caning, clock building...or learning how to repair transistor radios. Why not? Yes you DO have time if you want to spend it constructively instead of watching the ball game.

Why not help out with a local fund-raising activity to benefit one of the many worthwhile social programs in town? Why not become involved in efforts to make the place you live a better one for everybody? You'll be delighted to find how welcome you are.

Why not start a collection? Coins, stamps, antique pewter, books about Cape Cod, or any other subject that interests you? People who packed Depression Glass away in their garrets thirty years ago are selling their peices at fabulous prices today.

Why not take a course in anything you find intriguing? You'll meet other people with similar interests and sweep cobwebs from unused corners of your brain.

It's the little things that count. Little things like saying, "Yes, I'd like to try that!" instead of, "No, thanks, I can't find the time."