

Follow lead set by ants, be determined

Q: I know people who always seem to have things under control in their home. Everything is neatly put away and they appear to be stress-free. What is their secret and how can I become more organized?

A: There are a number of people who maintain a neat, clutter-free house and manage their time efficiently, but in our busy society it is a difficult challenge. They have probably implemented some basic principles that have been successful.

Determination and discipline are key ingredients to making changes in your behavior. Ants are great examples of these characteristics. Ants are determined to provide for themselves and other ants in their colony. You can apply the same tactics ants use for survival to help you maintain an orderly home.

The Ant Model

- Ants are goal oriented and diligent to reach those goals.

- Ants aren't easily discouraged and will take an alternate route if something interferes with their path.

- Ants live in colonies and work together for a common goal.

- Ants have assigned duties that they focus on and accomplish.

DOMESTIC PLANNER



DIANA KOENIG

- Ants are usually industrious despite being lethargic at times.

- Ants will move objects more than 10 times their size.

- Ants are patient.

- Ants are determined to succeed.

- Ants aren't in a hurry but they press on.

- Ants are undisturbed by the presence of another species.

- At first glance, ants appear to have no purpose or direction. But watch them closely and you will observe their determination.

We view ants as a household nuisance. Although we wouldn't like to entertain them in our homes, we can gain valuable information from their lifestyle.

Next time you encounter an ant colony, take time to observe their activities. You will usually find an ant trying to move something much larger than he is. Move the item away from him and see what he does. Try to block his path and watch his determination to find an alternate route. The only thing that

Today's refrigerator bulletin: 'Accomplish your goals through determination and diligence!'

will permanently stop his progress is if you squish him.

Model your life after the ants and you will bring order to your home. Spend a day, week or month finding a home for every item in your house. If an object doesn't have a home and you don't create a home for it, then dismiss it from your house.

The key to a clutter-free house is to put everything immediately where it belongs. Our biggest enemy may be laziness. Instead of reading the extra magazine and drinking the second cup of coffee, file some clutter in a folder, basket, drawer, closet or trash can.

Make a written weekly schedule of all your tasks and activities. Determine within yourself to adhere to your schedule.

Focus on what you want to be and want to accomplish, not on your current situation. When you make a mistake, get up and try again. If one plan doesn't work, try another. Don't worry about obstacles or detours. Keep in

mind this is hard work in the short term but at some point you will gain control and free up more time in your life.

It is important, like the ants, to slow down and take time to relax. You will need to balance your work and play schedule continually. A balanced life is a productive life.

Pull together as a family, focusing on maintaining a happy household. Be determined and train to maintain so you will accomplish your goals.

When your child has dropped his backpack on the floor for the 10th time, patiently call him into the room to pick it up. When your 1-year-old is learning to walk and continues to fall down, encourage him to stand up again. When you lose 10 pounds and gain back 5, throw the chocolate candy bars in the trash.

Ants are excellent models of determination. Follow their example and it will lead you to success in your household.

Diana Koenig is a writer, educator, speaker and consultant. Send your questions and success stories to: Diana Koenig, P.O. Box 1702, Manchester, MO 63011. e-mail: diana@koenig@hotmail.com Visit www.domesticplanner.com

GARDENING CALENDAR

Send items for consideration in Gardening Calendar to Susan Steinmueller, Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009, fax (248) 644-1314, (734) 591-7279 or e-mail ssteinmueller@ec.eccentric.com

YOU GOTTA HAVE ART FLOWER SHOW

The Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan/District 1 presents its 10th Annual Standard Flower Show, "You Gotta Have Art." The flower show is presented in conjunction with the Michigan Home and Garden Show at the Pontiac Silverdome Thursday, Feb. 21 through Sunday, Feb. 24. Show hours are Thursday

3 p.m.-9:30 p.m., Thursday, 12 noon-10 p.m., Friday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday. District 1 is a member of National Garden Clubs, Inc.

The primary objectives of the Standard Flower Show are to stimulate interest in horticulture, to provide an outlet for creative expression, and to convey to the community the objectives of National Garden Clubs, Inc. Representing these objectives will be sixteen classes in design, thirteen classes in horticulture, five sections in educational exhibits and several in artistic crafts, including one for youth. Entrants must be members of any one of the 46 clubs represented in District 1. All entries are judged and winners are presented with coveted ribbons of distinction. While we are still bracing against the winter winds of February, it's a breath of spring to attend this event. One can see lovely flowers artistically arranged, horticulture entries, and come away with a plethora of ideas and inspiration for the growing and planting days ahead.

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