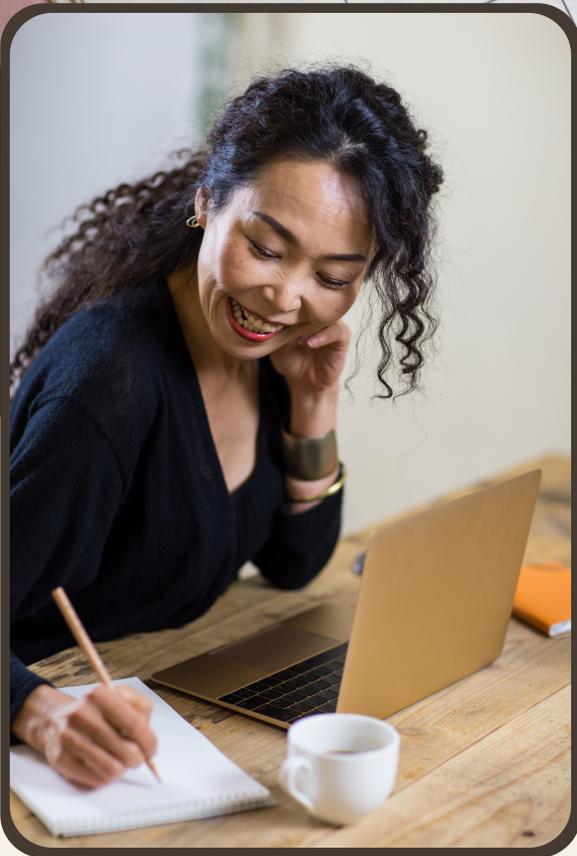


Planning WITH PURPOSE



An insightful and spiritual
guide to the why and how of
purposeful planning.

BY HEIDI COOPER



Heidi Cooper

FOUNDER OF TORAH FAMILY LIVING

Heidi and her husband Doug have been married for 23 years, and have seven children. They homeschool and homestead on their farm in Michigan. Their days are filled with coffee, animal care, and deep discussions around the dinner table. Heidi has a desire to help families and especially moms to build their homes on Torah and Scripture. She has written several books including 'My First Torah' and created a planner just for Torah keeping moms. You can find her blog, homeschool resources, and books at www.torahfamilyliving.com. You might also find Heidi out with her chickens, learning about nature with her kids, stretching her vocabulary with her teenagers, making baskets out of recycled yarn and grocery bags, or stealing extra hugs from her hubby.

TORAHFAMILYLIVING.COM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

04
Living with no plan

07
Purpose of planning

17
Nitty gritty tips

36
Spiritual planning

38
Products



Living with no plan

When I first got married, I kept a notebook by my bed, and I would draw little icons like a laundry basket to show that I did a load of laundry that day. That was the extent of my planning, technically more like recording. As I started having babies, even that feeble attempt at organization fell by the wayside. Thankfully, I maintained a predictable routine. My husband had his work hours, and picked up the groceries for me on the way home from work. We had church every Sunday, which I could plan for. The problem came with all the little details.

the little problems

- Dinner was definitely “fly-by-the-seat-of-my-pants.” The most dreaded words were “What’s for dinner?” I regularly forgot to thaw meat for dinner, leaving me in a panic at 4:00, since my husband had to leave for work after dinner.
 - I had no system for paying bills on time, and even missed a mortgage payment once.
 - My husband would ask me to do a little job, things that shouldn’t take more than five minutes. I would completely forget. Then I would try to justify that I legitimately forgot.
 - I would be scrambling to put together a shopping list at the last minute.
-

I had a problem. You see, I realized that my disorganized lack of planning was resulting in my family thinking that I didn't care. When they asked me to take care of something or buy something at the store, and I forgot, it appeared that I was purposely sabotaging their needs and desires. I was legitimately forgetting, but that didn't change how they perceived it. All they could see was that I wasn't taking care of what they trusted me with. I cared a lot, so I needed to learn how to show that I cared. That's how my journey to becoming a planner began. It was a high-stakes necessity.

My early attempts at planning consisted of a notebook with numbers down the left hand side for each day of the month. I would write events on the correct line, and felt very good about myself! It was a start, but one day, my mom asked me what I would do if more than one thing was happening in a day. As an introvert content to stay at home for months at a time, my mind was blown. More than one thing happening in a day?! But, let's face it, sometimes life is like that. Sometimes more than one thing happens in a day, and we need to deal with it. Our family needs us to show up for them, and not constantly walk around in a scatterbrained cloud. We need to do whatever it takes to rise to the challenge and learn how to get things done. As my pastor's wife used to say, "You need to pull up your big girl socks!"

We all have a starting point. For me, it was telling my husband that I forgot one too many times.



Proverbs 19:21 esv

“Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.”

Do you feel the same way? Do you forget and procrastinate and wander around aimlessly wondering what you should be doing? It's time for a change. Once you learn the value of going through your day with some semblance of a plan, you will never turn back. Keep in mind that a minute by minute break-down is not necessary, and probably not preferable. A plan and a system for tracking is what is needed.

Let's define our purpose for planning.



Purpose of planning

Knowing why you would want to take the time to plan your days is so important. Let's look at some general benefits of planning.

1. Would you like to know what's for dinner at the beginning of the week, rather than 30 minutes before you want to eat? If the answer is yes, then you know one of the benefits of planning. It is an amazing feeling to know what's coming next, giving you plenty of time to prepare.
2. Being able to pay a bill on time without a late fee is pretty nice, too.
3. How about knowing about a meeting or appointment and being able to pick decent clothes and remember the items you are supposed to take with you?

These are all amazing benefits of laying out a plan for your days. I'm not even suggesting that you need a minute by minute plan, either. The key is simple. Give a framework to your day, and provide a system to track all those little things that need to be taken care of.

Finding a solid purpose

There are so many voices out there telling you to use a planner and get your life together. It's a strong, powerful message that needs to be screamed from the rooftops. A huge part of my business is producing a planner, because I feel it is that important. But, here's the thing. You need a strong and powerful why. Why would you take the time to sit down with a planner and decide what you need to get done in a week? Why would you meal plan? Why would you keep a physical budget, or a chore list?



Without a solid why, you can try every planner out there, and every single one will eventually end up on a shelf, abandoned as useless. Good intentions and the latest pretty supplies cannot replace a deep belief in the importance of having a plan.

What is your current why for planning?

Each of us may have different reasons for using a planner, but let me list some good reasons that will likely resonate with you as well.



- The Bible talks about the importance of planning.
 - We are instructed in the Bible to work at being excellent managers of our homes and families.
 - We show our love for our family by keeping track of what affects them.
 - We become better versions of ourselves when we learn to plan ahead rather than spend our days putting out fires.
 - We benefit not only our immediate family, but our descendants as well, as we plan for the future.
-

Proverbs 31: 10-31

(10) Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

(11) The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

(12) She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

(13) She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

(14) She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

(15) She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

(16) She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

(17) She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

(18) She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

(19) She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

(20) She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.



(21) She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

(22) She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

(23) Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

(24) She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

(25) Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

(26) She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

(27) She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

(28) Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

(29) Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

(30) Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

(31) Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.



Don't fret just yet...

As women, we are usually presented with the Proverbs 31 woman as the ultimate goal for our lives as believers. In my experience, depression is usually the result after looking at all the amazing things this woman managed to accomplish. On some days, I feel good to get the dishes all washed! We feel like failures in comparison. But, instead of looking at this passage and feeling overwhelmed and depressed, let's change things up. Here are some points to remember.



- The Proverbs 31 woman is not a single woman, but rather character qualities and accomplishments available to us as women.
- This passage is not so much a to-do list, but rather a wealth of opportunities.
- This woman knew how to plan!

Let's look at some of the things she accomplished through planning.

- She cares for her husband physically and emotionally.
 - She prioritizes relationships.
 - She creates beautiful and useful items from the raw materials and animals raised by her family.
 - She shops well for quality items and food for her family.
 - She makes good use of her time, from morning to night.
 - She is a master of delegation, from human help to well chosen machines.
 - She is capable of making large purchases, such as property.
 - She maintains a garden, vineyard, etc.
 - She keeps herself in good health.
 - She runs her own business with high quality merchandise.
 - She learns and develops new skills.
 - She is generous to those in need.
 - She prepares for the next season by putting up food, evaluating clothing needs, etc.
 - She has useful skills that she uses to better her home.
 - She is known for her kind nature and wisdom.
 - She has entrepreneurial savvy.
 - She manages her home well and uses her time wisely.
-

Is there anything on this list that you would like to accomplish? Perhaps you would like to improve your homemaking skills. You may aspire to have a small business. You may want to continue your education and learn new skills. These possibilities are all open to you. But, you need a plan to get there. I encourage you to pick one or two items on this list that really resonate with you. Perhaps they will be an important part of your "why."

Write down three things from this list that you would like to accomplish.



Here is another key planning passage in Scripture, this time from the book of Luke.



Luke 14:28-30

(28) For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

(29) Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

(30) Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.



Any time we intend to begin something, we need to take the time to work out a plan. This applies to preparing for a purchase, planting a garden, creating a product to sell, or beginning a course of study. Projects require a plan or they are destined to fall by the wayside, unfinished. Did you know this important concept was found in Scripture? Being able to finish what we start is an important “why” for planning.

Now that we have explored benefits and Scriptural support for planning, take a minute to list your top 3 reasons for having a plan for your days.

1.

2.

3.



“There are many ways to use a planner, and lots of tips to help with time management in general. Now that we know planning helps serve a much higher purpose than just making the most of our time, let's look at some boots-on-the-ground tips from my own experience.

Nitty Gritty Tips

Here's a snapshot of the tips we will be discussing.

- Use a timer.
- Save your monthly calendar for hard and fast appointments.
- Rotate.
- Menu planning
- Cleaning jobs
- Homeschool schedules
- Keep your daily to-do list less than 10.
- Your brain is not a storage device.
- Focus on flow and routine.
- Allow for downtime.
- Keep your planner handy.
- Brain dump.



Use a timer

Due to having many years of hip pain in my 30's, I learned the value of a timer. To minimize stiffness and pain, I would sit for no longer than 25-30 minutes, then I would move around doing tasks for about the same amount of time. My reason was pain at the time, but even now, after I got both hips replaced, I still use a timer. A timer offers several benefits.

- When taking on mental tasks like reading or writing, we tend to max out and get distracted after a certain amount of time. Even while I was writing this ebook, I would get bored with writing and start playing with fonts. It is far better to take a break and do a physical task like sweeping, then return to the mental task. Setting a timer for no more than an hour at a time can help you stay fresh and on task, then take a scheduled break.
 - When we are cleaning, using a timer is a huge motivator. We tend to race the clock to see how much we can get down. For example, I often set the timer for 20 minutes in a really messy kitchen and see how much damage I can do. When I know that I only have to clean for 20 minutes, I put forth 110% and make real progress. I also find that I can overestimate how long I think a task will take. When I time it, it's usually not as time-intensive as I thought.
 - You can also use a timer to allow yourself to switch gears. When you are looking at a long task that may take a few hours, it can help to break up the monotony. Rather than trudging on, allow yourself to do something a little different. If you are scrubbing down the kitchen (that would take hours, after all) take a break and hang out some laundry and enjoy some fresh air.
-

- An informal way to use a timer is to do a quick task during commercials, or when waiting for a page to load because you have slow internet. I can get the whole living room swept and tidied by popping up and cleaning while I wait for loading.

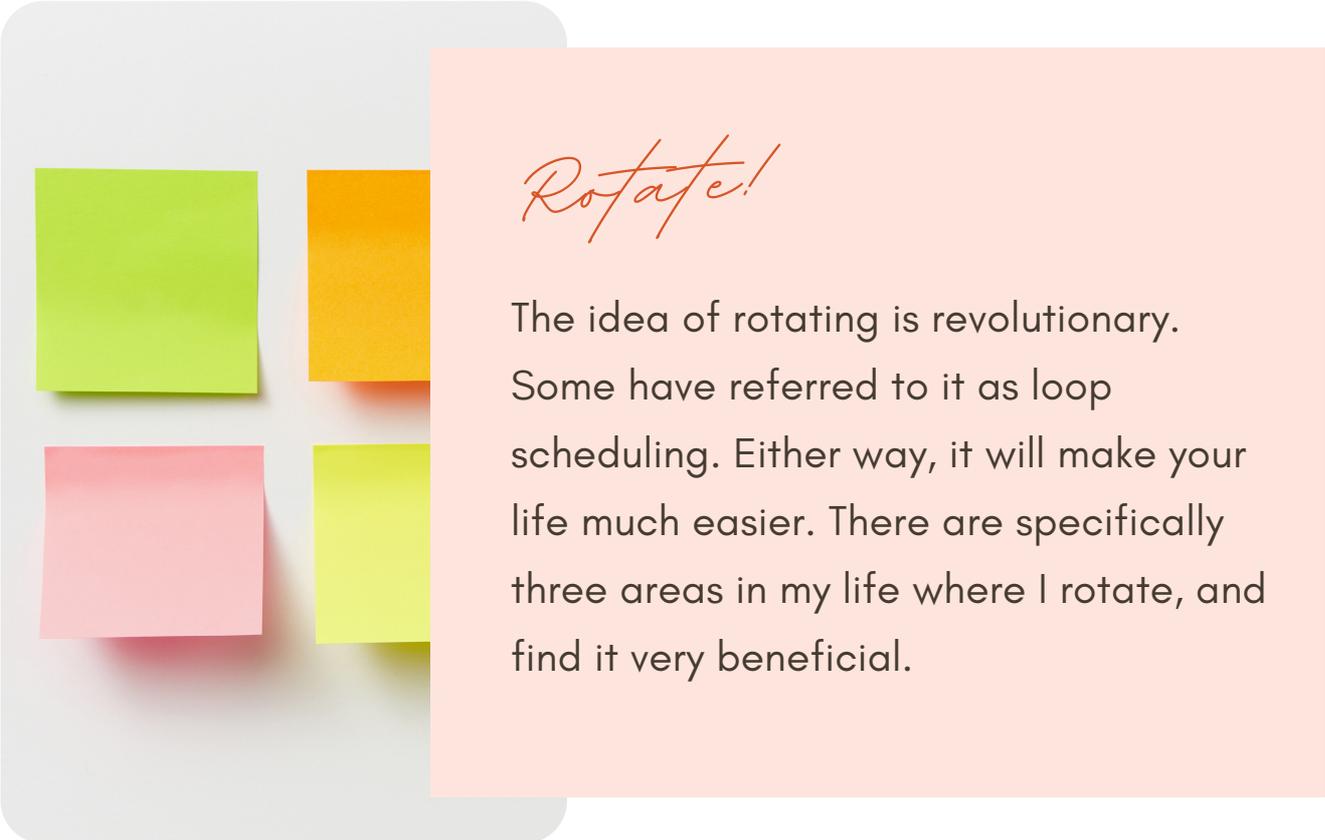


Save your monthly calendar for hard and fast appointments.

I learned this trick several planners back. I use a planner with a monthly section and weekly sections. The monthly layout is reserved for fixed events, such as appointments. My more detailed planning is kept on the weekly layout.

This keeps the month view much tidier and easier to refer to when making appointments or looking ahead, even a few months out. Don't clutter it up with random notes or to-do lists.

How does this look in practice? I try to do all my planning for the next week on Fridays. It helps clear my head so I can relax on Shabbat without trying to figure out the next week. When I sit down with my planner, I fill in the dates on the next weekly spread. Yes, I only put the weekly dates in a week at a time. Then I look at the monthly view and add any fixed events to my weekly pages. I can plan the rest of my week around those fixed events. Next, I put my dinner plans at the bottom of each day's column. If this is all I am able to do on a Friday, I already have a good headstart on the next week. More detailed lists and reminders can be added as I go through the week.



Rotate!

The idea of rotating is revolutionary. Some have referred to it as loop scheduling. Either way, it will make your life much easier. There are specifically three areas in my life where I rotate, and find it very beneficial.

Menu Planning

I have been an advocate of a rotating meal schedule for years. My daughter commented recently that we have been eating burritos on Friday night so long that she can't even remember when we started. You may rotate a few meals now without thinking about it. We have a weekly rotating menu for almost all the days of the week, leaving a couple days open to try new things or have seasonal favorites. Some families work better with a two-week or monthly rotating menu. Here are some benefits of setting up a rotating menu plan.

Benefits of Rotating Menu planning

- You are putting dinner on auto-pilot. There is no longer that burning question of "What's for dinner?"
- Your stocked ingredients list is much easier to maintain, because you will know what foods you need to keep on hand.
- Your family will know what day of the week it is by what is being served for dinner!
- It is much easier to plan ahead for thaw times, etc. with a rotating menu.
- An established meal plan makes it easier for someone else, like your older children, to step in and prepare meals when needed.

But, how do we go about setting up a rotating meal plan? Won't everyone get sick of eating the same thing?

Excellent questions!!



A big key to making a rotating meal plan work is to pick meals that everyone enjoys. We eat a lot of fun foods, like burgers, burritos, and pizza. These can be altered a bit to change up the flavor, as well as customized. We can decorate our burgers however we like, for example. Here are some tips and ideas.

- Ease into a set meal plan. Try getting 2-3 days set first. Do you have busier days of the week where having dinner figured out would be particularly beneficial? Start there. Perhaps Friday night heading into Shabbat would be a good place to start. Prep day can be a very busy day. We have burritos, mainly because it is easy to prepare. In the morning, we load the crockpot up with pinto beans to cook all day. Mid-afternoon, rice gets put in the rice cooker. Then, we just need to chop some veggies and set all the ingredients out on the island. This frees us up to get other things taken care of before entering Shabbat.
 - Create a longer meal plan to allow for more variety. Instead of a one-week meal plan, try rotating 14 meals, or even 28.
 - Instead of a set menu, try picking a certain cuisine for a certain day of the week. Perhaps you will fix chicken on Wednesday. Even if you pick different chicken dishes, you will still have heads-up to get the chicken thawed. That alone can save plenty of mental headache.
 - Create seasonal menus. We don't want to eat soup and bread in July. We aren't able to grill in February. Our menu can and should vary with the seasons. This can break up any potential monotony as well.
-

I want to encourage you to give a rotating menu a genuine try. You may find it a life saver, or you may find that it isn't a good fit for your family. If you find that to be the case, at least take the time to plan out your meals a week or month in advance. Hopefully, you have established a weekly planning day, and can plan your weekly menu then. Write those plans on your weekly layout in your planner.

Cleaning jobs

Routine cleaning jobs can also be handled on a rotating basis. For me, tying tasks to weekly or monthly intervals can feel a bit overwhelming. Using this concept of rotating, I found a simpler system that works for me. If you struggle with maintaining cleaning tasks, this system might be helpful for you as well. I rotate through the rooms in my house, cleaning them in a certain order. This is how you can start a cleaning rotation for your home. Keep in mind that this does not include daily tasks like washing dishes. This is to track and keep up with cleaning jobs like dusting, decluttering, wiping cabinets, etc.



How to rotate cleaning the rooms of your home

- List the rooms in your home, in an order that makes sense to you.
- Take a look at each room, and list the tasks that would need to be done for you to consider the room clean. This is your list, and should match your cleaning comfort level. I don't care much about my baseboards, so they aren't on my list; but if that is important to you, be sure to include it.
- Start at the top of your list and devote what time you have to the first room only. Use a timer. Do what you can. If you don't finish the room, it's okay.
- If you are super busy the next day, don't sweat it. On your next available day, move on to the next room on your list. Again, do what you can with the time you have. If you don't finish, it's okay.
- Continue through your list, doing one room a day.
- Start your list over at the top.





Isaiah 28:10 esv

“For it is precept upon precept,
precept upon precept, line
upon line, line upon line, here
a little, there a little.”

*Rotating through your home is less stressful and slowly
makes headway.*

Each time you go through the list, you will find them a little easier to do. You will slowly get the upper hand. The average home can be cleaned in two weeks, even skipping days. That means you will be back in that room very soon, and many jobs don't need to be done every two weeks. You don't need to dust the ceiling fan that often, for example. Baby steps in the right direction can help you feel more in control of all those cleaning tasks. I also find this rotating method less demanding.

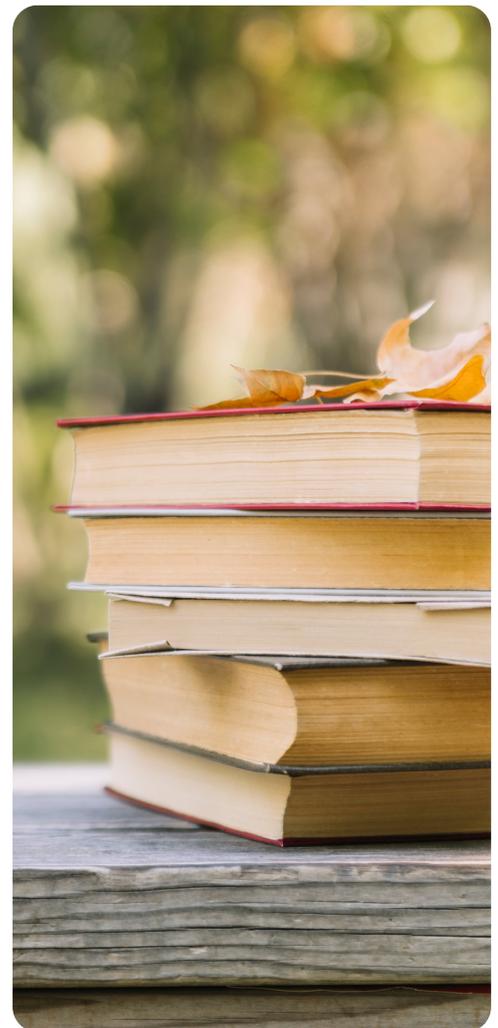
The mother who takes pains to endow her children with good habits secures for herself smooth and easy days; while she who lets their habits take care of themselves has a weary life of endless friction with the children.

~ Charlotte Mason

Homeschool schedules

A homeschool schedule is unique as the family setting it up. I don't think there is any one way to set up a winning routine. I simply offer some ideas that we have used well.

- Keep daily assignments measurable. When it's done, it's done.
- Teach independent learning once children can read well on their own.
- Rotate through "together" subjects, and allow more time for spontaneous study.
- Remember that life itself is the best classroom, so spend plenty of time living life with your children.





Life is learning

I often tell people that my children have learned far more by accident than I ever taught them on purpose. Let them have plenty of time outside to study nature, and include them in activities like food preparation, gardening, fixing the car, etc.

- When reading novels or history lessons, focus on the people and the choices they made. Did they make good choices?
 - Build your homeschool and your family life on the solid foundation of Scripture. Everything else will fall into place.
 - Learning happens all day. Embrace the fact that your children are learning and developing even when they aren't reading a book.
 - Give your children your whole attention when you are doing schoolwork. We all struggle with this, me included, but our children deserve all of us, particularly when they are tackling new skills like long division. Set aside a time block for school in your day, and focus on your children.
 - Be flexible. You have the freedom to make changes as you go. Do what is best for your family.
-

Keep your daily list less than 10.

We all have big dreams. We have lots of obligations. Everyone needs our help. We have so many things we feel we should be doing. Unfortunately, this usually results in a to-do list a mile long. We truly believe we can get everything on that list done, but reality says otherwise.



Remember!

Keep your daily list short and realistic. Don't set yourself up for failure by giving yourself unattainable goals.

You cannot do a million things in a day, or even twenty-five. It's time to be honest with yourself. I strongly recommend that you keep your daily list at ten or less, preferably less. Keeping your list short gives you a chance to actually make some headway, rather than ending each day in defeat. Keep in mind that your daily to-do list should only contain what you actually intend to accomplish before bed. A running list should be kept separate and referred to when making your daily list. While life happens and you need to be flexible and adjust, it's best to have a small and manageable list that you can actually finish.

I also want to point out that many things on your daily list should be habit. You shouldn't need to write 'brush your teeth' on your list. As you look at your typical list, are you seeing lots of things that you do everyday anyway? Try combining these repeat tasks into mini routines. Group items together into lists on an index card to refer to, Here are some examples.

Morning routine

- Brush teeth
- shower
- Scripture study
- wake kids up
- coffee

After dinner routine

- put away all food
- wash dishes
- clear counters
- sweep floor
- check and take out the trash

Keep these mini routine cards near your planner. This way, you can keep repeat tasks off your daily list, but not forget anything either.





Your brain is not a storage device.

My son recently helped me pick out a new computer. He understands all the numbers in the specs, and made sure that I not only had enough storage space, but also enough memory to work on multiple things at the same time. My new computer can handle terabytes of information to help me accomplish my tasks.

Unlike a computer, my brain is not designed to store huge amounts of data. It is designed to be creative, appreciate beauty and wonder, build relationships, solve problems, learn and grow. If we are expending mental energy to remember everything on our shopping list, our ability to create and solve is vastly diminished.

How do we avoid trying to remember all the details? Simple. Write it down. This concept is one of the main reasons to keep a physical planner. You have created a central place to record all the details that you need to remember. Once the shopping list and your task list and appointment dates are safely recorded in your planner, your brain is free to marvel at a rainbow or write a short story or help your fifth grader with his math.

Focus on flow and routine

Some of us thrive on precision and exactness. It is a much needed quality. If you are one of those people, you will probably benefit from a schedule attached to exact times. For example, you may have breakfast every morning at 7:30. You will benefit from a daily plan attached to a clock.

The rest of us don't do so well with time based scheduling, especially if we spend most of our days at home.

Developing a flow to our days is the key. I use meal times as my anchor points. Breakfast is my time for Scripture copywork, simple business tasks like emails, and a quick review of my plan for the day. Between breakfast and lunch, I help the kids with their schoolwork while I work at my computer on writing and design projects. The afternoon is used for farm chores and more physical jobs, like cleaning the house. After dinner, I go to my workroom to assemble orders and create physical products. Any items on my daily list can be sorted into these time slots. Some people refer to this as batching.

Look at the flow of your days currently. You will already see some patterns that you can build on to help you loosely structure your days. Allow large time slots for certain types of tasks and sort your daily list into those time slots. This system gives you plenty of flexibility, but gives you a direction and flow to your days.

Allow for downtime

Creation is full of seasons and cycles, ups and downs. We accomplish our tasks during the day. We sleep at night. Nature is most active in the summer, and the plants and animals rest during the winter. We work for six days in a week and rest on the seventh. Part of learning the spirituality and purpose of planning is learning to embrace the cycles our Creator gave to us.



Genesis 2:3

So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The one element of the natural cycles that we usually miss is allowing for rest. The world wants you to be productive 24/7 to improve their bottom line. You are made to feel guilty if you sit still too long. We have bought into this belief in every aspect of our lives. I might work steady in the house for two hours. I sit down to take a short break, and that is always the moment that my husband will walk in the door and think that I haven't been doing anything.

We need to change our thinking on this. Our bodies, both mentally and physically, were designed to need rest. Your planning needs to reflect this. That is why I encourage you to keep your daily list short and manageable. It gives you some white space to breath. That is why the fourth commandment is to keep the weekly Sabbath. We need space and we need downtime. If you over-schedule, even with your daily tasks, you will burn out. It is up to you to give space for rest.

Since we've already talked about keeping your lists short, let's now talk about the weekly Sabbath. God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. We are to follow this example for all eternity. It is not a burden, but rather a gift. If you haven't developed the habit of keeping the Sabbath, here are some ideas.

- Take the day off from all your normal weekly tasks, such as business work, cooking, and cleaning.
- Take a nap, or at least put your feet up.
- Recharge your batteries with some alone time, or fellowshiping with others.
- Reconnect with your Creator through Bible study, prayer, journaling, etc.

As you learn to allow for rest in your schedule throughout your day, your week, and the seasons, you will actually be more productive. Giving ourselves the rest we need, and the space we need is essential for us to be at our best. Imagine how much better a mom or wife or business owner you can be if you are well rested and your needs are met.

Take time to rest.

Keep your planner handy



We've talked a lot about writing everything down, getting the info out of your head, etc. The only way your brain can trust this system is if you can trust your new "storage device." This is why I recommend that you have a planner that you can keep with you or in a place that is easily accessible. My planner is kept either on my desk in the living room, or at my spot at the kitchen table. It also fits in my purse so that I can take it with me on errands. My family knows what my planner looks like so they can easily fetch it for me if needed. Think about where you tend to spend a lot of your time. Would that be a good place to keep your planner so you can refer to it often?

You want to develop the habit of using your planner every day. Keeping your planner in a handy designated spot is step one. Step two is having a planner that you enjoy looking at. Planners can be found very cheaply, and these planners can be used. However, there is a benefit to selecting a planner that is visually appealing and has a layout you love, even if it costs more. If you enjoy looking at your planner, you are far more likely to actually use it.



Remember!!

Your brain is not a storage device.

Write it down!

Getting everything down on paper should be done at least once a week.

Brain dump

One last nitty gritty tip for you: use the amazing concept of the brain dump. It's not as gross as it sounds. It simply means to get all the random thoughts and tasks out of your head and down on paper. Grab a scrap piece of paper, and write down everything you can think of, from worries, to your shopping list, to those little things your kids asked you to do. I like to write in bubbles on a blank piece of paper. Once you think you've written everything down, you can sort it out. Get all the shopping items on your list. Make a running to-do list to reference throughout the week. Pray about those worries. Make a list of what you are thankful for. Now that you have everything out of your head and sorted, you can focus on action, rather than remembering.

Using your planner for spiritual growth

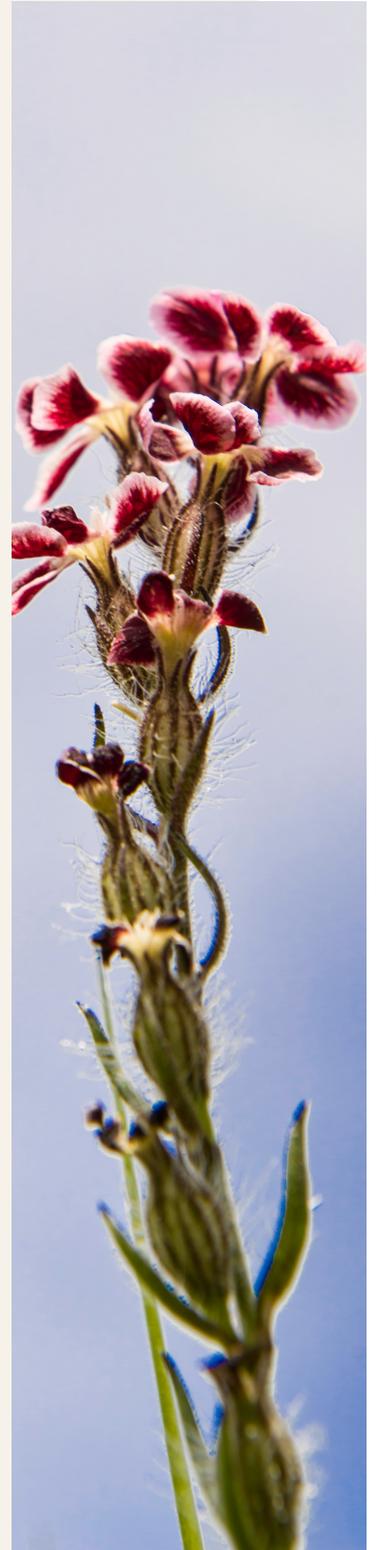
Focusing on spiritual growth in our lives is essential. Without an intention to become more like our Saviour, we become stagnant and completely blind to our faults. We are instructed to work out our salvation, which does not mean that we save ourselves, absolutely not! Rather, we are to listen and obey, continually striving to improve and please our Father more.



The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians gives us a great list of character qualities that should be present in our lives. Understanding these character qualities, such as love and peace, and praying for the ability to live them out in our lives, is vital to seeing real spiritual growth. We want to prosper and grow spiritually, but there is also another very important reason to focus on spiritual growth in our own life. We want to be an appropriate model for our children. The best way for them to learn what spirituality looks like is to see it modeled in front of them. How will they learn to seek peace first? By seeing their mother and father seek peace in the home. How will they learn to give a gentle response? By seeing their parents give gentle responses. We are not without fault, but a combination of intentional modeled behavior and apologies when we fall short, will go a long way towards facilitating their spiritual growth as well.

Tips for using a planner for spiritual growth

1. Prayerfully decide what character quality is lacking in your life right now and needs your attention.
2. Write this down in your planner in the form of an intention, ie. I will show gratefulness for three things daily.
3. Find verses and quotes that support your intention. (Pinterest can be a great place to topically search verses and quotes.) If you need more space, use a tip-in, which is simply a little card taped to the edge of the page.
4. Look at each situation throughout the week as an opportunity to work on your intention. This is often seen in how we respond to said situations.
5. Add verses to your planner throughout the week as you continue to study the character quality and how YHVH wants us to live that quality out.
6. Write down your successes.
7. Continue to pray for help. It is through divine help that we are able to grow, not through our own power alone.



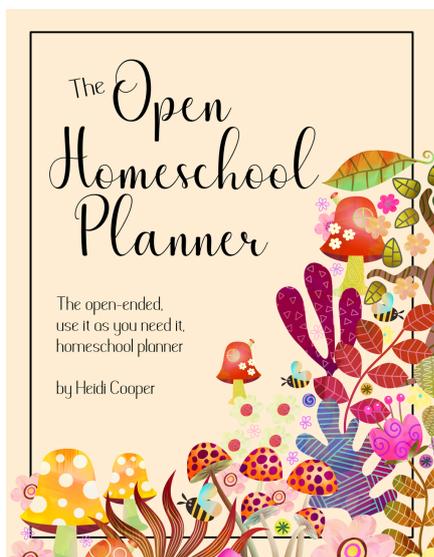
Planner products from Torah Family Living



1. **Torah Family Living planner**
 - This is your all-in-one planner solution. It is completely customizable, with add-on sections for homeschool, menu planning, and home management. You can also add accessories like pockets and phases of the moon stickers.



2. **MINI Torah Family Living planner**
 - This planner is the perfect purse size, a scaled down simple version, perfect if you don't need to keep track of every detail for a whole family. It's also a great secondary planner for taking with you.



3. **The Open Homeschool planner**
 - This spiral-bound planner gives you a flexible way to plan for your homeschool year week by week, and record all the work that is completed. It also features fun and cheery graphics.
-

Keep in Touch!

I hope that you have been blessed by this book. Planning can be an incredible game-changer when done with purpose. You can learn more about planning, as well as spiritual growth at my website: www.torahfamilyliving.com. There you will find lots of articles, resources, and a sign-up for a weekly encouraging newsletter. I look forward to seeing you there. You can also find my planners, lots of accessories, and journals for Bible study.

Head on over to the website here: www.torahfamilyliving.com.

"Wherever you are, be all there." ~ Jim Elliot



Heidi Cooper

Torah Family Living
Helping you make Torah
the heart of your home



www.torahfamilyliving.com

sheepmommy@yahoo.com