

WHAT'S CAUSING YOUR MORNING MADNESS?

By Chris Perrow, President, Perrow Systems

Where do the arguments, stress, frustrations occur? Is it in picking out an outfit? Packing lunches? Finding paperwork?

Once you know where you need more time or better forethought, it becomes a simple matter to allot more time or procedure to those activities, says time management and organization expert Chris Perrow, president of Perrow Systems in Silver Lake, Ohio.

If you have an hour of work to accomplish in 20 minutes, here are some ways to systematize:

- **Sunday Night FOG (Family Organization Group)**

Grab the family calendar and note who is buying, who is packing, who is where after school that week.

Give each child 10 minutes to pack their own lunch (build responsibility!) and gather school work into bookbags and place them by the door, ready to go in the morning. This not only helps save you time, but teaches your children organization skills.

- **Money Bags**

Label hooks with each child's name and daily attach baggies with lunch money, notes, vitamins, medicine, keys and other small items they might need for the day. The child grabs the baggie and is good to go.

- **Index cards**

Place a decorative basket of index cards and a pen on your nightstand and jot down tomorrow's big tasks. In the morning, simply scan the list as a way to imprint the day's activities. Better off your mind and onto paper. If you don't process it purposely, your brain will do it subconsciously and wake you up with the 3 a.m. screaming meemies. You've given it the thinking time the night before, which will probably take only 5 minutes. In the morning, that index card slips into your pocket or purse and gives you direction.

- **Pack the car the night before**

Put your briefcase, paperwork, books that go back to the library, items for the dry cleaner, grocery list and other errands in the car the night before. When you wake up, the day's tasks are ready to drive away.

- **Time your shower ... Or makeup...or whatever else is zoning you out**

Most people spend more time than they think during typically relaxing activities, like showering, fixing their hair or makeup, reading the paper. The shower in particular is one activity where people tend to underestimate time. Warm and relaxed, it's easy to zone out and lengthen it to a 15 minute wake up instead of a 5 minute clean-up! So set the timer for five minutes for those zone out activities. When you allow yourself to waste time, you're already in the hole for a stressful morning.

About Chris Perrow:

Chris Perrow designs organizational systems that fit the nature of the individual, department or company, helping people perform at their peak while maintaining order and flow. As President of Perrow Systems in Silver Lake, Ohio, Chris conducts training for time management, lean office, productivity, change management, leadership, and employee development. Perrow is a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO).

Chris holds a BA in psychology from Muhlenberg College. She has helped clients like Kent State University, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, Office Max and SummaCare. to achieve new productivity through new, lasting process training Contact Chris at Perrow Systems at 330-686-0282 or by e-mail at info@perrowsystems.com, or view her website at <http://www.perrowsystems.com>.