

A Mirror Only Reflects

The members are the strength of the Women's Institute! Motivation with incentives!

These are the tools for achieving specific ends. They can't be evaluated except in the way they are used. Like other tools they can be used skillfully, clumsily or misused.

Take a look at yourself as a W.I. member, and ask which direction are you taking? The "tools", in this particular situation, are planned programs that focuses on the growth of the mind, yet includes the overall priorities of the organization.

Building for a better to-morrow.

Women will continue to play an important part in building this to-morrow. In war and peace, in abundance and in scarcity, women have stood their ground with vision and courage.

We are living in a world of rapid change, new ideas, new standards of living, so often creating new problems and some of them do not please us. But problems become a challenge and we must be ready to tackle them if we are to continue to carry out the ideals which were accepted when the first Women's Institute came into being. We know there is strength in the family unit, perhaps the concept will change, but whatever that "unit" may be, we know in order to keep the community strong the family within the community must be equally strong.

W.I.'s have always encouraged women to play a part in the development of their own community, regardless of where that community might be in the world. Equality of opportunity for the sexes is a goal towards which we all should be striving, but it is equally important that people create an awareness at all levels of the sweeping changes that must be achieved in so many cases before this can take affect.

So let us look again at the area of development and, at the same time, look at the area of problems which such a desire, causes. It is not easy for women in any segment of society to throw away age old traditions, and we must never forget that the freedom we are seeking includes, "freedom of choice" so that no women should feel forced to change her way of life completely, or in part, if she does not wish to do so. What is essential, is to see that no obstacles are put in the way of women simply because they are women, if they want to move forward and be free to share in a more productive life for themselves and their organization.

Is the structure of the W.I. as meaningful as it was when it was first designed? Does the structure aid the apparent methods whereby we achieve our objectives? Can you see any changes that are needed to help branches and districts to achieve a greater degree of efficiency? Are some of our methods cumbersome or outdated? This is the year of the Constitution review so you have an opportunity to speak up and voice your opinion if you can see any need for change.

If you expect good turn-outs at meetings, then members will have to give of themselves. Time, effort, research and energy will become the key to better program planning, then and only then, will women take time from busy lives to spend a few hours at a meeting.

Skills are needed for a good sound program, competent skills to improve the structure of the W.I. We talk about workshops and learning procedures and knowing more about the organization, maybe it is time we learned how better to write-up a meeting or a report or how to summarize and report the important points of a meeting or program. Perhaps that is something we can build on for to-morrow, to make the W.I. more effective.

Doubtless one of our expectations in building for to-morrow is to realize that the W.I. should be growing, not aging, as well as living not merely existing. The desire must come from within the Women's Institutes, each member must look in the mirror and ask, is the reflection relevant to-day?



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