



"PATH TO RHYTHM"

Streamline Class -3

Donna: Hi again. This is Donna with The Waldorf Connection. Welcome to Class 3 of Path to Rhythm. This week, we're talking about streamlining. Basically, this is your pass from where you are now to where you want to go. You're over here, and you want to be way over here.

This class is going to lay the foundation for that road. It's going to get you going in the right direction to make the changes that you need and to start mapping out your rhythm. We did a little bit of that last week in our "Imagine," where we looked at our current rhythm for our daily and our weekly, on that timeline. We got a bird's-eye view of what's happening so that we can start to put things together, make some changes to our current schedules so that we can get more aligned.

I want to talk just briefly about last week's family values and mission statements. I hope that you guys had a chance to map out some of this we talked about in class two, because this really will *help* to align you with where you want to go. If you don't know where you're headed, then you just might end up somewhere else. I really want you to be aligned with your true goals. You use those values about the mission statements – or even just a few words; it doesn't have to be anything written out in a lot of detail. I want you to use those as your compass so that if things start to get off the path a little, you can go back to those values and say, "Wait a minute. This is what we said we wanted to do. This is what we agreed, or this is what we *determined* that is so important and that we really want this for our family, but we're kind of over here."

And it's so easy to do, because we get so busy, and weeks go by, the months go by, and we end up *not* doing the things that truly are important to us. That does seem kind of odd when you think about it, but it happens to me. Maybe it happens to everyone if we're not conscious about doing those things that we really want to do with our family together as a unit, or with each individual child, or just having date nights with our spouse. We'll talk about some of that next week when we do the self-care. There's a lot of things that we have really good intentions about, and if we don't have them out there and have them in a place where we can see them, or at least have said, "Here's what we want," then, it's really hard when it gets busy to go, "What was that that we said we were supposed to be doing?" Or you just don't even think about it. So, take the time to make sure you do that. I don't want to keep going on, because we have so much to do this week. Anyway, I just wanted to give a reminder. I didn't see a whole lot of anything posted up in the Facebook forum. I want you guys to know that that forum is for you to use and to share. I would *love* to see some people posting up there a little bit more.

Don't be shy. There were a few questions that came in. Whether it's a celebration of something great happened, or even if it's some struggle that you might be having, that's okay too. Because, sure, someone else out there has been through it or is going through it, and may



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have a suggestion for you. So, feel free to use that, if you're comfortable with posting some values or just how it went *with* talking with your partner about your values, if you don't want to list out what they are. I hope to see some more action over there. I am there a lot; I'm on Facebook a lot. If you do have questions or you do have something that you need help with, I'm there to help coach you and to give you that as part of the support for this program. Take advantage of that while we have the course going on. Just wanted to give you that.

Let me see here where we are. Let's just go right into today's content, as we have so much going on here. I'm going to talk for a few minutes here. One other thing – if you have it handy, we are also going to use the worksheet we did from Class 1, where you wrote out your challenges; I think there were three challenges – I've got so many sheets here in front of me, but I probably have it back here. If you have that handy, we are going to use that sheet again as we start to work through your challenges. I'm just going to give that to you while I'm talking; maybe you can round that up. It's the worksheet from Class 1. Let's talk a little bit about a couple of things I want to talk about here is that is, our environment. We're going to talk about actually getting in there and making a plan. I know that sometimes our mind have great intentions, and I have this plan going and everything. I'm like, "I'm going to get up early. I've got the meals planned out. We've got our school lesson all mapped out. I have everything. I know what I need to be doing. It's all going well."

And then I look over in the living room, or in my office, or kitchen, and there's clutter, and there's toys that didn't get picked up from the night before, whatever it might be in your house. A stack of mail, stacks of this and that. We do a lot of de-cluttering, and I'm going to talk about that in a minute. It seems like I've always got a bag of clothes that have to go to the consignment shop, or be donated. There's like those bags or boxes of stuff I'm *always* trying to get things out, but they get stuck along the way. Whatever it is – I don't know if you're anything like me but, I have a really hard time focusing and, just like living in an area that is just full of clutter and full of lots of things. This house is basically my home day after day. I do homeschool my kids here, I have my business run here out of my office, and then I'm here the rest of the time with the girls; were gardening and whatever. I'm here 90% of the time, so I really need my environment to help me and not hinder me. For me, I get very anxious and I just feel like I can't do anything if I see all these things everywhere. "I have to stop and do the laundry," or, "I have to do..." whatever. All these little things that come up during the day that can keep you from staying on track with your rhythm the way you have it mapped out.

Because suddenly, it's fifteen minutes here and it's twenty minutes here and then it's over here and it's totally just pulled the thread out from your whole rhythm that you had going. My advice is to do a big weekend de-cluttering. It depends on when you've done it last and what your house looks like. You can't do the whole thing over a weekend but you can maybe take one room. Maybe it's the one room that's driving you crazy or the one room that you see the most, whether that's maybe the kitchen, or the school room, whatever it is, the living room, where you are all the time. If your kids want to get involved, that's great if they're older. If they're younger and you're getting rid of toys and things, I suggest you do that without them if possible. But if it's just clearing and cluttering other stuff, then sure, put a big trash bag in the middle of the floor and have them – as you're going through things – run over and throw it into the bag. They can help with that.

If you see piles or desks covered with everything, too much stuff, I really want you to think about the cluttering and the blocking of the energy from all that stuff. We go through



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a lot of this in the early childhood program in our Simplicity Parenting program where we really talk about "Less is more." Less toys and less things, even for ourselves. We talk all about the children, how it's better for them to have less toys, less books, less clothes; a few simple items. That's great, but we have to look around at the *rest* of the environment; how is the rest of the room stacking up? How are *you* doing with that simplicity mindset?

At first, I was like, "Oh my gosh! I didn't really realize but when I looked around there was just so many things that one, I'm not even using, and two, how did these stuff all get here? It just piles up on you after a while. I suggest you go through whatever it is; be it a big stack of books or magazines, or clothes that you just make some piles – I'm sure you've probably heard this before, but if you haven't – make three piles; one to keep, one to donate, one to trash, if it's broken or ripped or maybe you have a repurpose pile you can use things for. But, I find that a lot of times when I put things in the – "Oh, I think I'm going to – I'll redo something with this," it ends up I don't and it's just stuff that gets sitting around the house that I feel I have to do something with. I gave example of this in my home study. I had bought this, like an antique bench but it didn't have the seat part was missing, like maybe it had been in cane or something and it was missing and I thought, "Oh, it's so great." I got it at the flea market for like \$5, something. "I'm going to make a seat." I never made the seat and for years, I swear I had that seat for about ten years. It moved with us and I was like, "Oh no, I'm not going to throw it away. I'm going to use it in the garden. I'm going to put some of that – I don't know if you guys remember this when it came out – like a burlap or something, it hangs down and you put dirt in and it can grow flowers and stick it out in the garden."

All these great intentions. It ended up that I finally just had to get rid of the thing. I don't even remember what I, sold it at a yard sale or something. I was so relieved I didn't have to think about it again. It was like another project that I was looking out all the time and, "Oh my gosh, I forgot. I got to do that over there." Or scrapbooking; I was really into that for a while, and I *still* have this big pile of pictures and things and I finally just had to tuck it away and go, "I can't do this right now I keep looking at it." It makes me feel guilty like I should be doing that, or whatever it is. If it's a knitting project or some project that you've been working on for a long time, and you think you might use it; you can keep it, you can store it in the attic, or you can just say, "You know what, it's all right. I'm going to pass this on to someone who can finish it or can put it to a better use." And I *never* have gone back and said, "Oh, why did I give that away? I should have kept it." Never. In fact, it's like I shut the door on that, and it totally opens up the energy to bring new things that I do really *need* or really love to have.

I'm pretty ruthless when I go through the house. If I don't absolutely love it, and I'm not absolutely using it, it *goes*. It may go into a temporary holding place, like the garage or the attic, and we did this a few years ago when we put the house up for sale and we thought we might move and ended up we didn't. But, I found a box up there of kitchen stuff that had been up there for two years. I thought, "Guess what, if I haven't used these in two years, I'm pretty sure that I'm not going to need it." I just hauled all that stuff off to the Salvation Army.

Anyway, a lot of times, we have good intentions and we want to do projects and we want to do all these stuff. But you know what, honestly, all these things will – we can't do everything, and not everything is always going to get done. And it's all right.

Because if we've talked about our values and where we want to go, if we just concentrate on that and just know that we're just one person, and we can only do so much and let's try to stick as close to what we want to do as possible. Clear out the clutter. I know that



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makes me feel so much better. I can see what's around me and then I can see if there are things that I *do* need. Like, another rule I have is "Everything must have a home." If you have piles of stuff, there's a good chance that you don't have a place to put it. So, it just starts getting stacked up somewhere because you don't know what else to do with it, whatever it might be. If it's paperwork, or whatever; there's so many things that come into our household that just get tucked in the corner. Next thing you know, you've got a big stack of stuff.

So, try to find a home for it. If it doesn't have a home, then you really can't find a place for it. Again, it may be one of those things that you just have to say, "All right; time to pass along to someone else." I use a lot of baskets. We have a lot of different baskets around the house. The girls' toys are mostly all in baskets. I get large baskets. I have a – I might take a picture of this and put it on the forum. I just have a set of bookshelves actually that I got from Ikea and I just have baskets. They're not any kind of matching baskets that I bought with the bookshelves; they're just baskets that I've gotten over the years. Depending on what size toys they have, they have a certain basket for their silks and a certain basket for their little wooden animals, little dollhouse dolls, and the tree blocks; everything has it's own basket. Acorns and walnuts and shells and stones, some little baskets.

All that kind of stuff goes in baskets. Now, they know where that stuff goes. That will help a lot when your children, as they grow. You can even put labels on the baskets, or if they can't read, pictures on the baskets. We did this when the girls were young. Just take a picture or have them draw a picture of an acorn and tape it to the front of the basket, or tie it on with a ribbon or something. This is the one for the blocks, this is the one for the acorns, and this is the one for the shells, for the silks, whatever. Then they can help when they're putting things away. It's very helpful to start having that, in their room as well, in my office; I have baskets for all my paper work. I have a homeschool basket that I keep my current books. I have more than that will fit in the basket, but the ones I'm currently using, I put in the basket. The rest goes in a little drawer or just have a bookshelf – I'm just looking around. The girls have their art supplies in different-sized baskets. Crayons and pencils; everything is sorted. I'm not a freak about it but, I just feel like it needs a place. Otherwise, it just gets thrown in the drawer and you never see it again, or it gets broken. I try to do as much as I can with baskets.

We even have some larger baskets we use for shoes; at the front door, the back door. We also have some miscellaneous baskets that I use in the winter time for our little throws – like if you're cold and you want to tuck something on yourself when you're knitting or watching TV or whatever it is. I have a couple of those and I just keep the baskets by the couch and you can tuck it around you, when you're having story time, or whatever. Pull the blanket out of the basket and tuck yourselves in it. It's really nice to have that. I like baskets. You can use filing cabinets, or whatever it is that works for you. I'm just giving you that. I won't talk too long, because we've got *so much* to cover here.

Anyway, I think that'll really help – I feel like you have to get *all* of these stuff that we've been talking about the last two-and-a-half weeks, done first before you really get your rhythm. If you don't, it's like you're starting but then you still have all those craziness around you. So, we're to sort out the craziness and sort out the values and sort out where we want to go.

This last step will really help with the de-cluttering and the simplifying. I will be welcome to take your questions on this on the forum. I'll be happy to help you through that, because I know we've got so much to go through today, so I don't want to take up too much



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more time with that, but I'll be happy to talk more about that on the forum. Let me see here where I am. The other thing I want to talk about – there's a sheet that is under Step Three, the Class Three, that's called "Ages and Chores." While we're talking about kids helping to pick up and that kind of thing. This is the realistic expectations that I want to talk about, that I talked about in the what was going to be offered for this course.

I think if you can take one thing from this course, and that is to have the realistic expectations of what your children can do. You might think, "What does this have to do with rhythm?" But really, it does. Because if you are expecting your five-year-old to do their daily chores or weekly chores, or whatever it is, just to know what to do and go do it, that's not going to happen. We sometimes see that our children can *do* things and *act* older, if you will, than what they're really capable of doing on a consistent basis. I hope that makes sense. So, I have a sheet here that I made up for you, just called "Ages and Chores." It's just a quick thing to give you an idea of where your child is, depending on their age, and what they can do, so that you don't expect *this*. And it really is a matter of perception, because you wouldn't expect a baby to feed themselves and make their beds, right? And you don't get mad at them when they can't hold their fork or spoon, and yell at them because they're not doing it properly.

It's the same thing. We shouldn't expect our whatever age child to do something that they're really physically or emotionally not capable of doing. If we look at it from *that* perspective, that hey, it's not that they're just trying to annoy us or they're just being defiant and not doing what they're supposed to do. It's just that they need some more reminders and it's up to us to make sure that we give them the reminders, or we come up with a creative way to help them. I'm *still* having this. I'm looking at the list here and basically, even my nine-year-olds, *still*, I have to remind them about doing their chores. They have something they do every morning, which is I call "the morning routine." They've been doing – honestly, they've been doing that since they've been really young. I want to say like four or five, but obviously, that has improved over the years. I have them make their bed, which is just pulling up the sheets, and pulling up the... they have just like a little comforter, and getting dressed. Now, they're a lot better about brushing teeth and getting dressed and all that stuff. That's all they have to do.

Their own personal hygiene there; brush hair, brush teeth, get dressed and make *bed*. We've been working on that for five years. It may sound mundane, but in the early days, I didn't care that much if their covers were half on the floor, and it wasn't the perfect bed made up. But they were doing it, and I would remind them, and that kind of thing. I just want to give you this as a reference to where your children are and what they can do. I noted at the bottom here, a good reference is "The Gesell Institute Books on Child Development." That's G-E-S-E-L-L. Those are great books, and I got mine from the library.

It will really give you a realistic view of where your children are, why they do what they do, and what they're capable of doing. Basically, I'm just going to go through this really fast, for those who are just listening and don't have it in front of them. At age three and four, they want to help, and they *can* start helping but obviously, not consistently. They may also play alongside you while you fold the laundry, but if you can offer some child-sized brooms. We got that little dustpan and the little broom. I swear I still have that little one, because it's so nice. Sometimes it's small, to get into small spaces where they can go along and scoop and help.

Don't expect that they'll be a whole lot of *real* help, but it's about them modeling and doing some practical work and *learning*. Then, at five, they may want to participate more, or they may not. They might weave in and out, depending on the age and what they want to do.



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They may regress even. You might be like, "They were helping before and now they don't want to help anymore." That goes on, in and out. Same type of things; they can start to lay napkins on the table, set the table if they're careful with the plates. Age six, they can really start to do more household chores: sweeping, vacuuming, dusting. My kids love to take the little duster all around the house and dust. Sweeping outside on the porch; anything like that, they can do. Help feeding the dog, as they get a little bit older.

At age seven, it's a little bit more on their own, where they're starting to do a little bit more. But you still have to do prompting. One thing that we did that worked is, I have little pictures on the magnets – I don't know if I said this before on this class – because at the time, they couldn't even read. So we drew out the pictures – they also have weekly chores they do. We've added and changed them as they've gotten older, but one like empty the dishwasher for the week, and the other one, cleans out the litter box and the bathroom, we changed. Then they both are responsible for putting away their own – like hanging up their own laundry. I'll wash and sometimes they'll wash, then they each get their basket of clothes to hang up. That's taken time to get to that level, but I *still* have to prompt them, and we do have these little magnets with the chores on the refrigerator.

We do the weekly chore switch each week, Monday morning. I just switch one name with the other name over. Then we go, "Who's doing dishes this week?" I can look over right on the fridge and say, "It's you Lily. Come on, I need you to empty the dishwasher." We're still prompting. I sometimes think, "Gosh, don't they know they have to do this?" But they don't.

I'm just giving you that. You can put signs, and you can put up little notes and get creative with it. Have a little song, or just have it built into your weekly rhythm. "Now, all of us are going to do our weekly chores." You start to do yours and they start to do theirs. There's many ways to do it, but I just wanted to give this to you so that you weren't getting frustrated with why they weren't helping, or how old do they need to be when they start doing blah, blah, blah. Chopping and helping chop vegetables – I was amazed when I took my children to a morning garden. They were four, and they allowed them to start chopping and cutting their own sandwiches. I probably would never have allowed that, and I was so grateful that they showed them how to do it – holding the knife. Now, they've been making their own sandwiches, sometimes for lunch, for years. They can help chop; they can help baking, and all of that stuff. That can go along with that. Let's move along here. What I want to do now is look at those challenges from week one. I want to really get into where we are and where we're going. If you have your worksheet from week one, it's called, "Step 1: Release."

There was in the middle of the page, you had "Top Three Challenges That You Had." There is a sheet from *this* week, called "Action Steps." It's got Action Step One, Two and Three. Basically, what we're going to do, and if you have them there, I'm going to give you a few moments to transpose – unless they've changed and you want to put something new done – but basically what I'd like you to do is to – we're going to start working on these three challenges and we're going to give a dates and we're going to give the details that you must take. I'm going to go through this just as an example, and I'm going to give you a few minutes.

I had written down, "Not getting up early enough." That was one challenge that I was having. I would move over to my Action Steps sheet from this week, and under Action Step number One, I would put, "Get up." You can put, "Get up earlier," but I think it might even be better if you're very specific. Figure out what time you want to get up. I'm going to say, "Get up at 6:30." For me, that's fine because my girls sleep till about 7:30 and that will give me about an



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hour by myself, to do whatever it is I want to do. Whether it's get a shower, or whatever; do a little work, or just have a little tea by myself, and figure out how the day's going to flow.

Whatever it is – maybe you've got "Meal Planning" as your top rhythm challenge. You never have any idea what you're going to have for your dinner. Your Action Step under number One might be, "Make a meal plan. Make a monthly meal plan. Make a weekly meal plan." You might even get *that* specific. We're going to go over meal plans in just a little while here, so you'll get some examples of that. Or, maybe the kids aren't cleaning up – and that's another challenge. Your kids won't clean up and you're having to go behind them and clean up. Action Step One would be to "Get the kids clean up their mess." I'm going to give you a few minutes; put on a little music here. I want you to basically write down the three challenges that you have under the Action Step part. Beside the number One, write whatever it is, and then the Date To Begin, so you can figure out when you want to start. If it's tomorrow, if it's Sunday, if it's Monday; whatever's good for you. Just put a date to it. Otherwise, it doesn't get done.

If you've got three really big Action Steps that are really something that are going to be, "Wow! I don't know..." You may just want to pick one this week, one next week and one the week after. That kind of a thing. Because I think these are doable Action Steps. If it's something pretty simple, like de-clutter, then you might say, "I'm going to work on the de-cluttering this weekend, so *that* one will be done. So Monday, I can start getting up early." You may be able to do them depending on what they are. It's really hard for me to know, so I'm just giving you some ideas here as far as how to handle it.

What I *don't* want you to do is to feel overwhelmed and say, "Gosh! Look at what I have to do in here." If you just want to do one right now, that's fine too. Go at your own pace. I don't want to – again, this is about *helping* you, and not making you feel overwhelmed. I have three – if you only have two and you really just want to work on those, then you just have at that. I'm going to give you just a few minutes; this shouldn't take long. And I wanted to say about the details. I've got here, "Get up at 6:30." The date to begin: it's going to be tomorrow. You put the date. Tomorrow is going to be February the tenth; or whatever date you want to start.

And then, "The detail action I must take." For that, it's pretty simple. "Set the alarm. Make sure I get to bed early tonight, so that I can set my alarm and get up." But if it's "De-clutter," it might be, "Get trash bags. Plan a few hours by myself. Have my husband take the kids so I can have this few hours and do the de-cluttering." Really think about what are you going to need to get that done. If it's meal planning, again, it might be just an hour. "I just need an hour of uninterrupted time, a couple of recipe books, and I just need the meal plan sheet that Donna's going to give me in a little while, and I'll do the meal planning." If it's "Helping the kids clean up," the kids won't clean up, the maybe you need to get some – like I said, detailed action might be "Get four new baskets for their toys, label or add pictures." You go ahead and sort them all and then show them and then they are responsible for doing it, and then you just have to keep that going up.

Maybe you put half – I sort of used to do this when my girls were younger – I get lunch time, I would look around and say, "Whatever messes that we've got needs to be cleaned up before lunch." And then, you do it again before dinner. Because if you wait till dinner – if your kids are like mine – they go through art projects, and the house is a wreck by dinner time. You can do it twice a day, you could do it before every meal or you could just do it before dinner or before bed time, you have a big cleanup. However you want to do it; but make that the rule. Cleanup's at twelve and at six, or cleanup is at five. Set your timer, if you have. Set an alarm



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that goes off, that reminds you. Those could be some of the details that you need to take to do it. It's hard for me to speculate, but I'm just giving you a few ideas with some of the things that I had on my list or some of the things that I thought you might have.

I welcome you to ask questions, if you're on the line right now. I'm going to give you just a few minutes, turn on the music here. If you *do* have a question about this exercise, go ahead and send it over. I'll be happy to take a look, or un-mute you. We're on the forum; please ask and I'll go into a little bit more, or answer your specific question on this. Take just a few minutes to work on the Action Steps, the Dates and the Details. All right. Okay. I'm going to come back here just for a minute. There were a couple of questions. If you still are working on, that's fine; go ahead and do that. There were a couple of questions that came in while I was talking earlier. Someone was asking about the Facebook forum. Thank you for that question; that's a great question. It *is* really private. If you are on a private group and you post in that group, that will *not* go on your Wall. You're welcome to try that, but as far as I know, that will *not* come out on your Wall. If you are on a private group – because I'm part of several groups, and that stuff does *not* get posted on my Wall. So, feel free to go ahead and post there.

The books that I recommended about the ages and stages was The Gesell Institute and it's on that – I'm looking for it here. The Gesell Institute Books – it's spelled G-E-S-E-L-L. Gesell Institute. There's a whole bunch – a whole series. If you want to go, just look on Amazon or something for them, and then try to look at your local library, or you can order them. Gesell Institute books. I hope that you had a few minutes to think about what your plans are going to be here, and your Action Steps. I've also got this in the forum is the Action Steps Results. There's another page that comes after this, but obviously, you won't be able to fill this out. But I want you to keep this around the house – if you are working on a doable action this week, or two, or three – then I want you to keep your Action Step Results handy. I want you to bring that back with you for next week. A little bit of homework here. Basically, what this is the result of what you did. Let's just say, four, five days go by, and then you take a look and say, "The getting up at 6:30, how is that going?" Then there's a place for you to write, "Well, it's going pretty well, but I may even want to get up thirty minutes earlier."

That's the thing about rhythm, is that you got to tweak it. Sometimes, your first try doesn't always work, or can be altered a little bit. That's the way it goes. Sometimes, it's right off the bat. You might say, "It's going great and I don't need to make any changes. Six thirty is going great. I'm getting up. It's been amazing. I've had loads of extra time. I'm calmer in the morning now because I'm not getting accosted by my kids when I'm still half-asleep." Whatever it might be.

So, here is an opportunity to – again, it's all about being proactive and just taking a few mindful moments. In the evening, when the kids go to bed, or, during that early time when you get up before the kids and take five minutes, ten minutes, and just look. How are things going? Is this making a difference? What else could I be doing along the same theme?

Maybe, "The kids' baskets are really doing great, but we're still having a problem with them wanting to clean up," or, "I'm still having to remind them so much and sometimes I'm forgetting." Whatever; it's hard for me to say what it could be. You just have to take a look – maybe part of what you're doing is working, and the other part is not working, so look and think. "What can I do?" Maybe the timer thing; we were using the timer and the alarm was going off, on your smart phone or iPod or just a little alarm clock. That alarm clock is good because then



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the kids hear it and say, "That must be time for me to clean up." So that's less you have to say about it. Maybe there's a favorite song you put on. When they hear that song, they go clean.

The Action Steps Result page will come with you next week, and I'd love to hear on the forum, or, just any comments of how this is going. But basically, it's just to keep you on track. I can only give you these sheets. I can't make you fill them out. But, I really want you to take the time to do this, because it will really help you and it will give you that opportunity to check in with yourself and say, "Oh yes. We're supposed to be getting up early, but that hasn't gone real good. What's happening that's keeping me *from* that? Oh! I've been up late three nights in a row and I'm so tired I keep hitting the Snooze and I'm just going to bed."

Or maybe, "I need to get more exercise so I feel like getting up." You just have to look at the reasons why it's happening. Like we did before, where we really got deep is, if you're really stuck, then there's probably something else that's hidden there. So really think about that and try to go through that. I'll be happy to help you as I can, as I said over on the forum. That is the Action Steps. We will take hold of those challenges and we will knock them out. You can use this if you've got more challenges, or use this again in six months, three months, and say, "What challenges am I having now?" And you can do the same process. So, you can reuse this whole program; start listening to it, take out the sheets and go right along. That's the great thing about it.

The next thing we're going to look at is the evolving rhythm pyramid model. This is something that just came to me one day. If you have this worksheet, basically, I just want you to get the idea of how rhythm stacks up, if you will. By doing this, what I came up with is that, your foundational stuff goes at the bottom. Because I guess it's just like building a house. Those are the things that you will always do. When you're mapping out your rhythm, or thinking about your day, there's going to be things that we just have to do, no matter what. Down here, I've got under foundational: laundry, meals, shopping for meals, errands; whatever it might be. Or changing diapers, nursing; whatever takes up some time for you. Washing dishes; it's just those things that are going to happen, no matter what.

They have to be figured into your day, or into your week. Otherwise, they get left behind, or you get frustrated because you're like, "Now how am I supposed to do all of these?" We know we have to do those things. Those are the foundational pieces. That's probably the biggest chunk of things that you have to do. Now you've got the middle portion, which is under "Changeable." This could be changing by the season, or maybe occasional things that you have to do. It's hard for me to say, because there could be so many different things, but I'll try to give you some examples.

For example: soccer in the fall. We had soccer with the girls. It lasted about two months and then it's over. It's something that doesn't happen all the time, every time. It's not ongoing, but it's with the season, or occasional. Like summer; children are home from school. Or, you so summer activities that you don't do the rest of the year. Or, it could be winter things that you're having to do that you don't normally do. So, it could be by the season, it could be occasional. Certain errands that you have to do, for a few months, and then they're going to change to something else.

It may be library; story time goes on just during the school year; or whatever. There's lots of different things it could be. But, it's not something that *has* to be done over and over again, always going. It could change. And then, the top portion are the things that you *love* doing. It's the fun things. It's those things that you always want to get around to, but don't have



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time to do. It's really what you love to do. Reading, yoga, knitting, crafting with your children, gardening, running, walking, exercising, singing; any of those things that is the fun stuff. It's that stuff that really gives you that spark and refuels you that we should *also* put into our everyday rhythm. But again, because we don't have the foundational pieces in place, we spend all our time running around and we never get around to do some things.

I have also included sort of a blank copy of the pyramid that gives you space to write your own – what your things are. There should be a page that has arrows, that's where I wrote in, and then there's just one that's like a big pyramid and there's room for you to write. Under the foundational, I want you to take a few moments now and write down - it doesn't have to be everything, but just so you get the idea – some of the things that you spend a lot of time doing, that are just ongoing things like laundry, meal planning, meal prep. You've always got to do meals. I feel like I just got done with breakfast, and it's time for snack, it's time for lunch, and you're doing dishes or whatever. This is the time for you to see how you stack up and what you are doing. So that we don't forget about the fun things, is basically what I want you to do. I'm going to give you a few minutes just to jot down some of your foundational activities, some of your changeable activities, and then some fun activities.

Because when we go to map everything out next week, putting it all together, I want you to have – pick a few from each category and how we're going to fill those in during the week. You know you have to do laundry; do you do it once a week or twice a week? You start to fill-in those days. But if you don't know and you're just running around and things are haphazard, then I guarantee, the first thing that's going to get forgotten about are those fun things that we *really* need. We'll talk much more about that next week, with the Self Care and the "Refueling our own tanks." I'm going to give you a few minutes here just to fill out the evolving rhythm pyramid.

Why is it evolving is because it will change. What you're doing this week or this year is not what will be happening in two years. So, it will be evolving, but there will be those basic things that you keep doing. You can use this over and over again. I'll be quiet for a few minutes. You can just fill in some of the things on your pyramid. Okay. Come on back here and you can finish that up later if you want; I just want to make sure we get to the rest of what I've got here. The next thing is a sample transition template. I've got a lot of handouts for you this week, but I wanted to make sure to get all this stuff. We're going to talk about this just for a few minutes, because I think transitions are one of the things that is the stickler of the day. It's that moving from one activity to another and transitioning over that sometimes it has trouble, with younger children that don't want to stop what they're doing, don't want to come to the table to eat because they're playing, don't want to go to bed; that's probably one of the biggest ones. Can't get them out the door; it's very frustrating for us as a mom, if we're trying to keep our schedule or have some place we have to go, or exhausted and just trying to get them to bed.

I wanted to just give you a few ideas for some of the stickier parts of the day, or things that I have coached other moms and these are the things that came up.

Basically, meal times, dinner prep and bed time. Bed time; let's just talk about that for a moment, because that right there is the one area or one transition that if you get that streamlined, it will really change a lot in your household. I don't know where you guys are with your current bedtime routine, but most of the time, moms are complaining to me about that. It's taking too long; it's taking an-hour-and-a-half. By the time they get to sleep, it's 8:30, 9 o'clock and I'm exhausted. There's a lot of that. So, I wanted to say if you can work on bed time and get



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that down, that will improve so many different things. Give you time in the evening to connect again with your partner, or give you free time to just rest and relax, or get to bed early. I remember just *waiting* for 7:00. Sometimes, it was like, "Oh my gosh! Just another hour and I'll be free." That may sound horrible, but those early years, sometimes you're so drained. I just want to sit over on the corner, read a book and not say a word. Just for an hour. And it's okay. We're going to talk more about this next week with the Self Care. It's all right to do that.

We're just going to briefly go through the transitions. We talked a lot about transitions especially with the children who are younger in our Nourishing the Early Years. In case any of you are interested, we are starting that on February 15th. We're going to go ahead and do that one more time and we probably won't be doing it again this year. So, if you want to jump in to that class, then you can check – okay.

Back to meal times. Here's a couple of ideas to bring your family or your children to the table. My kids never seem to have a problem. They're like, "When's the next meal?" They *run* to the table. But I have heard some that don't want to, start playing or doing things and come sit down and eat. One is to have a meal time song or blessing. Just the fact of sitting down for a family meal together, and making it a sacred time. This was something that was one of my values. We're going to eat dinner every night if possible together. We have done that 99% of the time, unless somebody's out of town, or whatever. We have a family meal together.

The other thing is that they will not come to the table. They're busy playing, is to go physically, especially with younger children now. Just hold their hands and just walk them to the table. Sometimes, it doesn't need any words. It's just about walking them to the table. Just gently moving them along in the right direction, and just say, "Dinner's waiting. Come on. Here we go." You can also ask them to set the table. Maybe dinner's just about done, and that will get them out of what they're doing, if they're playing something else. Now, they're going to come and set the table. Now, they're in the kitchen and they're setting the table, and they're ready to go. Or, ask them to carry something to the table. I know young children like to help out. "Could you help me carry this basket of rolls, or this basket of bread, over to the table?" They come running and they help you, and now, boom! They're in the kitchen and they're there. That's just a couple of ideas there.

Dinner prep is another hard time. It's always that 4:30, 5:00. The children are tired; you're tired. What do you do with them while you're trying to make the dinner? There's different schools of thought here but, if the child is willing and is able, have them help, if possible. I know, sometimes we just say, "That will be just more trouble than it's worth." But a lot of times, it isn't. If you just have them doing something small, it really helps set the stage where they will be really helpful to you. I know our girls have been in there helping my husband cook the dinner most of the time, so Yay for me. But, they can cook, and bake, and they've been shopping and helping for *years*, and they're great now.

And they're nine. They can literally cook dinner, with a little bit of help. They're in there. Sometimes, it's, "Agh!" You know.

But if they can just chop some things; if there's something – peel some things, or whatever it is that you have to do. Measure the rice and pour it into the bowl, or the water. It helps have them nearby doing something sort of like you're doing. Give them a couple of carrots in a bowl and then you do what you need to do, but then they're right there and they're with you. You can watch them and then they're busy and it'll keep them occupied for a little while.



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Something else is to possibly have a special toy basket or activity folder or something, for that time of the day that comes out only during that time. So that's kind of fresh and they haven't been playing with it all day, to kind of keep them busy and give you that time you need to get the dinner done. Something else that we started to do, and this is for older children, is to listen to them read aloud. They can come in there and sit on the counter beside you and start reading their book. You can listen while you do the dinner, and that's a *great* time to get that read aloud time and you can really give them your attention to some degree.

You're cooking but you're right there and you can talk to them and that's a great time to get that done and it'll keep them occupied instead of saying, "I'm bored; what can I do? I'm so hungry," like mine do. They can be reading. Something else is they do an instrument. Mine like to play their instruments while dinner's being done. That time of the day is a nice time; one of mine especially really loves to go in there by herself and just practice her instrument for fifteen or twenty minutes. So that's another thing.

On to bed time. I'm going to say this, as a sort of a caveat here. When you're doing bed time, figure out the time that the kids need to be – want them in bed. Seven-thirty, seven, six-thirty, eight, and go backward. We're going to do this; we're going to do this. We're going to figure out what your routine is going to be. If it's read a story, have a bath, and back that out, so that you have enough time before so that they are actually in bed and lights out at that time. Bed time snack; this I got from Sharifa Oppenheimer, who was on my early childhood program last year. I used this my girls; they still ask me for this: the warm milk and honey toast. It doesn't matter if they just ate dinner thirty minutes before – mine are always hungry – they will have that. One of mine doesn't like hot milk, but she'll just have water or sometimes, tea. But, you just warm up the milk. I just put it in a tiny pan on the stove, and while I'm making the toast, it's warming up and I just spread it with a little honey or jelly. I don't know what it is about the warm milk and honey toast. She will swear by that, and I will too. Because it's amazing. And then they're off to bed.

I don't know. It's just – it must fill some kind of want/need and fill their tummies, and they're off to bed. And I put "Limit roughhousing and stimulating activities," which seems kind of obvious, but, I know it's really hard especially when daddy comes home and then it's like the whole thing goes crazy and they're playing, and they're running around and it's such a, kind of an uproar. It's very hard. If you can talk to your partner about that – even if it's "They have to get that out." But *then*, start bringing it down a little bit; because it is really unnerving when you just had them all calm and then the next thing you know, they're wrestling in the next room and laughing and screaming. You're like, "This is supposed to be bed time." That is another reason to talk with your spouse, your husband, whatever and try to get them on board with the family values, explain what you're doing and why you're doing it. It is very important that they get it.

Depending on schedules – you have to work with schedules, depending on when he comes home, or maybe if he's working from home, or if you're by yourself, the kids might just need a little walk to get – sometimes they need to get that energy out after dinner, a little bit.

That's all right as long as you have enough time to get them back down again. You may have to look at moving dinner up to an earlier time and then *after* dinner taking a walk and then *still* having a little down time when you come back to get into that sleepy mode. There's a few ideas for transitions. We're coming up on an hour. We might go over a little bit on this call, but I really want to go ahead and get all of this in. The next thing – the last thing I've got here are the meal charts and the meal plans. Also, I did a quick grain of the day, on the



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planetary chart – if you're following the Waldorf-inspired education here, then you've probably heard of "grain of the day" and all this.

I've never been a real stickler for grain of the day, *but*, when I did some research about this; it's very interesting the way it all works. So, I just did the grain by the day and the planet that coincides with that. If you do a search, in fact, I *did* find something here; let me read what this says. "The sun from most ancient times has always been associated with the number three. And it's double fixed and wheat was called "the three-fold-grain," with its germ, starch and bran layers." "The moon on the other hand, rules over water, and that grain which must be grown in water, and was always considered yin in the east, rice. Thus shows its affinity with the moon." So, each planet has some kind of – like Mars and the oats. It says, "Mars has an affinity with oats, which energize one, and we'd like to serve hot, like that fiery planet."

So, each planet coincides with its coinciding grain. Here, what I've got on this list are just a couple recipe ideas or what will you want to do with the grains. Because some people are like, "What do we do?" Lots of times, people do the grains or have heard of the grains doing for breakfast. I don't know that it matters, but it's totally up to you how you want to do it. I just gave a couple recipe ideas here for each one. Obviously wheat, if you're gluten-free and all of that, then wheat might not be something you want to do. But if not, then pretty much you can do anything and have wheat. Because anything that wheat flour is, muffins, bread, pancakes, cereals, anything; most everything has wheat; crackers. You can get that in.

And then rice; you can do a brown rice, a rice cream, rice milk; there's so many different options with the rice. Barley. A lot of times they do barley in a soup, or a warm barley cereal. Millets. I used to use millet in sort of a porridge; like a millet porridge for breakfast. You can use millets sort of like a couscous, with veggies and stir-fry it all up, sauté it. Rice, of course, bread; I found a great recipe for Swedish Rye Cookies. Oats. Of course, oatmeal, oatmeal cookies. Maybe even put it into an Oat Loaf or Meat Loaf. A lot of times, Meat Loaf does call for – if you eat meat – it does call for putting the rolled oats right in there. So you could have that on Friday and have your oats.

And then Saturday is Corn. Of course, you can use corn – corn bread, corn cakes, even popcorn. Corn can be used in a lot of different ways. There's a corn on The Magic Onions blog. All about this. If you want more information, she has a great two-part blog post. You can just go to Magic Onions and just search for "grain of the day." She has lots of different recipes and you can probably find lots of that stuff online as well. I just wanted to throw that in just because people hear a lot about the grains of the day, and since we're talking about meals.

Now, we're going to do the meal charts. This I think is probably – doesn't everybody wish they have their meals all planned out. I remember hearing about a meal plan. Meal plan. This must be some big, complicated thing. What do they mean, "meal plan?" When I finally saw a meal plan, I was like, "Oh! It's really not that difficult." If you just take a few moments, it's not something that could really take a ton of time to think up.

If you look at the meal idea chart, and I did: breakfast, lunch *and* dinner on here. Sometimes I'd just seen breakfast or just dinner, breakfast and dinner or just dinner. But I had it lunch in too. This is just some things that we do, and just some other things. If you're a vegetarian, or a vegan, or a gluten-free, you just have to use your own preferences. That's why I have included a *blank* meal chart for you, but this just gives you an idea. Basically, when I'm making my meals up, it's basically the meal category. That will really help you, because it's hard



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to plan out. Like if you want to do the whole month, it's really harder the whole week to plan every single recipe. But this will give you a general idea. Let's just forget those briefly.

Let's just say Monday. For breakfast is omelet. It's Monday morning. You get up; you know you have to make an omelet. What I would do is go in there and look and see what I have in the fridge that I can put in the omelet. I don't have to mark out, "I'm going to have a ham and cheese omelet." You can, of course, but this is just some sort of general guideline. If you want to add that as a separate sheet, like you just want to have omelets, and then list your top five omelets so that when you look, "Okay, it's Omelet Day. What kind of omelet do I like? What are our favorites? We have on the sheet over here that we like pizza omelet, or ham and cheese omelet or veggie omelet." Then you can look and say, "We have a whole bunch of veggies. I will just make a veggie omelet." But basically, if you have some more of a start, that's the whole thing here.

Lunch is pasta. What kind of pasta? What do I have to go along? What are our favorite pastas? Will the kids like butter noodles? Or maybe just spaghetti. I don't have any pasta or spaghetti sauce, so we're going to have butter noodles. It's not rocket science, but it's just the matter of you getting it down and you *looking* and having – make sure that you have the food on hand, obviously, to some degree. Chicken. You can do the same thing. List out your favorite different chicken recipes, but you don't have to map everything out. Or, you certainly can. If you're one that wants to have everything listed out so that you have all of your ingredients, and you know, "Tonight, we're going to have Mexican Chicken."

Then, you've got Mexican Chicken. You know you have everything you need. You could just start making the Mexican Chicken, or you know it takes an hour to make the Mexican Chicken so that you have to start ahead of time and your prep time is earlier. Also, you may want to do a Quick Night. I didn't write that on here, but if you know – we have music classes on Tuesday, and a lot of times, we don't get back till 6:30. So that might not be the night to do the hour meal. It might be your Quick Night, or Casserole that you've already done during the day and you just pop it into the oven and heat up.

We also have Friday night Pizza Night. I don't know why; that just has become a tradition. My husband makes a homemade pizza, or we'll just get a pizza. Friday night is Pizza Night. We don't have to think about it; it's already done. We're like "Wohoo! It's Friday. We have pizza." And then on the weekend, we might do something more involved. We have crock pot, and sometimes we invite my parents over and we have Sunday dinner, which is more like a roast, or something that takes a little bit more – a big turkey, whatever. You don't have to worry about other things because you've got a little bit more time and your partner's there and you can do the bigger meals. When you're planning out, think about your week. If you can look at your chart that you did last week, the weekly activities and see what you've got going on those days. If you have a bunch of errands, then it may not be – the last thing you want to do is come home and cook complicated meals.

That night just might be simple sandwiches. That was something that my mom did a lot of times. We just had simple sandwiches; something easy. Also keep that in mind when you're planning out your meals, what days. You switch them around, of course. It's not set in stone, but this is a good thing to have. At least it gives you a place to start. You can get as detailed as you want. You can really look over your – and you can repeat it every week. You can look over your list and then when you go to the store to buy your groceries, you've got, "Well, we need this, this, this, this and this."



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You've got everything, and that will keep you away from the store from just buying a bunch of stuff that turns out doesn't really make up any kind of a meal, which you've probably experienced. I have the blank meal chart here, for you to fill out. I think it's a really important part of your rhythm, to have a meal chart. It's up to you, of course, but I really think it's to your benefit to at least have the categories, like we have here on the meal idea chart here. So that you have some place to start and you're not totally just floundering around, "What's for dinner?" And your children will see that, and you can post it up if you want. That way, if they say, "What are we going to have?" That's just one of those confidence boosters. We can say, "What's today?"

And they say, "It's Tuesday."

"We're having egg salad for lunch."

"Oh, okay."

Then they run off.

If it's, "I don't like egg salad."

"Well, that's all we're going to have on Tuesdays."

You don't have to just wonder and, "I don't know dear. What do you want to have?" All those. It makes it really hard. They catch you off guard, and you want to – it's nice to feel that you have things under control, and that's really what we're talking about here. Making sure that you're one step ahead of your children. Not in a manipulative type of way, but, they need to feel that you are in *control*, and know what's going on. This will definitely help with the meal chart. If you want to expand and add snack, you can do that as well.

I would love to hear your thoughts back on how this worked out for you. Any successes, or failures, or struggles, on the meal chart thing. We have gone over a whole lot of content here. I don't want to keep us much longer, because we're going over our time. We did have a lot today. Next week, I would like to hear back from you on your action sheets and how you tackled your three challenges, or even just one challenge; how that's going. Any feedback on the meal plan; if you want to go ahead and put that into motion, or just start thinking about filling that out.

We're going to talk about the accountability calendar next week. We're going to put everything all together. I'm giving you these pieces as we go, so you can sync and tweak and do little bits and parts. And then, we're going to put it all together into one big rhythm, and an accountability calendar so that you can keep track of everything, and you'll get that next week. We're also going to talk about boundaries, self care and getting support. Also, like I was saying earlier, refueling our own tanks. Because if we don't have that, it's going to be really hard for us to keep nourishing and not being resentful and wanting to help and care for our families, if we're feeling like we're not getting cared for.

We're going to have a lot again next week. I can't believe next week is our last class already. I'd love to hear back from you.

I also want to just put this out too, as well. If I am going to offer to just the group here, for this Path to Rhythm course. If you would like to do any further – if you need to get further support and would like to do a one-on-one coaching, or mentoring with me, I will offer that to the group. If you are interested, I'm going to do it either through e-coaching, which is through email; we'll email back and forth together. If you have specific questions, and you want to have me look over your meal chart or your rhythm, or anything, any questions talking about



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rhythm. Also, if you want to knock it out altogether and do a half-day rhythm intensive, I do offer those as well, and I will give you a special rate on that, since you're a part of this class.

If you are interested in that, go ahead and email to me: donnaashton@thewaldorfconnection.com, or you can go ahead and email to the support@thewaldorfconnection.com and just say that you're interested in the Rhythm Coaching.

We can talk about what would be best for you; whether it's the e-coaching, or doing the half-day rhythm intensive to really put it all together for you. We can schedule that; I've got a little time over the next few weeks before another program starts. I'll be happy to help you out in a more one-on-one type of way, if you feel that will be beneficial for you. Let me know about that. Let me think if there's anything else here. I think we've gotten everything; all the checklists and all the whatever's. I'd love your feedback. Please meet us over on the forum. If you have any other questions *about* the forum, just email me and let me know. All right! Have a wonderful week. Let me know how it's all going. I will talk to you next week for our Class Four. Thanks so much.
Bye-Bye.

End of call -