

# Please, Make Up Your Bed!

What should be one of the first things one should do when one wakes up in the morning? It should be to make up one's very own bed. For most of us, the "first-things-list" might be a little long--pray, brush your teeth, drink water, go to the bathroom. But for many, one more item must be added—making up one's very own bed. Why is this so important? Some might even think that making up one's bed is trivial or demeaning. In this article, I will seek to stress the utmost importance of making up the bed in which one sleeps first thing in the morning.

A big mistake parents make is not insisting or requiring their children to make up their beds first thing in the morning. Some parents might think it is not important or do not have it on the list of morning priorities. The rush for school or work is a convenient excuse. Here are more poor excuses: There is a helper in the home who makes us the beds, school is more important, he/she wakes up too late before going to school. One teen said: "Why should I make up my bed when I am going to use the bed first thing when I get home from school?" These are all diversion tactics.

Let me make a little clarification. For adults who are married or living with a partner, it is a great idea to agree between each other, as most of us do, that the last one who gets up is the one who makes up the bed. Also, the understanding about collaborative responsibilities in the home facilitates an attitude of cooperation in everything, including making up the bed in the morning.

In this article, my deepest concern is about toddlers to teenagers and even young adults who live at home with their parents. It is common in many homes that these are the ones who do not make up their beds in the morning and are not asked to or required to do so. It is my view this is a great error in parenting or home management.

Why is making your one's bed first thing in the morning so important? Here are four reasons. (1) It's a tool for developing self-discipline. Personal discipline or total self-government is one of the most important tools a parent is to instill in their offspring. It is the foundation needed to face the world. (2) It teaches about the importance of setting priorities. Ignoring the simple or seemingly unimportant things in life prepares the child to ignore proper care of one's environment, orderliness, and a sense of beauty. (3) It teaches about community involvement and team play. Living as though one is a part of a community—home, neighborhood or country—is an integral ingredient of personal growth and comradery. (4) It helps one to understand that starting with the simple tasks in the morning sets the tone for the rest of the day. As inferred in the other three points, when one ignores this simple task, it impacts one's ability to handle the bigger tasks for the rest of the day.

Recently I came across a video by a United States Navy Seal Admiral who was speaking at a Navy Seal graduation. He shared this with the graduate: "The ten lessons he learned from basic shield training." The first lesson he shared was that the first thing in the morning every soldier in training was required to make up his bed. He wondered at first why the soldiers who were being trained to be tough fighters had to do such a seemingly mundane task every morning? It did not take him too long to learn the important lessons. He said to make your bed every morning you will accomplish the first task of everyday. It gives you a sense of pride and encourages you to do another and then another task. That first little task would have multiplied into other important and even more difficult tasks throughout the day. The Admiral also stated that making up one's bed in the morning helps one to appreciate that little things matter. He stressed that if one cannot appreciate the little things, it will be harder to do the more difficult things in life. I loved his ending words: "If you want to change the world, start off by making your bed."

Parents make changes in your home today. Require your children to make up their beds first thing in the morning and to change their own beddings when needed. You will begin preparing your children for the world ahead.

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