

A Maximizing of Efficiencies

There was a time in my life that both at home and working as an author, I worked far too much. That is not the case anymore.

One sunny day in an August (I think it was a Saturday), I noticed a young woman's ad in the paper offering services for Any and Every odd job that came her way. I had experienced an abnormally busy week without any time for myself and felt compelled to respond.

We met a few days later over coffee, during which I fielded her with questions to see if she was compatible with my and my family's lifestyle. Every question I had, brought me closer and closer to the realization that not only could I use her, I could likely give her full time work. Her name was Rebecca and she was in her mid twenties. She was marvelous.

It all started easily enough. Helping clear and wash the dishes, mowing the lawns. Stuff like that. I was quite forgetful at that time in my life and one day Sebastian, our only child, reminded me of a soccer practice that would pull me away from research for a novel I was preoccupied in.

My husband John was already gone grocery shopping.

"Rebecca," I asked, from under my umbrella on the patio. "You don't by any chance have your licence, do you?" It was the only question I had failed to ask over our coffee.

“Why, certainly, Mrs. Callie,” Rebecca answered with the same disarming smile she answered every question with.

She helped assemble his gear and took Sebastian to soccer. They even stopped for ice cream, butterscotch ripple, on the way home. It was a win for everybody involved. After that day, things progressed exponentially.

Instead of just helping to clean up after meals, Rebecca graduated to also cooking what at times were nothing less than six course gourmet feasts. She had spent two summers during her university years studying under a chef in France, in the Poitou region.

Since she was already in the kitchen and that was where Sebastian did his homework after supper, she helped him with his physics and grammar. Rebecca giggled more than once and confessed she had never thought she would have a cause to use her pre-cal theory ever again.

I was stuck head deep into another novel's direction a few days later when John came to me with his pants in one hand, and the front button in the other. In despair, I looked for Rebecca and without saying a word she nodded and had the pants and button reattached quicker than John could say thankyou.

John often wanted help with packing the groceries away, and through nothing less than pure trickery I had him convinced to let Rebecca help and it even evolved to her going with him to the store to get them.

It was near this time I was feeling under the weather one afternoon, (too many martinis I think?) and I remembered I hadn't grabbed the research papers I desperately

needed from my editor's office. They offered to courier it, but I informed them Rebecca would be more than happy to pick them up.

The next day, my health wasn't much better, and I sent Rebecca to return the file. As luck would have it, the elevator she was in while returning the file broke down and through small talk she realized the other person in the elevator was the very client the folder was about! She took the folder and obtained answers to some of the questions I still had.

Needless to say, when she dropped the folder off and explained it to the editors they were nothing less than ecstatic.

With Rebecca's added chores and errands while helping Sebastian's, John's, and even my own lives stream line and become easier and smoother, her freedom to prepare the large meals began to suffer. It was only a short step from that to her John and Sebastian grabbing a meal together while on the way to one of Sebastian's Selects games. (weeks before, with John and Rebecca's help he had made the local rep team. Unfortunately, no one thought to tell me.) In the meantime, my wine got me through and my main novel was quickly adding up to a series of books.

I'm not sure how much time had passed, but eventually Sebastian grew older and quit sports to smoke weed with his friends. By now, John and Rebecca were so used to each other's company that even when I went with them the odd time, I felt like I was the outsider and never knew where to jump in on their conversations. Most of the time I just stayed home. The writing came fast and easy and I had long ago lost all sense of time. Besides, they always brought me takeout.

Rebecca had a quiet moment one day and asked to read the last few pages of my work. This is something normally seen as unprofessional, but Rebecca confessed she had long had an interest in writing prose but never had the confidence to do so.

I gave her the last thirty pages I had written and advised her to see what ideas it gave her.

She came back a few hours later. "Mrs. Callie, I love it. Do you think you may consider having the judge come back after he's retired to settle the score?" I confessed I hadn't thought that far ahead, but in reality her idea was much better than what mine had currently been.

I gave her an old laptop and told her to see what she could do. She did and has been writing for me on my behalf ever since. Not sure if I have said this yet or not, but back then I always had my wine to keep me busy anyways.

Rebecca soon got to the point that her and John hired her own small job assistant, but they made sure they only gave her fifteen to twenty hours a week. Not the two hundred I often gave Rebecca.

Rebecca went from taking my notes at the many writing conferences I missed to becoming a key-note speaker at some of them. So good were her notes she took for me.

Normally people get raises as they progress in tenure and ability. But not Rebecca. She actually insisted on scaling her pay back to the point where she was basically here for free.

“I enjoy your life so much I feel guilty getting paid to do it,” she whispered to me one afternoon as we soaked our feet in the pool. I couldn’t disagree with her, as my life was pretty good.

I came to spend less and less time on the deck and more and more time in my room. The effort to go out just wasn’t worth it. Besides, Rebecca had all my bases covered.

I lay here now, and hear what sounds like rain outside, but with the tubes going in and out of me transporting food and waste. I find it much easier to simply stay in bed. My muscles are so atrophied I’m not even sure I could get to the window if I wanted to.

I don’t get many visitors anymore. Which is too bad. People’s time becomes a lot freer if they consider getting a personal assistant like I did. At least Rebecca comes everyday, cleaning my tubes and administering my food. She has always had my back. Even John comes occasionally.

Sebastian has long since moved away. Exactly when I’m not sure, as his visits past the living room and all the way to see me prior to that were scarce at the best of times. He does come home to visit occasionally. Sometimes while at the house he comes to see me also. He has a wife and small child, a girl he named Callie, after me. Rebecca Callie.

The sound of my machines have long ago irritated John to the point of him sleeping upstairs. Sometimes during the night I can almost hear footsteps going back and forth. Nobody has mice that big.

I'm writing my memoirs now- as every successful author should. Well, Rebecca is, under my name, as me, on my behalf. I hear she is doing well with it.