

## MRS. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S OWN PROGRAM

July 16, 1940

Description: Broadcast time 1:15-1:30 PM over the NBC Red Network. ER responds to questions regarding women's proper role in society and whether or not women should pursue careers outside the home.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Ben Grauer, NBC Announcer

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(15:46)

[Ben Grauer:] This is *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program*, presented by the makers of SweetHeart Soap.

[Theme music 15:53-16:17]

[Ben Grauer:] It's listening time, America. Time to pause in whatever else you're doing and join in another friendly visit with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. Today our gracious visitor joins us from Hyde Park by special arrangement of the makers of SweetHeart Soap, who today offer you a splendid opportunity to save money. But first, we present Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

[ER: Good day, Ladies and gentlemen. One of the many questions which have come to me as a result of these broadcasts is, "Should daughters be trained for business and the professions, or should they be taught that marriage is their best career?" I heard Dr. Morgan [Margaret] Mead, a well-known anthropologist, say the other day, that women had only recently reached a point in civilization where they could be sufficiently free from their biological function of child-bearing and child-rearing to allow them an opportunity for development along lines which have long been open to men. Women, said Dr. Mead, could now care for their children without carrying them on their backs or in their arms every minute, and the drudgery of the home had been lightened by machinery so that women could make a contribution in science and art to the wealth of the nation.

The woman has always been tied down, not so much for the actual bearing of the baby, but by the fact that she's had to care for that baby during its years of helplessness. Some women are still tied down in just the same way, not because they could not be free, but because in the development of our system of civilization we have allowed poverty to enclose human beings. Poverty has made it impossible for many women to obtain the proper kind of physical development through good food and medical care, and has deprived them of an opportunity for education and training with which to earn the money that could allow them to use these modern inventions that are designed to free mankind for new and different endeavors.

(18:35)

There was a time in civilization when men were hampered by the need for making rough tools with which to create the shelter for the family and to obtain the food. Therefore, they went little beyond this endeavor because in itself it consumed most of their time and energies. Gradually, however, the development of science and machinery has freed the men, but this development of machinery, until fairly recently, did very little to free women in the home. They had, therefore, less opportunity for development in the arts, in the sciences, and general culture. Opportunities are opening up for women today, however, and the question seems to be not whether women can make contributions, but how they may best make their contributions. It need not be in competition with men. It should be a complementary contribution,

growing out of their past experience and extending into the world of today along the lines in which they've had such long training in the home. (19:49)

People forget that much of the work which was done in our grandmothers' homes has now moved out into the realm of business. For instance, we used to make the wool, the cotton, the linen, and the clothes for the family, the sheets for the beds. The candles were all made in the home. Soap was made in the home. All of the food was not only prepared in the home, but grown and cured and canned during the summer months for future use. So, women's entry into business is really simply a question of following her traditional work. The work which she has always done of feeding, clothing the family, and making the home livable. She follows it out into the business world.

One of the illustrations that Dr. Mead gave was the fact that women in the home confronted with the question of a problem child who does not get on with his brothers and sisters and creates a storm center, do not as a rule take that child and throw him out of a window or lock him up in a cellar closet. They patiently train and guide him until he grows up to be a more sensible human being with the ability to live among his neighbors in a friendly way. Might this have some bearing on the contribution which women might make in the field of international relationship? It is true that her treatment of children in the home is not always crowned with success, but that is not always the woman's fault either. Our criminals are a shining example of failures, but they would not exist if we had not created a world which failed to grasp the fact that the criminal is the outward and visible sign of the breakdown in civilization. (21:47)

Each of these failures is tied to our lack of success in giving all people a decent minimum standard of living. One cannot expect a normal race of people to grow in unclean, unsanitary surroundings with poor food, no medical care, and in constant touch with the lowest side of human nature. We talk constantly about the impossibility of changing human nature and it probably is impossible to change it if people continue to live under the same old handicaps which have produced selfish, greedy people all through the past years.

If women are allowed now to make their full contribution, I think we will find that they will grasp the needs for change very rapidly. Perhaps they will complement the work of their husbands by laying greater emphasis on these social changes as being the necessary foundation for a better future civilization. We may find that the only way to develop the human being so he does not become a criminal and does not succumb to the temptation to use physical force and ultimately war to settle the problems of the world is through social changes which eliminate the sore spots in our present civilization.

And now, let us pause a moment to hear a few words from our announcer. (23:26)

[Ben Grauer:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt. Ladies, I'd like to tell you how only a penny can give you pleasure many times a day for many days to come. Right now, just one penny buys a full-size cake of pure, delicately fragrant SweetHeart Soap with every three at the regular low price. A big, generous oval cake of the soap that is highly recommended even for young babies' tender skin because it's so pure and therefore so gentle. The soap you'll enjoy as long as it lasts, and each big cake of SweetHeart Soap lasts amazingly. Where do you get this remarkable bargain? At your favorite store. Ask for SweetHeart Soap, the soap that agrees with your skin. And remember in the one cent sale, the more SweetHeart Soap you buy, the more money you save. And now the microphone is again yours, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. (24:22)

[ER:] No one can tell a woman that she has any function more important in life than that of childbearing and the creation of a home. For the race dies out if these two things do not continue. But the physical care of the home and of the children no longer need drain the strength and the health and the mind of women. She can develop in many other ways. Her genius may flower today and there is every reason to believe that she has as varied capacities as the man. It is fairly evident that in our modern society, woman

must be prepared to do her share of wage-earning. Not only because the things desired by human beings have increased but also because many women desire that outlet for their energies. A woman must learn to do her household tasks efficiently, to plan her home, to give her children scientific care. Therefore, the education of women today must be varied and thorough to be satisfactory. She must be an accomplished homemaker and her mind must be well-trained, her aptitudes exploited because they may later be developed for wage-earning or productive activity outside the home.

Therefore, the girls must be carefully studied by both parents and teachers.

The opportunities for education of young women today are excellent. Even in the fields of higher education there are countless numbers of excellent universities, both co-educational, and for women only. Many of these are state institutions which permit young women whose families have modest incomes to carry their studies as far as they desire. In these schools, modern girls are also afforded the opportunity of physical development. This is reflected in the increasing role of women in athletics such as tennis, golf, horseback riding, swimming and so forth. Our universities have also kept up with the changing function of women in world affairs. Social service, domestic economy, child psychology -- many other fields of learning have been added to the curriculum of women's schools. (26:40)

In the totalitarian governments, a reaction has set in which has, of course, occurred many times before in the lives of women. The girls and women are being shoved back into the home and into a position subordinate to the men. Here in the United States, we seem to have a greater opportunity to prove that through education, a woman can perform all the tasks imposed upon her in the totalitarian government and still make a contribution to the greater strength and development of civilization through a democratic way of life. Because the advantages for women in a democracy are so obvious when compared with the drudgery of women under dictatorships, women must do everything to preserve the democratic way of life. The curtailment of women's rights in totalitarian societies has only been possible when women relaxed their vigilance and concern about their freedom.

Women are or should be concerned with the improvement of the individual -- his health, his education, his recreation, his ability to earn, his right to a free existence which can only be free when there is economic security, and all these things are the basis for democracy. It would seem that women have a tremendous task in order to really achieve equality of opportunity for there is not only the problem of continuing to bear and raise children and of making healthier and happier homes. All of that must be done in addition to securing a well-rounded education, learning to use their business and professional abilities, and taking an active part in local and national government. In other words, it would seem that women have to do everything that men require to prepare themselves in the business world in addition to the traditional duties of women in the home, but even such an ambitious task for women is not impossible.

The peace which a democracy strives to bring about among nations is no different from the peace which a woman strives to bring about in her own home. The way of life in a democracy is just an extension of what goes on in a really good home. So in bringing up our girls today we should bear this fact in mind. They have a new opportunity and should be given every assistance in preparing themselves to use it to the utmost. (28:52)

[Ben Grauer:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt. Ladies, there aren't any ifs, buts, or ands about the big penny sale on SweetHeart Soap. You get one full-size cake for one penny with every three cakes at the regular low price. You are not limited as to quantity. The more you buy, the more you save. And the cake you get for a penny is exactly like the other three: same handy oval shape, same lovely mild fragrance, same wonderful purity. It is our sincere hope that every one of our listeners will take advantage of this remarkable offer. Many thousands of loyal friends of SweetHeart Soap will tell you there's no other soap like it. So see for yourself today. Treat yourself to a good supply of this fine, pure soap, and you'll also

save a substantial amount of money. At favorite dealers everywhere, it's SweetHeart Soap, the soap that agrees with your skin.

[Theme music 29:48-29:59]

[Ben Grauer:] [Music continues softly] Next Thursday at this same time, over this same station, Mrs. Roosevelt again comes to call on her countless friends all over America. We hope every one of you will be with us. Meantime, get big dividends on your pennies in the sensational penny sale on the fine product that brings you these programs: SweetHeart Soap, famous for fifty years as the soap that agrees with your skin. And now it's goodbye until next Thursday, when you'll again hear [Music swells, cuts] *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program*. This is Ben Grauer speaking. (30:31)

[NBC Announcer:] This is the National Broadcasting Company.

[NBC Chimes]

(30:39)

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