

marriage—but Dinah's determined that it won't rob her of her children's love, too

"I used to sing a song called 'I'm Too Busy,'" she answered. "It tells of a mother who asks where her children are. Suddenly she realizes it was 20 years ago since they played around the house—that they're gone! She'd been too busy even to learn how to play with them. One day I looked around and found myself in the same situation as the woman I'd been singing about. Missy was 14 and in high school—a beautiful, wonderful young lady. I wanted to get to know her and spend time with her before it was too late. And Jody was growing up, too; he was getting so tall and big, and was going into the second grade.

"A career in television is very demanding. While at the studio I used to say, 'I want to be sure I'm home when Missy and Jody get there.' When I got home, I'd feel I had left everything undone at the studio. I was always thinking I should be somewhere else. I never seemed to be around in an emergency—and whenever children need you, it's an emergency. Missy would come home from school with some emotional problem, and I wasn't there to listen and give her advice when she needed it most. By the time she saw me at 6 o'clock, she'd talked it over with someone else.

"Nowadays, the demands on my time are Missy's and Jody's. It isn't just going to PTA meetings, and getting up and having breakfast together. It's that vital moment when you have to be there, or you don't get another crack at it. If I miss those precious moments, I won't have been a real mother."

Her Own Childhood Not Happy

There's another reason why Dinah is making an effort to be close to her children. "I was never close to my own mother. She was very popular, very outgoing—a champion golfer, an expert bridge player, a member of all the PTAs. She was always tied up with so many things. But there was never a time when she and I sat together and just talked. She died when I was 14; yet the only thing I can remember is that she kept me from doing everything I wanted to do, I don't want Missy and Jody to remember me like that."

There has been speculation that Dinah's decision was influenced by romantic motives. One source had her engaged to a New York carpet manufacturer, another to a good-looking tennis pro and building contractor, Maurice Smith.

Dinah emphatically denied any seriousness about the manufacturer but readily admitted that Smith was her constant companion.

Asked point-blank whether she planned to marry him within the next month as had been reported, she answered, "I really don't know, but I do know that I'm not the kind of person who could ever stay single; the children need someone, and I need someone. But I haven't made any definite plans to get married. I want it to be exactly right." She hesitated. "I was so sure everything was right before—you can't be impulsive at my age."

Dinah admitted that her professional life

might have caused her marriage with George Montgomery to fail, but she insists she is not through with her career for good. "I may do an occasional special, and I love doing club dates and other personal appearances. But I don't think guest shots are fun, and right now I don't even want to think about doing a regular weekly tv show again."

Dinah often had considered quitting tv. "When Missy was born, I really didn't want to work any more. But people around me said, 'It doesn't take that much time.'

"I always live for whatever I'm doing at the moment. When I work, I love every minute of it. When I'm not working, I feel I never want to go back. That's probably why I didn't realize how much time my career took away from my family—until I became aware how much my children resented it.

"Shortly after Missy learned to talk, I took her for a ride one day. While driving along, she suddenly objected to my singing in the car.



Dinah's main goal today is to spend more time with children Jody and Missy, now 9 and 14.

"Don't, Mommy, please don't sing," she pleaded and started to cry. "When Mommy sing, Mommy go to the studio."

"When she was a little older, we went to New York's Madison Square Garden one day. People kept leaning over her, passing papers to me to sign right in front of her face. Finally she stood up, put her hands on her hips, and shouted: 'She's not Dinah Shore today, she's my Mom, so please leave her alone!' I nearly died."

Missy didn't even like Dinah to pick her up at school in Beverly Hills, because the other

children would invariably point out, "Hey, your Mom's outside." But Dinah does it in Palm Springs, and Missy doesn't mind as much. "Maybe it's because here her friends don't seem to care," Dinah said.

Surprisingly, Dinah feels that her voluntary retirement will help her mature as a person. "A performer is like a child who has to be praised all the time, and if you prolong that feeling and give praise for every little thing, that child never matures. It hurts me deeply to be criticized, as it does a child.

"Actually, the press has been very kind to me. The only criticism was that I supposedly appeared 'too good' on my show. I never meant for people to get that picture of me. I get as tired and angry as anyone else. But when I do, I don't throw hairbrushes, as one writer recently claimed. I get coldly silent and stiff.

"But not on my show! That would be entirely contrary to the way I was brought up. My parents never quarreled in front of strangers; they taught me that undue display of anger was rudeness and upset other people. But they did quarrel in front of me till I was embarrassed. Sometimes I'd hear such terrible scenes between them that I would sit and shake. That's why I never brought my own problems home."

"I'm Crying for You, Mommy!"

Dinah tried hard to hide the difficulties between her and George from the children. In retrospect, she is not sure it was wise. "I have learned it is not necessarily scarring to a child's psyche to see such emotions. I have seen friends bare their feelings in front of their children, and it hasn't hurt the children."

Dinah will never forget how Missy and Jody reacted when they found out she was leaving George. "They're used to this kind of thing out here because so many of their friends come from divorced homes, but they found it hard to believe it was happening to our family. When I told Missy about it, she started to cry. I told her to go ahead and have a good cry, that I had, too." But Dinah was stunned into silence when her daughter sobbed, "I'm not crying for me, Mommy—I'm crying for you!"

After all that has happened to Dinah in recent months, after the self-reproach, the unhappiness, and now the struggle for readjustment, would she want her children to follow their parents into show business?

"Missy is tremendously talented," Dinah reasoned. "She paints and dances. But right now she is so fascinated by being a teen-ager, she's not interested in a career. But if she wants it, that's fine. I have no apologies for having been in show business. As for Jody, he wants to wear the same kind of T shirt as the other boys and have the handlebars on his bike turned just as they do—he just doesn't want to be different. I'm not worried about them any more; they're going to be all right."

And so, by all indications, will Dinah. Her decision to take time off from work seems to be the wisest choice she has made in years!