

It's not about having time.It's about making time.



THE 3 MAIN REASONS TO BETTER USE YOUR TIME NOW!

MARC N.

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Yourself is the most precious gift of all. How are you treating your gift? There are many things you can do to become a better person. In this course, we discuss a few aspects of how you could become a better person.

For starters, you can maximise your family time. Family is one of the strongest support systems you can have. Having a good bond with your family can really make a huge difference to your life. We all don't spend as much time as we should with our families. So the first part of the course is about how we can spend more time with our family, its benefits and how this habit will reward our life.

The second part is about volunteering. Many of us live about in our day and forget our role to contribute to helping others. There are lots of benefits to volunteering and lots of tips about how you can start volunteering discussed in the second part.

The third part of the course is about personal development and growth. What is life if you don't grow? There are numerous things you can do to help yourself develop and grow.

The last part of the course is about time management. Time is one of the most essential assets you have. If you learn how to divide and manage your time, you could become a very productive person with lots of achievements.

Overall, the different parts in this course are designed to help you become a well rounded, improved and refined person from many aspects such as personally, family wise, socially and time wise.

PART I : FAMILY TIME

Introduction

The Dictionary definition of **family** is; a basic social unit consisting of parents and their children, considered as a group, whether dwelling together or not. The modern contemporary world has seen the evolution of this word family to mean a group of people (not necessarily related by blood) who gather at a particular home and spend most of their time there. They always end up together as the day goes on, and eventually forget about everyone else they used to associate with.

On the other hand, **Time** in this instance simply implies to a point of time as measured in hours and minutes or the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present and future regarded as a whole.

Family time is therefore when a group of people who consider themselves family come together to recollect the events of their day together. All distractions like radio and mobile phones have to be turned off and stowed away during family time.

The modern culture tends to work against family time with social forces working to keep us apart. This requires individuals to put in more effort into spending time together. The media especially social media has made one on one communication almost impossible with people more concerned about maintaining their virtual friends and virtual lives more than spending time with their families.

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The work structures have also become more fluid in today's society with more organizations walking away from the 'eight to five' system into a 'work wherever you are' system so long as maximum productivity is attained. This can either mean more time to spend with your family or family time converted into work time. The lack of structure may seep into your sleeping routine and before you know it you find yourself low on sleep, constantly drained and in need of down time just to be by yourself.

In both instances, family time often ends up being compromised. Recognizing that you need family time is the first step. The next is to create work schedules, school schedules, evening schedules, weekend schedules and holiday schedules.

What it means to spend quality time with someone

“Quality time is giving someone your undivided attention. I don't mean sitting on the couch watching television. I mean sitting on the couch with the TV off, looking at each other and talking, and giving each other your undivided attention.” Gary Chapman, The 5 Love Languages

The saying men are from Mars and women from Venus can be applied in this instance because spending quality time has a different meaning to both genders. For most men, watching a game, talking about their favorite sport and politics or simply being in the same room drinking beer and exchanging a few words are the constituents of quality time together.

For women, spending quality time requires much more. It means undivided attention, where all focus is on her. You have to be there for her and with her. There can be no distractions from phones, TV, emails or any other thing.

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Many people confuse sharing space with spending quality time. Just because we live together does not mean we are spending time together. An example is when your children keep asking for something acting like they are desperate for your attention when in real sense ‘you just spent the entire day together’. While you might have been physically present, your mind may have been far away and you might not have been involved in the here and now and tried to know what’s happening in the child’s life.



Evaluate how much quality time with your family

Use the definition of quality time to calculate how many hours you spend with your family per week. It is important to make sure you spend quality time collectively as a family while also trying to allocate special quality one on one time to allow family members to open up to you about things that may be personal to them or to do with their interests are only enjoyed by them among the other family members.

Evaluate how much quality time per week do you spend collectively as a family and how much personal quality time you spend with each member of your family/partner.



Why spending time with your family may be difficult

Finding quality time to spend together as a family is hard. There are so many things for both the parents and the children to do in a day that one might feel like 24 hours is just not enough. Getting everyone in one place especially during the week can be quite the task meaning family time is often left for the weekend

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or holidays. Many agree that family time is of great value but incorporating it into their daily routines still proves to be difficult for various reasons such as;

- Work schedules – someone has to put food on the table. This sometimes means crazy schedules leaving the parents with barely enough time for themselves and just enough to keep the family afloat and functional. Some parents may also have different work shifts meaning that they are barely in the house at the same time.
- Homework – The kids always have homework to do, after this it is eat, go to bed and wake up tomorrow to repeat all this all over.
- Divorce – Divorce or separation always mean that the children are constantly operating from two homes. Creating time where both parents are available for the child is sometimes impossible.
- Technology – especially mobile phones. We are living in a world where your phone is everything. Everyone is always glued to their screens doing God knows what trying to keep up with the rest of the world but your family.



Make a list of all the obstacles preventing you from spending quality time with your family.

After knowing some of the possible causes for preventing you from spending quality family time, it is important to identify the possible obstacles in your life. Are you going through a divorce or another stressor in your life that makes you emotionally unavailable? Or you busy? Why? Do you have so much to do? Or do you have poor time management. Depending on the cause, you can find a

solution to address the issue. For example, psychotherapy and counseling can help you with emotional problems. Delegation and time management can help you with always being busy etc.

The first step in overcoming obstacles is to identify them.



Importance of spending time with your family

We all know the importance of a healthy family. A critical factor in attaining this is family time. Family time helps to create strong bonds, love and deeper connections and a good functional relationship among family members. It also helps instill a sense of security, helps us cope with challenges, build family values and boost confidence in children.

Some might view time spent with family as a waste of time that could otherwise be put into use doing other ‘productive’ things like work and get more money. This notion is far from the truth as time spent with family is like a precious jewel that stays embed in the memory forever.

To create stronger bonds

As human beings, we all need a sense of belonging. Developing ties and bonds with your family gives you a sense of security and the feeling that you have someone you can look up to or turn to for advice or just to talk. Spending time together gives an opportunity for strong family bonds to develop.

To teach children valuable life lessons

School cannot teach your child all they need to know about life. If you do not teach your children at home, they will learn it elsewhere. They might have to end up learning through pain or going about it the wrong way. When faced with challenges, you could find ways of involving the kids to find a solution or

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having a discussion with them so they too can understand and know how to best deal with situations of life.

Just so you can talk and listen

When you spend time together, regardless of the differences in age, you will have to talk to each other. This helps to see the world from each other's point of view and leads to better understanding of each other. As a parent, it is possible to be a parent and also your child's friend if you take time to talk and listen to them. Talking directly to your kids is vital especially to the teenagers who are often dealing with a lot in terms of identity and pressure to conform to what is considered 'cool'.

To show interest in each other's life

Spending quality time as a family provides the opportunity to ask what each family member has done during the day. This not only shows interest in each other but also gives room for appreciation, praise, empathy, encouragement and affection. If for example your spouse had a difficult day at work or your child at school, you could give them a hug or do thoughtful and kind gestures to make them feel better. Family time also provides room to celebrate the little things in life and laugh about funny things making your heart lighter and ready to face whatever life brings your way.

To instill important family values

There are so many 'weird' things happening in today's society with people more open to experimenting with new things. Without proper family values, children can end up being misled into following a wrong path. As a parent, you are your child's first role model. Children imitate what they see in their parents. Spending time together helps impart a sense of self-worth to the children and helps the parent instill positive family values. If you are the type of parent who

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always finds time to spend with the family regardless of how busy you are, your child will grow up knowing that this is the right way and in future emulate this with their own families.

To share house chores

Spending time together can mean that everyone is involved in the daily activities of the house. Doing these activities together as a unit, gives more room for bonding. As parents, allowing your kids to perform certain tasks under your supervision not only gives you space to interact with them but also fosters a sense of responsibility. Sharing chores also creates a feeling of inter-dependence on each other which develops trust and intimacy.



Make a list of all the possible rewards from spending quality time with your family.

When you start seeing the benefit of spending time with your family, you will be motivated as now you see all the potential benefits. Find out what is the most rewarding thing about spending quality time with your family.

The list is highly personal and subjective as your priorities and preferences are unique to you. So feel free to state the things that truly fulfill and satisfy you when you spend quality time.

Encourage your family members to do their own list and keep it in a visible space so that you could see it when you feel like skipped family time.



How to spend more time with your family

Different families enjoy doing different things, what works for one might not work for all. It is important to find an activity that your family enjoys doing and make a tradition of it. For example, a family's idea of spending time together may involve a day in the backyard, grilling meat and bonding over drinks while the children run around playing. Another family's idea of spending quality time together may be spending a whole day out in the beach. You do not have to wait for such big days that involve meticulous planning to have quality time with your family. A little adjusting here and there may go a long way.

Family calendar

This can go in two ways; if you are the type of person who is always busy and probably has the next three months of life planned at all times then it is time to reassess your commitments and prioritize time for the family as it is equally important. Think about the things you could take off the calendar or do in less time and replace these with family time doing this that you enjoy with loved ones.

If you are the type of person who never plans for anything but at the same time find yourself too 'busy' for family time, then you could embrace the calendar and start planning for family time. Set time aside for family; could be family hour, weekend getaway or something as simple as helping your kids with homework or cooking with your spouse.



Make sure at the beginning of the week that you mark any important family occasions (son's soccer match, Daughters' rehearsals, etc) and schedule your

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week around it. Make sure those family slots are locked away and known to you so that you don't miss out on family time.



Dinners as a family

Food brings people together. Food makes people happy. Food makes people closer. Why not have more mealtimes together as a family? Home cooked meals give even more time to catch up on the day's activities before you sit down and enjoy the food. Eating together shows oneness and unity. Committing to this every single night might be difficult because of various reasons. You could however try eating together two or three nights a week and see how you progress from there.

Family hour

In a family where everybody is always busy doing their own thing, setting up a 'family hour' may be helpful in spending time together. You could choose a time that is most convenient for everyone probably in the evenings. During this hour, all phones are kept away and the TV is shut off. You can then all talk about the day you had or spend this time doing a fun activity. With only one hour to bond, there is still plenty of time to do other housework and for the children to do their homework or have their own 'me' time.

Movie nights or game nights

Having the time to do daily activities may not be practical for some families. In such an instance, the family may set aside one night every week, fortnight or month to spend as a family. They could plan fun games for this night or on a slow night just rent a movie and watch together as a family. Being together like

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this doing something that you enjoy brings the family closer and constitutes quality time spent together.



Make a list of movies and board games that is commonly enjoyed by many members of your family members.



Weekend getaways – holidays

More often than not we find ourselves suffocated by the routine that is our lives. Sometimes you just feel like switching the off button and taking a break before you go back to the daily grind. This is good for your mental health and can also be beneficial to your family life. You can take a weekend off to just relax with your family at home, go the park, shop at the mall etc. You could also save up and plan a holiday getaway for the family. This will give you a chance to bond and make fun memories. You could make this an annual family tradition.



Make a list of dream destinations that would be enjoyed by many members of your family members. You can create a target goal of hours of quality time spent and the more the hours, the better the destination.



Spending time with your wife for a healthy family

Before the kids come along, there is just the husband and wife. For these two to raise a healthy family, they have to set aside time alone for their own intimacy, to discuss the kids, finances and other matters. This ensures that they present a united front when they are with the children. The children can always tell when

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there is a strain between their parents and this impact negatively on any family time that has been planned.

Spending quality time together with your wife is an essential part of keeping a family happy and connected. This quality time can be as little as just 20 minutes of an entire day but it will go a long way in having a healthy family. What matters is that you keep this constant enough to keep the relationship feeling good. As a couple, you should not spend all your free time with your children such that you lose all touch with each other.

Your children are important but so is your relationship with each other. If your closeness as a couple no longer exists chances are that you will not stick together. In case you end up separated or divorce, it is the children that suffer the most.

“It’s not so much about where you go or what you do, but how you make each other feel while doing it. As a man, it’s your responsibility to lead the way and create a mood where you both enjoy spending time together. One of the easiest ways to do that is to focus on trying to smile, laugh and joke around more than you usually do. When you do that, you will find that it’s much easier to spend quality time together without getting bored, frustrated or ending up in an argument.” Dan Bacon, Author of the Modern Man.

Family time and technology

Most people will argue that the numerous technological innovations have made family time impossible as technology is our biggest source of distraction especially since people are often glued to their phones and computers. While

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this can be true, there are ways you can use technology to work for you and make family time more fun and pleasurable.

Instead of using your phones as a way to avoid talking to each other, you can use it to document and capture memories of the time spent together as a family. You can upload photos and videos of fun family times on twitter, facebook and Instagram, That way both sides win; you get have family time and still maintain your virtual social life.

The internet can also be a source of endless fun ideas and games to play as a family. You can research and learn from other people how they make family time work for them. With new ideas and change of games, family time becomes more fun instead of being a ‘boring, monotonous and mandatory time that you have to spend with your family’.



Make a list of internet based activities and games that can be done with family.

There are many games that are designed to be played by family, look for suitable games such as trivia quizzes, puzzles, scrabble etc and much more and make sure to play those together often to build a competitive spirit.

Getting your children’s attention during family time may prove to be a task as with every notification ping from their phone they will want to check. It is good to know that there are apps available to control your child’s use of their phone. The FamilyTime parental control app puts parents directly in control how their teens use their Android devices. With this app you can simply lock the child’s phone and enable the family to enjoy a fun Family Time.



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