



Inspirational Emails

Get a Fresh Start with Your Family

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If you're like many people with kids, you consistently come home too drained or on edge to be as resourceful with your kids as you'd like to be. Instead of being creative, understanding, patient and kind, you're sharp, angry or unavailable (either physically or emotionally). While this is perfectly natural given that too many things demand our attention, putting the kids last isn't the answer. What to do, then?



We all feel like we need more time in our days. And finding more time in our days is, in fact, the answer. So what's the secret? Obviously, we need to carefully look for what we can take *out* of our days that eats up time without giving worthwhile value in return.

Before we proceed, let's review again why we need to cut certain things out. Time is the only commodity we can't replace; it's even more irreplaceable than things like financial loss. We need more time for our children; we need more time for ourselves as well. When we allow time to let ourselves rest, think and have a few minutes of undisturbed reflection, meditation or pleasure during the day, we're much better at coping with the pressures and demands of our active families than if we run virtually exhausted all the time.



And speaking of personal time, you need to schedule that on your calendar, at least weekly, or it simply won't happen. The same goes for family time. What could be more important? If your family and your own personal welfare are the most important things in your life, then why aren't you calendaring those things ahead of all the busy work errands and even business appointments? You and your family come first—that's **rule number one** .

Rule number two: Eliminate or consolidate. How much time do you spend every day on activities (talking to the neighbors, talking on the phone or watching TV, etc.) that aren't necessarily productive or useful? You really don't know until you take stock. I recommend that every day you jot down how much time you spend on these types of distractions. By the end of the month, you may be shocked at how much time they take up. So eliminate them.

If you have lots of errands to run and seem to run helter-skelter from one end of town to the other and back again, learn to think about your errands and routines well in advance. Map out what you may need during the week, so you can get everything you need at one end of town and not have to run back to the other end. Consolidate as many trips as you can. Figure out if you can get other parents to join in if kids need to get to various events.

Bottom line : take control of your life by first taking control of your time. Prioritize what is really important: yourself, your family, your spiritual growth, etc.

P.S. If you need help prioritizing what is really important, read Steven Covey's wonderful book, *First Things First*.

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