

Setting Your Priorities: Finding Balance in Family Life

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Are you living a balanced life, with time and energy devoted to what is most important? Do you find yourself moving from one activity to another without taking a breath? If you do not feel as though you are in charge of your life, it may be time to slow down and re-prioritize. Complete the following steps and you will be on your way to living a more balanced life!

Make a commitment to change. Most personal change is a choice. It involves being tired of the old way and being motivated to do something different. If you feel frazzled and out of control, commit to changing the way you do things. You will not ever get more time in a day, but you can use your time more wisely, doing what is important.

Keep track of what you are doing now. Have each family member keep a log of activities for a typical week. Include sports and social activities, meals, housework, and TV watching. You will probably find time in your day that you are wasting on things that do not fit with your values and priorities.

Write down your priorities. As a family, sit down and talk about what is most important to you in terms of values and activities. This could be an extremely enlightening conversation in which you learn a lot about each other. Try to come up with individual and family lists. Are you spending your time and energy on what is most important? Take a hard look at what you are doing. Do you need to give something up in order to balance your life better? Do you have time to slow down and enjoy your life and your family? Fill in your calendar first with what is most important. For example, if family meals are a priority, your kids may not be able to participate in so many activities.

Make your priorities visible. When you are finished, make sure all family members are aware of and exposed to the priorities on a daily basis. Consider posting a list of priorities on your refrigerator, your computer desk or by your phone so everyone can see it and be reminded of the values.

Re-evaluate your priorities at least quarterly. As children grow, things change. Make sure to come together to look at how everyone is doing and see if priorities or activities need to change. It will be an opportunity to connect as a family about important topics.

As you begin to feel more in control of your family life, you will find that you have time to do what is important and that other, less important things will wait. It is easy to get caught doing what you feel is urgent and put off those things that matter, such as maintaining and building strong relationships. If you take these steps, you will not look back later and realize that you did not give what was most important the energy and time it needed; instead, you will have a balanced life!