
HEART AND SOUL CONVERSATIONS

QUALITY TIME WITH THE FAMILY

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Introduction

"Human beings have always lived in families from the beginning of time. The family is a pillar of society, as it influences the way society is structured, organised and functions. The family remains central in the lives of its members, from birth to death, and provides them, among others, with psycho-emotional and economic support. The family has been and continues to be the principal institution in society, playing a vital role in socialisation,

nurturing and care, Furthermore, the family continues to be a cornerstone of human civilisation,....." (Government Gazette, 2011).

What is quality time?: "Quality time" is time that you spend with your family members, someone you're in a relationship with, or really close friends. It's time that you spend doing things together, like talking, playing sports together, or going out somewhere together.

HOW MUCH TIME IS FAMILY TIME?

In a SA study done in 2017 of Young Families Become Mindful of their Possibilities Through the Appreciation of their Family Life, the top priority was Family Time, spending time together as a family was very important to all the families and they yearned to spend more time together as a family.

“They dreamed to have more planned activities together as a family, such as holidays, weekends away, and doing things together such as walking, fishing and cycling. They also appreciated special family occasions and family gatherings with the extended family. All the young parents expressed that they realised that if they wanted to be present in their children's lives, they had to consciously plan activities to spend time together as a family. [Koen et al. \(2012:346\)](#) confirm family togetherness as the most prominent theme in a study exploring family mental health in South Africa. [Daly \(2001:283\)](#) also found that the experience of a scarcity of family time was a common factor among working parents.”

One interesting article said “All Family Time Is Quality Time”, so every little bit counts ...?

What we need to understand is, Why Family Time Is Important.

WHY IS FAMILY TIME IMPORTANT?

1. Family Builds A Strong Bond

Your children need to feel part of a system and need to feel connected. Most people need to have a relationship of some sort to feel like they belong and feel a sense of security, to feel loved and nurtured and cared for. Some children turn to gangs or groups that make them feel welcomed and accepted. Therefore children need to feel a sense of security and trust and close bond with family and know they have someone to turn or look up to.

2. Importance of Talking and Listening and How it Improves Social Skills and Interactions

Spending time with family allows for sharing, interacting, bonding, talking and listening to each other which in turn teaches respect, social skills and interactions. As parents need to be listened to by their children, parents also need to listen to their children. This teaches

the child about respect and empathy. Parents need to learn not to jump in with answers, criticise or jumping in with your own viewpoints all the time. Learn to listen and be involved in the conversation and show interest in the child's conversation. Make the time!

3. Teaches Children Important Lessons In Life

It is important for you to understand that if you as a parent are not there to teach your children life's lessons, they will go elsewhere to "learn" and most probably from their peers which may not always be the most reliable resource or they shall look up information via the internet which may not always have proper filters or they may go to anyone who is friendly enough to offer information, especially if parents are not going to be truthful or honest or reliable.



4. Shows Appreciation, Affection And Encouragement

Remember people want to belong and be part of a system, people want to feel accepted but functional in a system and appreciated. Family members can show affection to each other by giving each other hugs, being praised or being kissed, being thoughtful and being kind. According to studies, teenagers who receive affection and praise from parents are likely to do better at school than those who don't have this experience. Therefore make enough quality family time to ask what each family member has done during the day, and show interest in each other's lives. People find it very easy to criticize than praise. So make an effort to think about the positive in each person and tell your child what goodness you have noticed, besides teaching them these values.

5. Instills Family Values In Your Children

How you as a parent interact and display yourself in front of your children, children will imitate the behaviour you show towards them. If you are an absent parent, too preoccupied or never home, the child will learn that to be normal and may grow up only knowing or understanding that to be the norm and accept that as their own in the future.

Therefore spending family time together instills positive family values and builds a sense of self-worth.

6. Promotes Family Rituals and Traditions

Daily rituals or the little things that you do daily or on special occasions, helps to build a sense of belonging, bond, happiness, and inner security within the family. Daily rituals, like the way you greet each other, or say goodbye, what you do at mealtimes or bedtimes, can all be something to share within your family time. Families benefit from coming together to celebrate occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, or festivals like Christmas, etc. where they learn the traditions about what happens at these times. Research shows that families who are more connected and traditional, live healthier and longer lives.

7. Understanding and Accepting The Differences In Each Person

Family time is essential to appreciate, encourage, and value the differences in each family member, knowing that everyone is special in their own way. Allow each family member to be excited about their personal interests, and show respect and tolerance towards them. Don't pressurize your family members to be like you, or hide their feelings and differences. Instead, let them feel proud to be themselves.

8. Teaches To Manage Relationships

The relationship you build with your child during family time, teaches the child the importance of bonding and connecting and in turn keeps relatives and friends closer. This in turn helps the child to understand that there are people outside the family that they can trust and that they can turn to in times of crisis or fears, therefore building a good support system. It also increases the chances of them making good friends later in life.

9. Teaches to Share Chores or Being Able to Work in a Team Set-Up

Family time is important to teach younger children responsibilities and chores, helping one another and learning to function in a team and also by giving them a chance to do things for themselves, under your supervision. This makes them feel a sense of self-worth, belonging and appreciated. Use adult power wisely, and keep control through humor and encouragement, not with punishments or threats.

10. By Supporting and Having a Better Connection With Your Children, Improves Better School Performance in Children

One of the most overlooked aspects of education today is parental involvement. Many parents don't realize the importance of family time and how important it is to involve themselves in their children's learning.

All parents and family members need to find time and make the effort. Research shows that when parents involve themselves in the family, their children:

1. Get superior grades and test results.
2. Graduate from high school at higher rates.
3. Are most likely to go on to higher education.
4. Have more positive attitudes and behave better.

Spending time with the family can be like reading a bedtime story to your kids, checking their homework, getting involved in PTA, discussing your child's progress with teachers, or anything related to their academic progress. Or it can be as simple as asking your children how their day was at school, but ask every day.

LIST OF THINGS TO DO TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

- Sharing **meals together** without the distraction of cellphones and television
- Play **cards, games or do sports** together, or take a family **walk** with the dog
- **Wrestling, rough and tumble** play or **pillow fighting, Hide and Go Seek**
- Take a **holiday together** or go **camping**
- **Share a hobby**, or create and do art together (scrapbooking, painting...)
- Create a **family night** in the week, where you get together as a family and do creative or fun things
- **Choose a charity** or **volunteer** whom you as family can help and serve
- **Cook together**
- Write **notes** to each other or **motivational or encouraging phrases**
- **Create rituals and traditions** eg: Highs and Lows
- **Listening to** one another's **music**
- Set-up a **picnic or camp indoors**
- **Children Choose Day** (doesn't have to fall on a Tuesday)
- Create a **wish jar**, where everyone places their wishes into, and then there will be a specific day for the family to fulfill that wish
- **Reading Festival**, everyone in the family reads a piece from their favourite story or book and everyone shares their feelings, thoughts and opinions
- Visit **museums** or certain **shows** or attractions that are in town
- Have a **movie night** at home or **technology games night**
- **Night time disco** at home with flashing torches and lumo lights and everyone dances crazy or a **karaoke night**



CONCLUSION

You will build a stronger family unit by spending more time together, and your family will stick together through rough times, besides enjoying the fun times together.

The most important thing is making time to talk, to listen and interact with one another.

Love and time make children happy, not money!

Relax and have fun with your family! Don't always make time together, too structured.



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