

June 2020

Dear Parents,

In this Time of Pause, we're reminded of Marshall's encouragement to "Take your time. It's yours, you know."

This is one of many things we heard him say that jolted us to attention. Because while we know this intellectually—time is what we make of it—we often act as if time is out of our hands. We say things like "I don't have time for that," or "I'm running out of time," or "I never have the time to do what's most important to me," or "I never have time for me."

These beliefs about the scarcity of time can stimulate feelings of anxiousness, worry, and powerlessness. They also contribute to stress reactions in our body—perhaps a tightened gut, tensed shoulders, rapid heart rate, or clenched jaw.

If you recognize this behavior and want less stress and more power with your world, here's an exercise to try.

Personal Practice

1. Notice when you say things about time that suggest it is out of your hands. Notice how these beliefs/thoughts bring stress in your body.
2. Pause and take a few moments to just notice your breath.
3. Ask yourself: "Do I know that these statements are true? Is it possible they are not true?"
4. Read the following statements to yourself slowly. Ask yourself if any of these statements could be just as true, or more true.

Instead of feeling stressed, I want to feel relaxed.

I want to trust there is enough time for what's important.

I want to care for my needs for relaxation and reflection.

I choose how I use my time.

Instead of feeling worry and fear about the unknown, I turn my attention to the needs that are present and calling for my attention.

5. Repeat these statements to yourself any time you'd like a reminder about the power you have to "take your time" for what's most important to you.

We hope this reflection and exercise helps you meet your needs for self-connection, trust in life, and power with your world.

Family Activity

At this time, other members of your family are also likely seeking less stress and more of a sense of power with their world. The following exercise can help family members identify what needs are speaking loudly to each of them. It provides a basis for more understanding and empathy in the present and in the future. It will also give you a chance to share what you have discovered in your reflections about time and what kind of support you might want from your family.

- First, make an appointment with family members for a get-together at a time that works for everyone. Cut four paper towels into four squares each. On each of the small squares, with a marker, write one of these terms: Rest & Relaxation, Exercise, Healthy Food, Learning & Growth, Fun & Play, Creativity, Purpose, Companionship, Honesty, To Be Heard, Help/Support, Choice About How to Use My Time, To Contribute to Others, Empathy, Acknowledgment, Power With My World
- Call everyone together at a table or in a circle on the floor. Ask a couple family members to help you lay out all the squares, reading each one aloud. Introduce them as *human needs*. Say that every person in the world has these needs and more.
- **Round 1:** Ask each person in the circle to choose a need that's important to them right now. If two people choose the same need, they can sit next to each other and take turns holding it while they talk in Round 2. Or someone can make an extra square with that need on it.
- **Round 2:** Ask each person, one at a time, to share what this need means to them. When do they notice it? How does it feel when that need is not met?
- **Round 3:** Ask each person to share any ideas about how they might be able to meet the need they identified. Ask whether they want to hear ideas from others or not.
- Thank everyone for participating. Ask whether there is anything else anyone would like to say.

This activity plants a seed of awareness about needs. By keeping the exchange short and lighthearted, and expressing appreciation for everyone’s willingness to participate, you encourage the seed to grow after the exercise is over. From this point on, when family members have concerns, upsets, or different ways of seeing things, you will be able to talk with them about needs. Talking about needs takes everyone beyond what might be habits of complaining, blaming, criticizing, or other habits of fault-finding that lead to dis-connection and instead leads to more understanding and connection.

We hope this activity contributes to your and your family’s well-being and gives you another tool in your tool chest for creating closeness and connection.

— Victoria & Sura

Explore more support materials for your tool chest:

- Free downloadable Feelings & Needs Cards in English and 20 other languages: <http://thenofaultzone.com/global-network.html>
- Free Needs List: <http://thenofaultzone.com/nfz-needs.pdf>
- Respectful Parents, Respectful Kids: 7 Keys to Turn Family Conflict Into Co-operation: <https://puddledancer.bookstore.ipgbook.com/respectful-parents--respectful-kids-products-9781892005229.php>
- The No-Fault Zone® Game: www.thenofaultzone.com
- Contact us for parent coaching and consultations:
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