

## 10 Ways To Enjoy Your Relationships

When you look at your calendar, who or what takes up most of your time?

Problem is, we can often take our dearest relationships for granted and waste precious time working ridiculous hours or on social obligations that are personally unfulfilling.

Here are 10 ways to match your schedule to your true relationship priorities:

### 1. Create strong boundaries

When everyone else seems to be entitled to your time except you, it's time to put stronger boundaries in place. You might not be able to adjust other people's habits, but you can adjust your own so your schedule isn't so impacted by them. Choose to finish work at a reasonable time each day and learn to say 'no' to discretionary requests on your time when it's really not something you want to do. Remember to always set aside a few precious hours to nurture your relationship with yourself too!

### 2. Who are your closest friends?

Does it seem like you never see your friends any more? Think of your ten closest friends. When was the last time you caught up with them either in person, or at least for a long chat on the phone? If it's been a while, or you can't even remember how long it's been, now's the time to reconnect with them. If your closest friends aren't appearing regularly on your social schedule, start freeing up some of your time and make plans with them. Don't allow your time to be completely dominated by any one relationship, family or work obligations, at the risk of neglecting your most cherished friends.

### 3. How much of your down time is spent with the people you enjoy being with the most?

Aside from scheduling time alone for yourself, ideally, you should be aiming for close to 100% here.

### 4. Is there someone you'd like to get to know better?

Always leave some unplanned social time aside to pursue new friendships and relationships with people you meet who inspire or intrigue you.

### 5. What are you looking forward to doing this week or month?

If you don't have any plans you're looking forward to, start creating some. We all need dates in our diaries like these! If you need to, plan ahead to be sure you don't miss out on tickets to that concert or sporting event you'd love to go to. Booking in holidays as soon as possible gives you longer to look forward them too!

### 6. When was the last time you and your partner went out on a fun or romantic date together?

Schedule these times as regularly as you can, to stay connected, enjoy being together and to give yourselves time out from your usual daily stresses and routines.

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## 7. Do you often feel stuck at home in the evenings with small children?

If you don't have willing family members available to babysit, paying for babysitters regularly can become very expensive. Entertaining at home can be fun and easy. You can keep it relaxed and don't need to go to a lot of effort. Make an easy-to-prepare supper or BBQ, ask your guests to bring wine or dessert, or split the cost of takeaway with them. Best of all, if you're the hosts, you won't need to catch a taxi home or spend the night negotiating who's driving.

## 8. Is your budget tight right now?

Catching up with friends doesn't need to be a budget-blowing experience. Swap Friday night drinks or expensive restaurant dinners with a B.Y.O. Sunday BBQ or picnic in a park, followed by a game of soccer, or enjoy fish and chips and a walk on the beach.

## 9. No time?

Find ways of combining activities when you have little down time. Would you love to catch up with a friend but, at the same time, don't want to miss that expo or art exhibition that's on this weekend? Go together! Don't want to neglect your exercise routine? Meet up with a friend and take your dogs for a walk and have coffee afterwards.

## 10. Just too popular?

Your social interactions with family, friends and work colleagues shouldn't be wearing you out or weighing you down. If you're spreading yourself too thin and feeling like you're on a never-ending merry-go-round of social engagements, start prioritising what matters to you most and set some limits. Decide which relationships are enhancing your life and focus your attention on these. Put in an apology for as much as you can of the rest.

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