



RELATIVES AS PARENTS

I Still Need Time For Me

The only thing you can really manage is people – and the person to begin with is yourself.



Have you ever felt no one appreciates the time you put into caring for your grandchildren? Time cannot be managed, nor can it be saved. It can only be used. Becoming an efficient time-user has many payoffs, including increased satisfaction, more relaxation and much less stress. The only thing you can really manage is people– and the person to begin with is yourself. Your work or personal habits affect your use of time, and these habits are no harder or easier to change than other habits. Changing habits in order to use time effectively requires self-discipline. The first step is to be honest with yourself and begin to identify some problem areas.

Managing your Time

To use time wisely, you have to control time wasters. Only through self-discipline will you have the time to do the things that are important to you. Here are some things you can do now to become a more effective time user:

- **Establish a Plan.** To help you see all of the tasks and activities you want to accomplish, set priorities according to what needs to be accomplished in a day, a week or a month. Break the job into many little tasks.

- **Use a “To Do” List.**

Write down those things you intend to accomplish during the day and prioritize the list. This will keep you on track and provide a benchmark for judging the importance of anything else that comes up during the day. Start with the most important item on your list, and stay with the task until you have finished it before moving on to the next item. This will give you a sense of accomplishment because you are now completing the tasks that are most important to you.

- **Use Your Prime Time.** Use the time of the day when you are at your highest energy level –your prime time– for jobs requiring the most attention and effort.

- **Try Delegating Tasks.** You do not need to do everything yourself. Give some of the tasks to the grandchildren. When delegating, be certain to inform them of their tasks, time limits and resources.

- **Learn to Say “No!”** This allows you to exercise control over your life so you can spend time productively on the activities that are most meaningful to you. It can also give you more time for other things.

More

A Few Tips to Help Free up Time for You:

■ **Practice the Barter System.** Swap jobs with family members and others.

■ **Do Two Things at Once.** Identify small tasks you can combine with something else, such as unloading the dishwasher while talking on the phone. Or, you could have the grandchildren help with the dishes, making it a time you can spend with them.



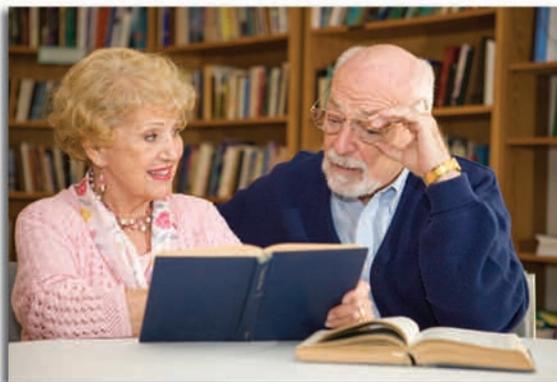
■ **Use Your Waiting Time.** Keep a list of five- to 10-minute tasks that can be done while you wait

for others, like balancing the checkbook while waiting to pick up the grandchildren or making a to-do list during practices.

■ **Clean the Clutter.** Create a comfortable work area; throw away unnecessary papers; sell or give away unused items, and have a place for everything.

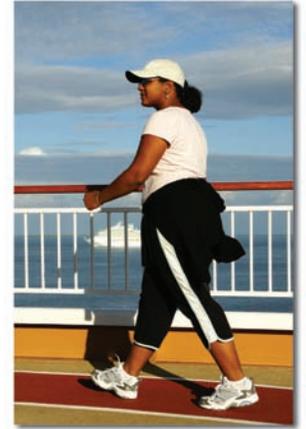
■ **Eliminate Any Once-Useful Habits** that are now first-class time wasters.

These tips can help you to set some goals for better use of your time. Finally, remember **you are an important person.** Become responsibly selfish. Find time and space to concentrate and relax by making time for yourself.



Loving Yourself

As a grandparent, there are times when you might resent your grandchildren. You may do more and more for the grandchildren and receive less and less appreciation for it. When you begin to feel resentful, it is time to work on loving yourself. This means taking time for **you** and respecting yourself. It means learning to enjoy your unique talents. When you love yourself, you can admit you are not perfect and recognize that you're doing your best. Loving yourself will give you the energy needed to continue taking care of your family. The grandchildren can learn from your positive example. It will help them accept and value themselves as well.



For more information please contact:
UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
Ms. Jaime Brown, Extension Agent
(202)274-7136
jsbrown@udc.edu
www.udc.edu

Reprinted with permission from the Texas A&M University Cooperative Extension Service. Permission was granted by Dr. Sam Quick, Human Development and Family Relations Specialist, Kentucky Cooperative Extension, to adapt this material for use by Texas Cooperative Extension. Adapted by Dr. Judith L. Warren, Gerontology Specialist; and Dr. Dorothy James, Family Life Specialist (Retired), Texas Cooperative Extension, Family Development and Resource Management, 311 History Building, College Station Texas 77843-2251. (979)845-3850.