

Quality Time

Get a babysitter impromptu for a night and take your spouse on a surprise date. A night he or she was expecting to be normal will instead be a romantic adventure.

Parents, if your children normally ride the bus home from school, plan a day you are able to pick them up instead. Doing so may be a wonderful time for you to have meaningful conversations with them as they talk about their day at school.

Consider bowling with some of your best buds before the holidays, even if you would never go bowling for the sake of bowling. It can be a good way to have fun and laugh, whether it's at how bad you bowl or the memories brought back by spending time together.

Quality time is most often felt when someone realizes you notice the little things they say or do. In other words, you are paying attention to the details. In your conversations make an effort to stay focused, listen closely, and notice body language.

Keith Ferrazzi wrote a book called *Never Eat Alone*, and that's great advice for the Quality Timer. But teenager NATalie Hampton took this to the next level when she encountered bullies at her school and no longer wanted to sit alone at lunch.

If physical fitness is an important part of your life- or if you would like it to be- invite a couple of your friends to join you for a fitness class. Whether you take it slow with yoga or spice things up with Zumba, it is sure to be enjoyable with friends by your side.

If you find you and one or more of your colleagues with some free time, try initiating a conversation about their personal interests. Make a point to get to know them, and be sure to offer some information about yourself, too!

When asking how your significant other's day has gone, try and move away from the "yes" or "no" questions and take the time to think of specific questions that would elicit longer answers. This will speak to his or her need for quality time, and who that you truly care.

The next time you're having a conversation with your child, ask what his or her favorite places to go are whether a restaurant, park, or store. Take note and schedule some times to take him or her on dates to these favorite places.

Do you live in the same area as any of your adult relatives? INvite your sibling out for lunch one afternoon, or have an aunt and uncle over for supper when you have a free night. Staying connected to family take work, but is always worth it.

If you struggle to find time in the day to spend with your spouse, try sharing tasks like cleaning the house, and talk as you dust, mop, and put things away. This can turn a

normally dreaded time into a sweet time of bonding.

Find an activity you like to do that compliments something your wife or husband enjoys. Cooking ,working out, or taking a stroll after dinner are good starting points for making the most out of your down-time. Your spouse is sure to enjoy your presence!

Is your friend an early bird or night owl? Respect their tendencies and plan an outing according to his or her schedule. Set your alarm earlier to make it to breakfast or drink an extra cup of coffee to stay awake through a night showering of a new movie.

Spend a few extra minutes putting your child to bed at night. Bedtime stories, talking about the day, or praying together at night are great patterns to begin with your kids. Take advantage of this rare opportunity when you have your child's full attention.

When was the last time you asked your mom or dad out for a meal or made them dinner? Ask one (or both) of them if they have a free night coming up and treat them to some quality time and food.

On a rainy day, make your spouse a cup of tea and spend some time catching up or just sitting in the same room and reading quietly, each with your own book. Taking time to slow down and spend time together goes a long way in staying connected.

Schedule individual dates with each of your children. Mark your calendar and don't allow other priorities to take its place. Setting aside time to connect with your kids is so important in communicating love to them and can begin setting good relational foundations that will continue into their teen and adult years.

Find a dollar theater near you and take your family or a group of friends to see a movie! This fun excursion won't break the bank, and is sure to be a fun bonding time for any group of people. For added fun, stop by the Dollar Tree on your way there to fill up on candy if the theater allows.

Check the weather for a windy day, grab a dear friend, and find an open space where you can go and fly a kite! This will be the perfect time to catch up on life and enjoy a sweet moment together.

Get the family together and compile the ultimate summer bucket list! Let each member choose at least one activity, and see if you can get everything crossed off before the end of the summer. This is a great way to ensure times of bonding throughout the summer for your family, without excluding anyone.

Plan a backyard movie night for you and your significant other! Grab some blankets and snacks and project your favorite movie on a sheet outside the house. For extra fun, stock up on his or her preferred movie snacks.

Put together a couple bird-feeders with the kids! Just spread peanut butter on a

cardboard toilet paper roll, roll it in birdseed, hang it from a tree in your backyard, and voila! Birds will be pecking at it in no time. This is also a fun way to teach your children about different types of birds.

After dinner, let your child pick out their favorite book and read it to them. Making up different voices for the characters adds enthusiasm and laughter that is sure to warm their heart.

Find or buy a good book for your mom and take the time to sit and read with her. She will appreciate the chance to “take a load off”, and especially enjoy the time spent with you.

Planning on taking a walk to enjoy the warmer weather? Invite a friend that you haven't seen in a while.

Consider bowling with some of your best friends. It can be a good way to laugh, whether it's at how bad you bowl or old memories brought back by spending time together.

Pick a movie that you and a sibling enjoyed growing up and schedule an evening to watch it with him or her. Afterwards, reminisce about why you enjoyed it then and share which parts you enjoy more now as an adult.

Although it sounds too obvious to point out, going to your children's extracurricular events as much as possible means a lot to them. Just knowing that you are present can assure them that you support them and boost their self-esteem.

Figure out what movie your children may want to see this weekend and take them out for dinner and the movie. If their love language is Quality Time, this will remind them anew of how much you enjoy making them happy.

While watching TV with friends or family, press mute during commercial breaks and rapid fire a conversation starter.

Discover something new with someone you love. Find a new restaurant for dinner. Walk in a park you've never been to. Try the new coffeehouse up the street. Not only will this be a fun experience for you both, you'll also create memories together.

A fishing trip or a boat ride can be a fun and peaceful way to spend time with someone you love. Whether it's grandpa and grandson, husband and wife, father and daughter... the time spent together will provide ample opportunity for meaningful conversations and interesting dialogue.

In the workplace, Quality Timers feel valued when you spend time with them. Take someone to lunch, stop by an office to chat, invite a colleague to a sporting event, or call a co worker just to see how he or she is doing. It's important when spending time together you're not just there physically, but emotionally as well. Your attention and

attitude will make a difference in how authentic they perceive your gesture.

In the winter months, pick out a novel that each member of your immediate family would enjoy and take turns reading through it out loud. This will create fond memories as you and your family experience a vicarious journey together.

Though it is not the dialect of every quality timer, watching movies or netflix together can sometimes fill love tanks. Sharing the experience of a story unfolding can be meaningful and lead to conversations (more QT). so if your love enjoys movies or a particular TV series, grab some snacks, dim the lights, and cuddle up!

“When I travel on business, my husband and I still have dates. For example, we’ve watched a movie while on the phone, had a skype bible study, and even picked up lunch and ate it at the same time.” -Angela

If you’re single, plan a regular movie or board game night with your closest friends. If any of them have Quality Time as their primary love language, this will deepen their relationship with you and keep it nurtured.

Instead of going out, plan a special evening in with your spouse. Cater from a restaurant you both enjoy, set the mood with some music, and plan some fun or romantic activities. If you have children, send them off to stay with some friends or family for the evening (overnight if possible).

If you are in a dating relationship, be sure you have at least one date a week if possible. It’s important for you and that special friend to regularly spend time together beyond seeing each other in class, work, or church.

If you’ve been in relationship for awhile and have some history together, why not recreate your favorite date? Wear the same clothing style (if some decades have past), and have fun reminiscing about the past while dreaming about your future.

Is there a friend you haven’t seen in awhile? Why not make it a point to catch up!? Give him or her a call, go out for coffee, meet for pizza just to spend some time listening, sharing, learning, and laughing. Time spent together is time invested well.

This Independence Day, don’t let your focus be on yourself- put it on someone else. Whomever you happen to be with this holiday, make a conscious effort to be present. Listen, make eye contact, turn your mobile devices off, and enjoy every moment.

“When our kids were growing up we enjoyed Quality Time together at least once a month- in the summertime weekly. We had what we called ‘Old Fashioned Night’ where we would use no electricity and we’d have to figure out how to cook dinner and entertain ourselves, the way the ‘pioneers’ did in the olden days.” -Sue

"I like to go hunting with my dad. We just go and sit in the quiet and listen to the birds. Spending time with each other is very calming and pleasant. I really enjoy this 4 to 6 hours a day with him." - Anna

Screentime, if not balanced, can eat away Quality Time quicker than Pac-Man eats dots. The next time you notice your child mesmerized by a device, invite him or her to join you in a game or activity that you can enjoy together.

Husbands, plan a "pamper" day for your wife. Have her clear an afternoon and night and tell her to prepare for a great surprise. Pre-pay for a hair styling and then make arrangements to have a nice dinner afterwards.

If you have a daughter, one reader suggests designating "Salon Sundays" as a way to spend some quality time together. Some ideas might be to paint your nails, pedicure, style each others hair, or simply give each other shoulder massages.

Find a bench at a shopping center, park, or alongside a beach. People watch. Take photographs. Talk about what you see. Make up fictional conversations of the people you see walking by. Point out interesting flowers near the scene. Stop and take everything in around you, especially each other.

Spend some time reading your child [*A Perfect Pet for Peyton*](#). Your child will enjoy the story and finding the hidden animals along the way. Download the [interactive iPhone app](#) to really bring the book to life. Your child will certainly enjoy this quality time with you.

"Each night after my boyfriend picks me up from work, we spend 5–10 minutes sitting in the truck talking before going into the house. It gives us time to reconnect after a long day. He gets his Quality Time, and I get to cuddle with him from the middle seat!"
—*Kristen*

"Wake up early to read together as a couple. Choose something that you can spend a few minutes discussing. You will learn something and have a meaningful interaction to sustain you the entire day." -Carol

If you have an extra personal or vacation day from work, why not plan a special day with someone you love? Plan it out, or if you're more spontaneous, have some options in mind that offer an atmosphere for meaningful conversation and/or activity.

If you are in a long-distance relationship, a handwritten letter is quite meaningful. Warm and fuzzy feelings can come as a result of knowing that a loved one took the time to sit down and write a personal letter. An added bonus is that the recipient can read it over and over again to renew the feeling.

Plan an excursion with your immediate family to a place that is a reasonable distance

from your home. This will ensure a road trip packed with plenty of time for your family to connect without the distractions of everyday life.

Parent: sometimes you need to run an errand or go to the store. If you are able, make it to a point to bring at least one of your children with you. This will encourage them and make them feel special.

Take some time out to turn off the phone and take someone you love to the park, play a game together, talk, read a book, or go on a special outing. Talk about whatever he or she wants to talk about. Don't forget to really listen and pay close attention to what he or she has to say.

Think about an old friend you haven't talked to in a while. Set up a time to have lunch or coffee together to catch up. If you're separated by distance then consider calling using FaceTime or Skype.

Are you a reader? Why not start a monthly book club with family or friends that also love to read? Sharing your thoughts about a particular book and listening to that of others is a great way to spend Quality time together.

Think of "that" restaurant or venue that you and your significant other have never been able to afford. Save up and when the time is right, experience a romantic date there together.

"When my husband turned 50, I celebrated by treating him to five events- one for each decade. Dinner, dancing, cocktails at a swanky new spot, a painting class, and a gathering at home made the week special for him." -Anglea

Eye contact is vitally important to those whose primary love language is quality time. When in conversations, put away distractions (i.e. smart phones, tablets), listen intently, ask questions, and pay attention to body language and emotional cues.

Think of a band that you and your closest friend both enjoy. Do a little research and see if that band is playing a concert anywhere close to you in the near future. If so, purchase the tickets and surprise your friend by asking him or her to join you for an evening of music and fun.

A walk can be a powerful way to spend Quality time to those you love. Whether your spouse, child, parent, or friend, going for a walk together is a relaxing way to decompress, converse, and connect. Make plans to walk together today!

Quality time isn't always about the big events and experiences, but also includes the small moments of togetherness. Swapping stories after work or school, planning future activities, or simply laughing together will feel like bliss for the Quality timer in your life.

We live in a busy culture. However, spending quality time with those we love is essential

to our well-being. In light of this, let's not lose sight of what it means to be friendly, hospitable, and interested in those who enter or live in your home.

"Once a week I set up a talking date with my spouse. We make a nest of blankets and pillows on the floor and we talk about anything and everything that comes to our minds. It is a great way to communicate and show how much we care about each other." - submitted by Addison

"When we are feeling stressed, my friends and I share daily chores to help one another out. One of the chores we do together is cook weekly meals." -Bianca

Sitting on the porch with your family, friend, or neighbor in the late afternoon can be a bit of a lost art in our fast-paced culture. However, great conversations happen and memories are made on the steps, chairs, and swings of porches worldwide.

If you've been in relationship for a while and have some history together, why not recreate your favorite date? Wear the same clothing styles (if some decades have past), and have fun reminiscing about the past while dreaming about your future.

Spending quality time with mom on Mother's Day can sometimes be difficult amid family and festivities. Try to plan some one-on-one time together the day before or after Mother's Day. Catching up alongside some good conversation will mean the world to her.

Schedule a leisurely picnic with your spouse or child. Ask him/her about his/her dreams and aspirations. Your undivided attention is key. If you find he/she is frustrated with school or work and want to talk about it, listen intently but don't offer solutions unless they ask.

Carve out some time to eat dinner together at the table. Let the conversation flow naturally. If you need some help to jumpstart the conversation, pick up a copy of my book 101 Conversation Starters for Couples or Families. Oh yeah . . . no T.V.s, cell phones, or mobile devices allowed.

Next time your child is talking to you, pay attention. Put away all distractions, get on his or her level, and listen intently. Ask questions to show you are engaged and soaking them in. This type of focused attention will mean the world to your child.

In the workplace, not everyone who values quality time wants individual time with their supervisor—some people are shy and can feel intimidated by a more outgoing supervisor. Often, going out to lunch or hanging out after work with their colleagues is the type of time desired.

Quality time doesn't happen by chance. It is intentional. Try to schedule time when you can walk or workout together with your love. Not only will this improve your health, but it

will also increase your energy and stamina for other physical activities together.

Schedule a "date night" with your child. Get all dressed up and go somewhere he/she would enjoy. It doesn't have to be fancy or expensive. You make it special with the care and attitude you bring. Be attentive, and most of all, have fun!

Do you and your spouse enjoy new things? If so, pick a sport you're both willing to learn together (e.g. tennis, running, canoeing). Spending time together focusing on a common pursuit can deepen your emotional and social intimacy.

Eating meals together is an excellent way for families to spend quality time together. Plan at least one meal that your family (possibly even extended family) can come together at the dinner table this weekend. Think ahead of some creative conversation starters and/or engaging topics to discuss.

If you don't already, re-organize your schedule so that you can work out together. This will make grueling exercise more bearable and a whole lot more fun.

Pick out a novel that each member of your immediate family would enjoy and take turns reading through the book out loud. This will create fond memories as you and your family experience a vicarious journey together.

When the timing works out, plan an excursion with your immediate family to a place a reasonable distance from home. This will ensure that a road trip with plenty of time for your family to connect without the distractions of everyday life.

If you're single, plan a regular movie or board game night with your closest friends. If any of them have Quality Time as their primary love language, this will deepen their relationship with you and keep your friendship nurtured.

If you are in a dating relationship, be sure you have at least one date a week if possible. It's important for you and that special friend to regularly spend time together beyond seeing each other in class, work, or church.

Think of a band that you and your closest friend both enjoy. Do a little research and see if that band is playing a concert anywhere close to you in the near future. If so, purchase the tickets and surprise your friend by asking them to join you for an evening of music and fun.

Guys: Find a multi-player video game that you and a number of your friends enjoy. Plan a night where all of you can come together and play it for a significant amount of time. Provide snacks for everyone and a trophy for the winner. As you game with your buds, be sure to bring on some good ol' competition.

Think of someone you've mentored that holds you in high esteem and ask them out to a "catch-up" date. Since you already mean a lot to them, your effort to intentionally spend with them will reassert your care and support.

Figure out what movie your children may want to see this weekend and take them out for dinner and the movie. If their love language is Quality Time, this will remind them anew of how much you enjoy making them happy.

Although it sounds too obvious to point out, going to your children's extracurricular events as much as possible means a lot to them. Just knowing that you are present can assure them that you care.

Pick a book that your child would be interested in and read a chapter or two together each night before bed. This will give you a regular avenue for conversation and deepen your bond with him or her as you spend time together.

Pick a movie that you and a sibling enjoyed growing up and schedule an evening to watch it with him or her. Afterwards, reminisce about why you enjoyed it growing up and share which parts you now enjoy more as an adult.

Find a night where all of your kids are free and plan a family board game night. Laughter and meaningful conversation often accompany the playing of board games.

While the "sport" often gets a bad rap, consider going bowling with some of your best buds before the holiday, even if you would never go bowling for the sake of bowling. It can be a good way to laugh, whether it's at how bad you bowl or old memories brought back by spending time together.

If possible, try to have Christmas dinner with more than your immediate family this year. This will allow you and the others you eat with to enjoy not only a special dinner but also to interact with people who you may not normally be able to converse with meaningfully.

Couples, make effort to connect with other married couples. Consider inviting them over for Christmas leftovers tonight or planning a New Year's event with them.

Parents, if your children normally ride the bus home from school, plan a day you are able to pick them up instead. Doing so may be a wonderful time for you to have meaningful conversations with them as they talk about their day at school.

Get a babysitter impromptu for a night and take your spouse on a surprise date. A night he or she was expecting to be normal will instead be a romantic adventure.

When you are hanging out with friends and there is no important conversation to have, play some of your favorite music loudly while you are hanging out. Sing along, dance to the beat, and make memories.

Carve out some time every other week to do things with friends you may not see regularly. Go out for coffee, try a new restaurant, enjoy tacos on a Tuesday, or plan a paintball excursion. Doing so effectively keeps you in touch with them and assures them that you care for them.

Invite a friend to work out with you regularly. Not only do most people have more successful workouts when they are not alone, but you and your friend will have a regular time to catch up and enjoy each other's company.

Ladies, get together with some of your favorite friends in the next couple weeks and get mani-pedis. Not only will you and your friends enjoy exemplifying your beauty, but you will also have a great time doing so together.

Think of "that" restaurant or venue that you and your significant other have never been able to afford. Save up and when the time is right experience a romantic date there together.

Find a TV show to watch with your friend or roommate, a show you will both enjoy. Only watch it with him or her, and cherish the vicarious journey together.

Parents, if you don't already, make it a point every week or two to have a family night. Play board games, watch a movie, or go to a special event; whatever everyone will enjoy. If your family doesn't typically spend a lot of meaningful time together, this may

feel unnatural at first, but in time the time you spend together will become precious.

If you watch a TV show regularly with your spouse, take time to talk about what you enjoy about the show with him or her. This allows the show to not only be enjoyed in physical

proximity to your spouse, but it will also stimulate and deepen your intellectual intimacy with him or her.

If your boyfriend or girlfriend's dialect of Quality Time is quality conversation, don't always bog down a date with things to do. Leave time unscheduled for the two of you to be still together and talk about life.

If you and your spouse don't pray at night before bed, make an effort to do so. Not only will this enliven your personal spiritual life, but it will also draw you closer to your spouse.

Seek to have deep, meaningful conversations with friends whom you trust. For some, an intimate conversation is what makes them feel most loved.

Parents, plan an "Ice Cream Sunday" for your children on a Sunday. Gather the family and go shopping together for toppings and ice cream flavors. Then, come home and enjoy a perfect ice cream "Sunday" afternoon.

Make an effort to visit your parents on a semi-regular basis. Even though you've moved out and started your own life, they would probably enjoy seeing you more than just holidays. If you live far away, try to Skype or Google Hangout them every couple weeks, even if only for a few minutes.

If you are dating and don't have a regularly scheduled date night, ask your boyfriend or girlfriend if they would like to have a regular date night. If so, schedule a day of the week that you will always go on a date on.

If your spouse has a favorite genre or era of film, plan a night with them to watch a film fitting those criteria. Not only will they enjoy the movie, but it will mean a lot to them that you made time to watch it with them, especially if their primary love language is Quality Time.

Beauty is found in the eye of the beholder. When you make eye contact and truly listen to someone you care about, it makes them feel valued. Put the mobile device away and pay attention to those you are with. Make eye contact and be in the moment.

College students, if some of your close friends are gone for the summer, schedule a time to visit them where they are or vice versa. If this isn't doable, then try to Skype with them a couple times before school starts back.

Take a few minutes once or twice a week to say hello to a co-worker you don't know very well. Not only is it good for employees to know each other, but it could be the beginning of a friendship, especially if the person's primary love language is Quality Time.

Get a few friends together who enjoy reading (and maybe a few who don't!) and start a

book club. Read through a variety of books, some fiction, some religious, some biographies; whatever captures the interest of the group. Enjoy the discussions you have about the reading.

At least a couple times a week, try to eat lunch with a couple of your co-workers during your break. Not only is this a simple way to have a fun lunch, but it also helps to create a warm and inviting work environment.

If your child's primary love language is Quality Time, it is paramount that you make it a priority to spend time with them. Whether it be board games, attending his or her school events, or talking to them on their way to or from school, your presence is the most powerful way for you to say "I love you."

Go old school and find a classic board game you and a some friends enjoy and make time to play it every couple weeks. Board games tend to stimulate conversation and laughter. Add some snacks and music to the mix and you'll have a winning combination no matter who wins.

This Independence Day, don't let your focus be on yourself put it on someone else. Whomever you happen to be with this holiday, make a conscience effort to be present. Listen, make eye contact, turn your mobile devices off, and enjoy every moment.

If you work a shift with someone at work regularly, make it count. Get to know each other as you do your job, especially if your job is one where you can talk without it detracting from your productivity. This will make your shift more enjoyable and give you a new friend or acquaintance.

If you find yourself in a busy season of life, make it a point to ask your children or spouse to join you in random errands or activities whenever possible. When young, kids especially relish this opportunity because they love spending time with mom or dad. It's important to make the most of your time now with the ones you love because one day they may come into a busy season of their own.

Children often ask their parents to read to them. Why not take a field trip to the local bookstore? Spend some time browsing the children's area with your child as you determine one or two books to buy and read before bed. Swing by the coffee or ice cream shop before heading home and talk about a few of your favorite books when you were young.

Plan a "Picasso Pizza Party" with your family. Get some fun and unique toppings. Instruct everyone to use the crust as a canvas and ask them to design a portrait of someone in the house using the toppings. After the pizzas are cooked, everyone gets to guess who each pizza represents. Take pictures of the pizzas before you slice and display photos as art and a reminder of your special time together.

What better way to spend quality time than to take a vacation or quick road trip with someone you love?! During your trip be intentional to explore each others feelings, dreams, goals, and perspectives. Ask questions and then really listen. Turn off the

phone and be in the moment.

Nothing says "love" like a home filled with the aroma of cookies. Bake a plate of cookies for when your child returns home from school. Sit down together and let them talk about their day. However, don't be deterred if he or she is too busy eating the cookies to talk... wait patiently and they will soon open up.

With the right game plan, fantasy football can be a team-building experience and camaraderie booster. Employees will come out the dark corners of their cubicles and begin interacting with each other. If they need a little incentive, throw a trophy into the mix!

◁The Camping Date▷ The Camping Date allows married couples to remove themselves from the 3same old, same old2◁the routines and pressures of daily life◁and literally breathe fresh air into their relationship. Whether you1re spending a week in the heart of the Oregon wilderness or an evening in a makeshift tent in your backyard, a Camping Date may be just the change of pace you need. Plan to spend plenty of Quality Time in front of the camp fire, talking with your date or just enjoying the silence together.

It's time to discover something new with someone you appreciate or love. Find a new restaurant for dinner. Walk in a park you've never been to. Try the new coffee shop up the street. Not only will this be a fun experience for you both, it will also allow you to create new memories together. Spend some time reading your child A Perfect Pet for Peyton. Your child will enjoy the story, finding the hidden animals, and the interactive iPhone app that brings the book to life. Most of all, they will enjoy the quality time with you. "My boyfriend and I are both Quality Timers. We are very busy and work opposite of each other often. About once every week or so he'll sit down and talk with me while I'm doing my make-up about what my day looks like like, etc. It's time he doesn't have to take, but he chooses to do so to have a few minutes with me." – Lara "Simply eating out or having a coffee together with friends is a nice way to share your time . . . and your life. It provides the opportunity and openness to talk about everything under the sun."

~Anonymous

"My husband prepares breakfast each morning before we both go to work. We pray together and have good conversation." ~Raquel

Is there a friend you haven't seen in a while? Why not make it a point to catch up?! Give them a call, go for coffee, meet for pizza and spend some time listening, sharing, and learning about their life.

What better way to spend quality time than to take a vacation with those you love?! During your trip be intentional to explore each others feelings, dreams, goals, and perspectives. Ask questions and then really listen. Turn off the phone and be in the moment with those you love.

Take some time out to turn off the phone and take your child to the park, play a video game together, talk, read a book, or go on a special outing together. Talk about whatever they want to talk about. Don't forget to really listen and pay close attention to what they have to say.

In the workplace, Quality Timers feel valued when you spend time with them. Take them

to lunch, stop by their office to chat, invite them to a sporting event, or give them a call

just to see how they are doing. It's important to make sure when spending time together you are not just there physically, but emotionally as well. Your attention and attitude will make a significant difference in how authentic they perceive your gesture.

My wife and I are both active duty Marines, and we spend a lot of time away from each other. How do we start talking when we know one of us will be leaving soon? I think one of the ways you prepare yourself for the separation is to talk with each other about some of the things that you really enjoyed during the time you were together. And then to ask the other person: What are some things I can do while you're away that would be helpful to you to have done while I'm gone? I think another factor is to say to them, "how can we stay in touch while we're away?" And the good news is, for example, the love languages can be spoken long distance by emails or phone calls or letters. But talking about that before you go can set the stage for your actually speaking love long distance.

The NBA playoff season is a great time to get together with colleagues and watch sports together. Take the initiative and see what people are doing and if they'd like to get together!

Find a bench at a shopping center, park, or alongside a beach. People watch. Take photographs. Talk about what you see. Make up fictional conversations of the people you see walking by. Point out interesting flowers near the scene. Stop and take everything in around you, especially each other.

"My wife has more than a full-time job being a stay-at-home mom, so to give her a break in her daily busy routine I've implemented Weekday Walks with Dad. So after greeting my wife when I get home, I greet my daughter and take her on a 30-45 minute walk around our condo complex. Not only does this allow me to decompress from my busy day at work, it also allows me to spend Quality Time with my daughter, and it's a small gift/act of service to my wife for all the sacrifice she makes for our family. Love is great!"
~Gregory

"I like to make eye contact and give my undivided attention as I am speaking or as they are speaking to me." ~Anonymous

"I occasionally do an at home social hour. I'll buy or make one of my husband's favorite appetizers and a light dinner to go with it. Then I'll send him an invite to our private social hour. I once listed 'live entertainment provided by Max & Pee Dee' (our 2 bulldogs)."~Marianne

Dad: Sometimes you need to run an errand or go to the store. If you are able, try to bring at least one of your children with you. This will encourage them and make them feel special. (Relationship: Father to Child)

Next time you are watching a TV show with a child, spouse, or friend, turn the volume on mute during the commercial breaks and start a conversation (if you need help, try one of the conversation starter series). Make sure they have your undivided attention. When the show comes back on, unmute... but not if they are still talking. Make them feel more important than the TV show. (Relationship: Marriage, Parents, Family, Friends)

Did you know that if you are separated from someone you love by distance, a hand written letter can actually fill the love tank of a Quality Timer? Because you took the time to sit down, hold it in your hands and write it, this expression can be an excellent way to spend time together when apart. The time the recipient spends reading it over and over again will make them feel special and cared for. (Relationship: Love Separated by Distance)

Think about an old friend you haven't talked to in a while. Set up a time to have lunch or coffee together to catch up. If you are separated by distance then you can call, FaceTime, or Skype. (Relationship: Friend)