



BE THE BETTER DAD

What Is Your Play?

What do you do for fun? What rejuvenates you? Write down the things you (should) do every week, and also list a few things you shouldn't do. List your vices and your virtues - things you do whenever you get the chance, and things you wish you did more.

These can be solo activities, or things you like to do with friends outside of your family.

Some writing prompts:

I feel really guilty when I indulge in.... If I had two days by myself I would spend a lot of time... When I'm up late and can't sleep I often... I feel best after I spend some time...

What Are Your Warning Signs?

When you are off balance, you get cues. Your family can probably tell, even when you can't, when you're not being your best as a Dad.

There are symptoms, and these symptoms can often cause greater distress in your life, with your family, and with your work. I'll list out a few common symptoms of being out of balance:

- You're too tired to do anything when you're at home to talk with your wife, take a walk, or play with your kids.
- You leave messes and don't clean them up, even though you know you should.
- You tell lies, drink too much, or don't pay your bills on time.
- You smoke when you've been trying to quit, you show up late, or you show up unprepared.

What are some of your Warning Signs? What can you identify as an alert in the future?

When one of these things happens, you will know it's time to get back in balance.

A, B, C

Your Work In the World

I use 'Work' to mean your job, your business, or your interactions where you provide value to the world.

Every family unit relies on their parents to provide some sort of value to the rest of the world, and translate that value into the household that takes care of everybody.

So whether you're a CEO, an hourly worker, or a stay-at-home-dad, you have some sort of Work in the world. It might be a great burden to you, or a wonderful expression of your best talents. Whatever your Work is in the world, this is what is balanced against your Family.

Write down all the work you do, outside of your chores at home. The errands you run. All obligations you have during any given week go here. Write them all down, and prioritize them with A, B, and C.

My Work In The World

A - has to get done, B - should get done soon, C - should get done eventually.

Family Time Worksheet

What are your social and emotional obligations to your family? What meals do you eat together? What activities do you do with your children, and with your partner?

Make a list of everything you know you should do at least once a week. Put a star next to daily activities with your family.

This is what I am already doing with my family every week:

Some things I really like to do with my partner:

Some things I really like to do with my kids:

If I had an extra hour each week with my partner doing anything at all, it would be:

If I could spend another hour each week with my kids doing anything, it would be:

Something new I can commit to doing with my family, starting this week, is:

Something new I can commit to doing with my partner, starting this week, is:

How Balanced Are You?

Rate your satisfaction with these areas of your life. 1 = lowest 10 = highest.

Work, career, and finances: _____

Family, home, and relationships: _____

Recreation, fitness, and personal development:

What could you do to increase your satisfaction with the Work in your life?

What could you do to increase your satisfaction with your Family in your life?

What could you do to increase your satisfaction with the Play in your life?

The Overlap of Work and Family

Your Chores are the Work that keeps your household running smoothly.

Every family divides their chores differently. You may share more or less of the household chores with your partner. Your kids may be handling some chores, or may be too young to do anything but make a mess.

Some chores you might share, and some chores are yours alone, but I know one thing: there are some chores that easily piss you off.

It's different for every person. Maybe you don't mind doing the laundry, but you hate doing the dishes. Or putting the dishes away might be an easy place for you to gripe and grumble. Write down all the chores you have to tend to in your household, and then rank them in order of how much you like them.

10 - I love doing this chore! I wish I could get paid to do this all day.

1 - I will avoid this chore under any circumstances.

Chore	Rating

The Worst Chore

For a long time, I hated the laundry. Avoided it at all costs. Never liked doing it. Then I realized: what I hated most was putting the clothes on hangers.

Once I recognized the part of the chore I liked so little, I was able to devise a way to do this chore that didn't make me irritated every time I did it. Now I've saved myself an hour of aggravation every week, by buying an extra dresser to fold up clothes that most people would hang on a hanger. My clothes are more wrinkled, but my heart is more serene, and with peace such a valuable commodity in fatherhood, I count it a fair trade.

What is the chore that makes you most angry? List more than one if you need to.

What makes you mad when you do this chore? Let it out.

What changes can you make to improve this? List some ideas.

What is one thing you can do this week to make your chores easier?

What is one thing you can do this month?

This year?

Schedule each of these things. Put them on the calendar. Make things happen!

Finding Overlaps

There are plenty of things you can do simultaneously. When I take my kids out to the park, I use the time at the playground to stretch my body and get some exercise. If I can combine a work trip with a family visit, then I have more time for Play later that week.

List some ways you could combine areas of your life into individual activities.

Activities that combine Family and Work are:

Activities that combine Work and Play are:

Activities that combine Play and Family are:

Take the Time for Life Repair

If you dedicate a block of time to chores every week, they will take less of your time. If you do them whenever you get to them, they can take much more of your week than necessary or not get done at all.

Consider taking a weekday afternoon, or a weekend morning, for dedicated Life Repair. 3 hours dedicated just for chores and errands. You have to run to the bank, the hardware store, and repair the garage door? Do it all on Wednesday afternoon, or whatever time of the week you have reserved for fixing up your life.

Three possible times you could have a 3-hour block for your chores and errands:

Take special care with those chores you don't like to do. If they have to get done every week, and you really don't like doing them:

- Give yourself a reward for getting it done. I go out to a nice cafe when I have to pay my bills, and treat myself to a chai tea, instead of my normal drip coffee.
- Find a way to minimize the impact the chore has on your life.
- Hire someone else to do it. My daughter started breeding bunnies, and cleaning out the hay was causing me distress, so I pay somebody a few bucks to deal with crap.
- Ask for help from your partner. Maybe what grates your nerves is easy for them.

Next, look over your Chores list from the previous page, and ask yourself: *can I batch any of these chores together*?

Doing similar chores all at once is easier than doing similar chores all the time.

Create three 'batches' of chores, things you can easily do all together. These groups will be the major candidates for what your Life Repair is going to be all about.

Problem Repair Worksheet

What is a situation in your life that causes you distress?

What advantages do you have for keeping things this way?

What does it cost you to keep this situation in your life?

How do you participate in allowing this situation to happen?

What is it that you really know that you are hiding from yourself?

What would you prefer to have happen, instead of the current situation?

What could you do this week to change things for the better?

What requests can you ask of others to help you make this change?

When can you commit to having that done?

Please Share This With A Dad You Know

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