

3 Practical Habits To Make Time Matter More

by Kristen Ivy



So time is moving. And it's moving faster than you think.

What does that mean for you as a parent? How can you make the most of the limited amount of time that you have with your kids? How can you make sure that time isn't getting away from you?

I certainly don't know the answer to all those questions. But here are three pretty practical ideas that might be helpful:

COUNT IT DOWN

You don't have to count down the seconds, or the minutes, or even the days. But maybe there is a value in counting your weeks. Because **when you see how much time you have left, you tend to get serious about the time you have now.**

So create a visual reminder. Have a countdown clock. In my family, we have two jars of marbles—one for each child. Inside each jar are enough marbles to represent the number of weeks that we will have with them before their high school graduation (we hope – fingers crossed for passing every grade). Every Sunday, I remove a marble from each jar as a reminder that our time is limited. Removing the marble doesn't do anything special for my kids. But it does something for me mentally. It reminds me that time is

moving. And **because I know my weeks are numbered, I tend to make what matters matter more.**

MARK IT UP

Some parents are naturally wired to schedule things. Some (like me) are not. But regardless of how scheduled or unscheduled you are, you probably have a calendar or a notebook or a napkin somewhere that helps you remember what you need to do.

As a working mum, I am constantly filling my days with meetings, and deadlines, and tasks that feel really urgent. But if I'm not intentional, that's ALL that will get space on my calendar. So, once every month or so, I look at my calendar and schedule the things that no one is asking me to schedule. I mark up the calendar with things like:

go on a date with Sawyer.

take the kids to the park.

have a movie night.

That may sound silly. But by "marking it up," it reserves the time. Because I know the weeks are limited. I need a reminder to make the weeks count.

MEASURE IT OUT

Every day isn't a special day. In fact, most days are pretty typical. But one of the best ways to make the most of every week is to create some habits. There are just some things that are inherently part of the rhythm of our world. And by creating some intentional rhythms, we can make the days and the weeks count a little more.

So if you want to make your time count, don't undervalue the simple things:

What do you do every morning at breakfast?

What if part of your breakfast routine just became looking for ways to encourage?

When do you eat together?

You don't have to make a home-cooked meal to have a conversation. What if one meal a day was media-free time when you were intentional about having a conversation with your child?

What's the last thing you do before they go to bed at night?

Every day ends the same way. We go to bed. So what's your bedtime routine? How do you make the most of the moments right before your son or daughter drifts off to sleep?