



# Rituals

**A**s the end of the year approaches, so the level of activity becomes more frenetic. There are exams and end-of-year events at school, holidays to plan, cars to service and temporary staff to employ. At work, we're reviewing performances, making decisions on bonuses and strategising for next year. The year has gone by in a blur and now we're getting even busier!

One consequence of all this busy-ness is that only things that are both urgent and important get our attention. We move from crisis to crisis, with scarcely time to draw breath in between. Take a moment to imagine how you would spend time, if you had more of it.

Maybe you would become healthier; taking time to walk, run or get to gym regularly. You might develop your skill on the golf course, or play the piano. Maybe you'd do something creative – writing, painting or re-designing your garden. You could spend time developing better relationships with friends, family or neighbours... or just sit in a

favourite corner reading, listening to music, or watching your children.

These are all things that clearly improve the quality of life. We all know how important they are, but they're not urgent...and so no matter how much we want to do them, we put them off until 'later'. And another year goes past.

You can't create more time than the 24/7 that's available, but with a little thought you can carve out some of it for things that are really important to you.

You can establish positive rituals. A ritual is something you accept as a part of your life; something you do regularly and unquestioningly. We're all familiar with rituals connected to religion and tradition. You can establish your own quality of life rituals in negotiation with others who may be involved or affected by your behaviour.

You might make it a ritual to attend an early gym class every Monday morning

to get the week off to a good start, or develop a ritual of having a family dinner together one week night every week, around the table, not in front of the TV.

Rituals serve to entrench things in your life so they carve out their own dedicated slice of space and time and gain the acceptance and respect of others.

Ground rules work in the same way, but apply more to specific behaviours. You could add a ground rule to your ritual family dinner by agreeing that no one will be accompanied to dinner by any electronic gadgets, nor will they leave the table to attend to one.

Resolutions and good intentions often get off to a strong start but are squeezed out as more urgent and important things overtake them. Putting rituals and ground rules in place helps entrench and maintain behaviour. Try it and notice how, step by step, you can improve the quality of your life.

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