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What Was The Best Part Of Your Day?

By Deanna Mascle

My son's bedtime ritual (like that of many young children) is written in stone. After reading a book or two, we snuggle into his bed and compare notes about the day. I ask him if today was a good day and being a cheerful fellow he always says "yes".

After reviewing the highlights of the day — all the elements that made it a "good day" — I ask him which was the best part. Often the answer surprises me but after some reflection I decided this fact was due to something pretty wonderful. My child has his priorities in the right order.

Noah's grandparents live in another state so when they visit there tends to be even more spoiling than might be expected from grandparents. One visit from my parents included several small gifts presented at the beginning of the visit, a trip to Wal-Mart with grandparents to purchase a new power ranger, and another trip to Wal-Mart with Grandpa to buy a new Spider Man bike and helmet (Noah's first big bike). They also took him on several outings to the park, children's museum, McDonalds and so on.

However after the grandparents had departed I asked Noah about the best part of the visit. He thought for a moment and said: "Going for a walk with Grandpa and seeing the dead possum."

The dead possum is located on a route we follow pretty regularly for our walks and we have watched the decomposition process with interest. Whenever we see the possum Noah always mentions his grandfather and whenever they speak on the phone he updates his grandfather on the status of the corpse.

Just think about these stories. Noah was showered with gifts and lavish outings but his favorite memory is a simple walk to the local airport and checking out the sites along the way.

Why do we spend so much money during the holidays on expensive gifts that will most likely be forgotten or tossed aside or outgrown — sometimes before the tinsel is taken down. In the end it is lavishing our time and attention on our loved ones that is the greatest gift of all.

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Not only is it a wonderful gift for our loved ones (who likely won't require a dead possum for bonding) but it is also a wonderful gift for ourselves. The holiday season can be frantic and filled with crazy shopping malls and unjolly traffic jams. Taking time out to spend quality time with our loved ones is really what we should give ourselves this holiday season.

Sitting around the kitchen table making homemade Christmas cards with Noah means our holiday message will stand out from the pile of glitzy prepackaged cards and we will have spent hours together giggling over our work with glue, construction paper, and scissors. I don't know about you but I'd much rather bond over glitter glue than a decomposing possum.

We are also working on his holiday gifts for various family members which I know will be lovingly appreciated by grandparents and cousins alike. More than crafting picture frames and holiday scarves we are crafting memories that I hope he will cherish his whole life. And I hope that I am teaching him that gifts from the heart mean much more than gifts from the wallet.

But then he may already know that as he snuggles down beneath his pillow and quilt — both lovingly quilted by his grandmother — for his afternoon nap.

You can enjoy more inspirational articles by Deanna Mascle at

<http://dawggone.net>

and

<http://officialwisdom.com>

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Extracting the Most from Your Time

By Mark Nemtsas

As we all know time is supposed to be the most precious resource in business. To help you be the most productive person you can be try the following tips to help squeeze out every last drop of your time.

1. The last thing you should do each work day is write down everything you need to do the next day. You'll go home thinking of the next days challenges and return to work refreshed and ready to take on the new challenges. It is essential that you write these tasks down, or better still create time items for each one in one of our timesheet software packages Timesheets MTS or Timesheets Lite for the next day.

2. Prioritize the tasks by deciding which are the highest value added tasks you can do. You can do this by asking yourself questions like, 'What is it on this list that I, and only I can do?', or 'why am I on

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the payroll here and which if these tasks am I best suited to address?'.

3. Be sure to make the distinction between what is 'urgent', and what is 'important'. An unexpected phone call may need to be dealt with 'urgently', but at what consequence to not completing an 'important' task.

4. To help determine how important a task is figure out the consequences of doing or not doing a task. Are there positive rewards to be gained from completing a task? Are there consequences of not completing a task?

5. Are your tasks just 'busy' work, or are they truly accomplishing something? This uses the the Pareto Principle (or the 80/20 rule) which you can read about here. Basically the concept of this is that 80% of the results are accomplished with 20% of the effort. Are your tasks part of the 80% or the 20%? Obviously if part of the 20% then these should have a higher priority in your day.

Here's to finding more hours in the day!

Mark Nemtsas

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