

WEEK 34: ALIGN YOUR CALENDAR WITH YOUR VALUES

Recently I was talking with a friend whose youngest child – her third - had just started a three-morning-a-week preschool program. “I suddenly have all these hours available, and I don’t know what to do with them,” she said.



I hear this refrain again and again from moms who suddenly find themselves with some extra hours in the week. It’s a common theme in the Beyond Baby community, and I’ve said it myself on more than one occasion.

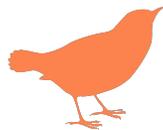
But I think “looking for something to do”, if not done mindfully, can put the cart before the horse.



When we start out just trying to fill up time whenever there’s a void, we run the risk of signing on for things we aren’t that jazzed about or taking on a bunch of commitments just because we can...or feel like we should.

The next thing you know you’ve created a life that might not reflect the person you want to be, or the things you really want to be accomplishing over the long haul.

Instead, I would encourage you to be much more intentional about the kinds of activities you invite into your life. There’s no hurry to fill up every spare minute!



Your Challenge: Who Do You Want To Be?

This week I'd like you to spend some time thinking not just about what you want to do, but *the person you want your actions to create*.

What You Do vs. Who You Are

Every action helps to create the person you'll be tomorrow, and next week, and thirty years from today.

What you want to do is about today. It's about how you'll use the 24 hours in front of you. It can be about staying busy, checking tasks off a list or feeling a temporary, fleeting sense of accomplishment.

But every action helps to create the person you'll be tomorrow, and next week, and thirty years from today. So before you start filling those hours, it makes sense to think about how to best serve your deepest values and highest priorities with

your daily to-do list. In his groundbreaking book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey calls this kind of looking forward "beginning with the end in mind."

Take out your Beyond Baby Workbook and ask yourself:

What character traits do you value most?

Make a short list – no more than five – of the kinds of character traits you would like to be remembered for.

Now look at the list and ask yourself whether those traits are currently represented by your actions and the way you spend your time. For example:

- If you want to be *generous* ... are you currently making time to give?
- If you want to be *creative* ... are you devoting energy to your art?
- If you want to be *healthy* ... do your habits reflect that priority?



Chances are you've got at least one or two character traits you'd like to strengthen or develop, but aren't investing in right now.

Remember that what you do shapes who you are! If there's a trait you aren't nurturing in yourself right now, it gets priority when you decide which activities to take on.

What did the character traits exercise teach you about yourself? What are some ways you can strengthen those traits as you make decisions about how to use your free time?

Challenge Checklist

- ✓ Make a list of character traits you'd like to be remembered for
- ✓ Ask yourself if the way you spend your time is contributing toward those value and character traits
- ✓ Write notes & observations in workbook