Quarantine and Quality time

Part of: GS-IV- Ethics-Interpersonal relationship (PT-MAINS-PERSONALITY TEST)

Lockdown can get a little overwhelming with the family staying together indoors for long periods. How can you make the most of your time in a healthy manner?

Many parents are having a hard time navigating our “new normal” of working from home in the current times. Being a mother of two teens, I have attempted to put together some useful tips for teens and adolescents to step up and take responsibility during such trying times.

Discipline, discipline, discipline

“Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.”

At the cost of not sounding regimental and old school, ensure that you are able to manage a timely schedule and follow basic activities of daily living (ADLs) in a reasonable time frame. Waking up in the morning and having a fresh start is not only important but also essential as it sets the tone for the day that follows.

While keeping awake all night, watching movies, binging on Netflix, gaming or socialising with your cliques is thrilling at this point, there can be a tendency to stay awake till the wee hours of morning. However, not being able to have a good night’s rest and lack of adequate sleep (seven to eight relaxed hours) is enough to create sleep deprivation and cause laziness, irritability, moodiness, fatigue, forgetfulness, a lack of appetite, and a depressed mood.

Cut down the entitlement

“There ain’t no such thing like a free lunch.”

Given the fact the current support system in the form of paid help — maids, cooks, baby sitters (for smaller siblings), caretakers for the elderly at home is missing — we need to help out. Everybody at home, most certainty needs to chip in.

You are an integral part of the family and it is crucial that you contribute and showcase some responsible behaviour. Mum and dad really can’t do much without your timely help and support.

Choose chores that you like (even when you really-really don’t like them) and pitch in. Cooking, chopping, washing dishes, cleaning the home, drying and folding clothes, taking care of pets, — the list is rather exhaustive and endless. So, grab your pick.

Technology / Internet / Gadget (ab)use

“The difference between technology and slavery is that slaves are fully aware that they are not free!”

India has the second largest internet users after China. Teens’ continuous, incessant and relentless gadget and screen usage bordering on addiction is a huge problem today for parents and teens themselves.
Given the current quarantine and lockdown, we need to cut ourselves a little slack — given these extenuating circumstances, but beware of the time that you tend to spend on your gadgets and gizmos and the sites and activities that you are engaging in online. It is not always a safe place. It is better to be safe than sorry.

There is excessive information on social media, most of which is untrue can be harmful for your consumption. FaceTime, Zoom, Facebook video calls, Skype are all virtual tools for you to chat and catch up with your friends and extended family. TikTock, online games and many other interactive apps increase your vulnerabilities to share plenty of information that might not be necessary and warranted. Use caution. Be mindful of your language and aggression levels as, many a times, you tend to loose grounding in a virtual world. Rationing screen time is well worth it.

Excessive usage of screen time can also result in symptoms such as dysfunctional daily schedule, lack of a routine, anxiety, depression, dishonesty, avoidance of work, isolation, mood swings, fear, boredom with routine tasks, agitation and procrastination.

Schedule time with family

“The family that prays together, stays together.”

Ensure that you engage with the family and do something meaningful for at least 30 minutes to an hour, every day. These can be simple activities together beyond the cleaning rituals and the chores that can become mundane. Cards, board games, old family stories sharing time, television/show viewing of common shows and serials, yoga, meditation, chatting and/or evening prayers are examples of what can become a ‘Family Ritual’. Build memories with your loved ones before you fly from the nest.

Academic mindfulness

“The early summer break in not going to last forever”

For those who have not been able to complete their board exams, please set aside some time for reading up and revising the subjects that are pending. These holidays are eventually going to end and yes, the suspense around that can create a lot of anxiety. But, the only way around is to be prepared.

Those of you, preparing for CETs and various other entrance exams, schedule in some time for a good enough prep, so that you are not taken by surprise should the lockdown be lifted on May 3 and dates get preponed. Many virtual content and classes have commenced to keep students afloat and so get on with your tasks on time as well.