

A Time to Simplify

The month of March is an important time in my family. My dad, brother, nephew, granddaughter, and I have birthdays this month. We enjoy getting together and celebrating with good food and lots of cake. Because my father has been very ill lately, we're huddling close, making this year's celebration especially meaningful.

Did you know that building strong bonds with the people closest to you, your family and friends, is the number one predictor of longevity? Nothing else in life adds value like enjoying the support of your inner circle. Having strong relationships is especially important when going through difficult times like serious illness and loss. The support of loved ones can make a big difference in how well you endure life's challenges.

Do you use your Pipeline Performance Group calendar to plan your off-duty time? Sleep is always a priority when it comes to planning the off-duty time of a shift-worker. Additionally, enjoying some of life's simple pleasures with others can be a great source of stress-relief. Here are some suggestions:

- Karaoke - always good for belly laughs
- Cooking and eating together
- Play a game of whiffle ball
- Take a trail walk; add a picnic
- Plant a flower or vegetable garden
- Complete a jigsaw puzzle

One more idea to add to the list is watching the sunset together. Other than the immense beauty provided in this daily event, watching a sunset is a great time to reflect on events of the past and discuss goals for the future. A sunset is a beautiful backdrop for meaningful conversation.

What are the simple pleasures in life that you enjoy? How can you share them with your loved ones? Don't let the busyness of life consume all of your precious time. Create value for yourself and others by investing quality time in the lives of those you care about.

Harvard researchers followed a group of several hundred men for decades, collecting information on their physical health as well as their mental and emotional health. Their findings are consistent with the notion that relationships are key to happiness, longevity, and overall health. Dr. Waldinger, director of the study, concluded "People who are more socially connected to family, friends, and community are happier, healthier, and live longer than people who are less well connected."

Another finding from the study is that being in secure relationships is protective for your brain, helping ensure that your memories stay sharper longer. All relationships have challenges, but as long as you feel you can count on the other person, benefits are realized.

Schedule some of your off-duty time this month for cultivating positive connections with others. You'll relieve work related stress and boost your health in every way.

