

The Five Minute Rule

Sixteen years ago, I was flying home from a speaking engagement reading the results to a survey about how much time the average father spends each week with his children. There were two criterias: It had to be one-on-one conversations and those conversations had to be done in a normal tone of voice. The national average? Seven minutes a week. That's not seven minutes a day; that's seven minutes a week!

This same survey also tracked the amount of time a husband spends talking to his wife-again, one-on-one and in a normal tone of voice. Twenty-seven minutes- for the week!

Sixteen years ago I only had two children. So, I decided to keep track of how much time I was spending with my children and my wife, one on one, quality time. When I tallied up the minutes, I was blown away. I was very close to the national average. I decided in that moment to do something about it. I created The Five-Minute Rule.

The Five-Minute Rule in a nutshell is this: Take five minutes every single day to be alone with a loved one and tell them why you are grateful to have them in your life. Five minutes. Very, very simple. Very, very easy. And very, very important. More important than eating supper, picking up email messages, talking on the phone or watching the news.

The first time I practiced The Five-Minute Rule with my son Brandon he was 10 years old. He was skateboarding with his friends across the street and I called him over. "Son, have I ever told you it was my generation who invented skateboards?" He said, "What do you mean, dad?" "Well, they didn't cost \$197 like yours. We took our old steel roller skates apart and nailed them on the bottom of a two-by-four board." "Dad, how come you've never told me this before?" "Oh, I'm sure I have son, you probably weren't listening." "No, dad. I would've remembered. I love skateboards." So, I told my son about the games we played with our skateboards. How we pretended we were in the Olympics. How we created a course and timed each other with a stopwatch. Whom ever had the best time out of two runs got to keep the trophy in their bedroom window for a whole week-until the next Saturday. "What a great idea, Dad. Do you have anymore stories?" Brandon and I sat on the curb and talked for another 20 minutes. Then I told him to go

back and play with his friends. But before he left, I told him about The Five-Minute Rule and how it was going to become part of our lives.

I watched my son pick up his skateboard and cross the street. A lump formed in my throat. I was standing in the middle of my driveway, tears streaming down my face and my boy turned around, saw me wiping tears away, ran back across the street and gave me a hug.

That's when the power of The Five-Minute Rule hit me full force. I knew I had to repeat it right then and there with my daughter Natalie. So, I knocked on the door to her room and said, "Natalie, lets go for a walk."

I knew I had to get her away from the telephone and her homework. "I want to talk to you. " "What's the matter, dad?" "Nothing's the matter. I'm just very happy about what's going to happen."

We started out around the block. It took us about fifteen minutes and when we got back to the front door she said to me, "Dad, did mom talk to you?" "No, princess." "Then Dad, I need to talk to you about something." Natalie and I walked around the block three more times. I learned more about my daughter in those 45 minutes than I had in the last 45 days.

It's called The Five-Minute Rule. Take five minutes each day with each of the people that are important in your life. At home. At work. On the telephone. Fives minutes to tell someone you love how much you appreciate them and how important they are to your life.

Rory Aplanalp has impacted the lives of more than one million people across the globe. He then founded his own company, Human Resource Development, a leader in the sales training field. For more than fourteen years, Rory was affiliated with Franklin Quest/Franklin Covey and was distinguished as their top seminar and keynote speaker. Copyright© 2001, Rory Aplanalp. All rights reserved. For information about Rory's speaking and training programs, please contact the Frog Pond Group at 800-704-FROG (3764) or Susie@frogpondgroup.com; <http://www.frogpondgroup.com>.

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Written by Rory Aplanalp