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TRAINS & TRACKS

[STRUCTURE]

Think about a train moving along tracks. It would be easy to assume the tracks prevent the train from moving freely, but it's just the opposite. The tracks give the train focus and direction. A train without tracks is just a disaster waiting to happen. You are just like this train. If you want to move forward you'll need structures and systems to keep you on track and help you make progress.

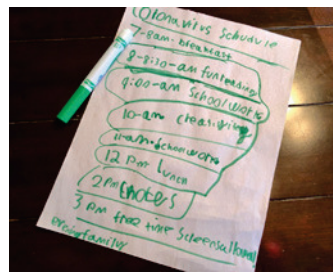
While they don't allow trains to go anywhere they want, railroad tracks actually help the engineer get to the right destinations more swiftly and without accident. They are a system to enable a train to reach its goal the best way possible. They don't hinder, they help.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Using a white board, brainstorm a family schedule during the time you will be home.

Then, have each family member create their own daily schedule. Give time blocks for things such as "chores," "creative time," "reading" or "exercise."

After creating your schedules, stick to them daily & have ongoing conversations about what works, what doesn't & what is important about keeping a regular schedule, even while staying at home.



MAKING TRACKS

Want to understand the power of routine habits? Ask any virologist during the COVID-19 outbreak. When each of them is asked what to do to stop the pandemic, their number one answer is very simple: wash your hands. In fact, simply washing your hands several times a day for 20 seconds can [majorly slow](#) the spread of disease. This is colloquially known as "[Flattening the Curve](#)." Isn't it amazing how a small and simple practice like washing your hands can make all the difference? The same thing is true in our daily routines.

Sometimes, the difference between a bad day and a good day is as simple as whether or not you made your bed, read something positive or used your creativity to make something. Positive and intentional habits like these are the key to a better life. So, what kinds of tracks are you building in your life?



Tik Tok Hand Washing Video

When Vietnam made a [catchy andwashing PSA](#), it was turned into a [viral Tik Tok sensation](#). Have your family make your own hand washing video and post it with the hashtag **#HabitudesHomeChats** for a chance to be featured on the **Growing Leaders Instagram @growingleaders**

Click [here](#) for additional ideas for creative and educational ways to stay busy at home

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why are structures and systems so important for our daily life?
2. What is the cost of living without structure? How could a lack of structure potentially derail you from getting to your goals?
3. What can you start doing today to create more structure in your home?



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HOSTS & GUESTS

[INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS]

Have you ever been a guest at a party? Then you know that guests don't have a lot of responsibilities. They might have a few conversations, or run into a friend they know, but for the most part they can just sit back and enjoy the party. Hosts are a different story. A host is responsible for planning, getting food, setting up the venue and even welcoming and introducing guests to others. Hosts take the initiative in relationships. They are intentional about them. You must do this too. You must see yourself as a host, not a guest, in your daily life and go out of your way to connect with others and provide for them.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Challenge your kids to host a dinner for the family.

They should create menus, set ambiance, cook food & plan dinner conversation or games.

Menu Ideas
Paninis & Soup
Salad & Pasta
Night Breakfast
Snack Dinner

Conversation
Dream Vacations
Would You Rather
Guess the Movie
Historic Trivia

Atmosphere
Candles & Tablecloth
Mood Setting Music
Floor/Table/Outside
Informal/Formal

Click [here](#) for additional ideas for creative ways to stay connected

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think of a few people in your life who are good hosts. What makes them good hosts?
2. Why is it important to make others feel comfortable?
3. How would relationships change if everyone took more initiative?



STAYING CONNECTED

Connections can be hard to come by, even when you aren't quarantined by Coronavirus. That's why it's amazing when you see people in isolation still finding ways to connect. [People around the world](#) are exercising together from their balconies, playing music together and utilizing video chatting technology to create together and solve problems. All this is only possible when people focus on being hosts, not guests, to those within their influence.

No where is this a bigger challenge than in our own families. Sometimes the people you know the best are the ones who you tend to make the least effort toward. May that not be true of our families during this time. The Coronavirus should be a reason to come together, and it's time we started taking initiative with those we love the most. So, what could you do to care or connect with others this week?



Make Music Together

When thousands were put into quarantine in Italy, it didn't stop them from connecting. Instead, they [played music together](#). Have your family grab instruments (real or make-shift) and make music together. Record and post it with the hashtag

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TRADE - OFFS

[WISE CHOICES]

Have you ever come to a fork in a road? Once you decide which path to take you have to live with your decision. Every decision is a trade-off. Doing one thing means you can't do another. It's an important reminder for life: you can do anything, but you can't do everything. In deciding what you'll do, you also choose what not to do. That's why taking time to make a wise choice is so important.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Host a family tournament using a decision-making game of your choice (e.g. tic-tac-toe, "The Game of Life," Chess or Yahtzee). Anytime a crucial decision needs to be made, stop and discuss the best process for making the decision. Challenge each family member to consider the benefits and consequences before making their choice. Decide together on a prize for the winner.



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Click [here](#) for additional ideas for creative ways to stay busy

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What makes "trade-offs" so difficult for people? How do you make difficult decisions?
2. How will learning to make wise decisions help us in our current situation in the world?
3. Think about many state's decision to close schools. What are the trade-offs of that decision?



MAKING DECISIONS

Monday March 16th started the beginning of a [historic decision](#) by New York City Mayor Bill De Blasio: He was going to close the nation's largest school system. Even though there were hundreds of COVID-19 cases in New York City, Mayor De Blasio said that it was "a decision I have taken with no joy and a lot of pain." NYC wasn't the first school system to close, and the situation seemed to warrant such a decision; so why was the Mayor in pain over this decision? It's because the decision was a trade-off. There are costs to closing schools.

Did you know that thousands of students in NYC schools depend on the schools for breakfast and lunch? How about that 114,000 students are homeless and will have no where to go if schools close? What's more, if thousands of kids are suddenly home full time, how do their parents manage work and care for their kids? To put it simply, the decision to close schools trades a health crisis for a childcare crisis. Of course, this doesn't mean that the wrong decision was made, it just means that every decision has consequences. So, how often do you consider the consequences of your decisions?



Stay at Home Picture

Medical professionals are asking people to stay home as a wise decision. Take a [Stay at Home](#) photo of you and your family to show your support of wise decisions, and post it with the hashtag **#HabitudesHomeChats** for a chance to be featured on the **Growing Leaders Instagram** [@growingleaders](#)



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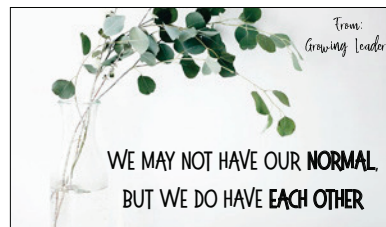
FOUNTAINS or DRAINS

[POSITIVE ATTITUDES]

Fountains and Drains have two opposite functions: fountains overflow with water while drains remove the water completely. In relationships with others, most people are usually a fountain or a drain — they either flow and overflow onto others, or they just drain people of their energy. My guess is that you’ve probably met both kinds of people. They either refresh the life in others or they dry it up. Driven by a positive attitude, great leaders focus on empowering people rather than exploiting them.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Get together as a family, and make a plan to write or record encouraging messages to friends and family. Challenge your kids to think especially about people they know who are more lonely during this time. (e.g. grandparents, friends or family members who live alone, etc). You could even challenge kids to create encouraging artwork they could mail or take a picture of and send.



Click [here](#) for additional ideas for creative ways to stay busy

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some characteristics of someone who is “draining” during a time like this?
2. What are some characteristics of people who have positive “fountain” attitudes during this time?
3. What are steps you can take to make sure you are more of a “fountain” than a “drain?”



HAVING PERSPECTIVE

At some point in life, we are all met with disappointment. Things just don't always go the way that we planned. Sadly, just like COVID-19, these kinds of situations in life are not in our control. What is in our control, however, is how we react to frustrating or disappointing situations. Very few understand this as much as seniors in high school and college during the Spring of 2020. Tens of thousands of soon-to-be-graduating students found out in the blink of an eye that the moment they had been waiting years for was no longer going to happen. No proms, no senior trips, no ceremonies, no championship games, and no caps and gowns. That is very bad news. What's amazing to us though is how some people were able to still maintain a positive attitude in the midst of a hard situation.

Just a few weeks ago, as hundreds of seniors were flying home from college without their diplomas, one airline took it upon themselves to [throw a graduation ceremony](#) right there on the airplane. The ceremony came complete with calling out names, walking up the aisle, and even a home-made rendition of “Pomp and Circumstance!” This action by the flight attendants didn't give the seniors back what they were missing, instead it taught them a more important life lesson: that they don't have to be a victim of their circumstances. They get to choose what to make of the hand they are dealt. You have that power too. So, will you be a fountain or a drain with the situation you've been given?

Want more? Read [this open letter](#) to graduating seniors written by a teacher who lost his senior year in 2005 because of Hurricane Katrina.



Making The Most

Take a photo or video of you or your family making the most of your quarantine and hashtag it [#quarantinelife](#) and [#HabitudesHomeChats](#) for a chance to be featured on the [Growing Leaders Instagram @growingleaders](#)



FILTER or NO FILTER

[AUTHENTICITY]

Have you ever used a filter on social media to take a selfie? Our filters give us the ability to choose which version of ourselves we show the world. Sadly, many people pretend to be something they are not online. No one really knows them. Great leaders are authentic and honest about who they are, both online and offline. Why? Because our level of integrity is the true reflection of who we are.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Use social media to find the funniest camera filters you can. Everyone take a picture of themselves to submit for a contest of funniest photo. Send these photos to someone outside of the house (an aunt, uncle or grandparent) to be the judge (if you want to keep it going, pick other categories like scariest, silliest or most creative).



Take filtered photo



Send to "Judge"



Attempt to win!

Click [here](#) for additional ideas for creative ways to stay busy

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why might it be tempting to distort how we are doing in the current situation?
2. Why do people feel the need to distort or magnify who we appear to be?
3. What does it mean to be a person of integrity? Why is integrity important right now?



BEING HONEST

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, an [interesting article](#) began circulating online. The author of the article speculated after conversations with professional counselors and therapists that much of the world was experiencing one of the 5 stages of grief. So, what are we grieving? As it turns out, all kinds of things: lost jobs, missing friends, missing school, cancelled graduations, and cancelled spring break plans. Lots of people are also grieving for friends and family who have contracted the Coronavirus.

The problem is that while many of us are experiencing grief, we aren't often talking about it. We have become so conditioned in our culture to present only happy and nice looking things on social media, and because most of us are no longer face-to-face with our friends, many of us are not being honest about how we are really feeling with anyone at all. If we are going to get through this time, we need a new normal. So challenge yourself: what if you video chatted with a friend, or talked with a family member at home about what was really going on with you? What if we posted on social media how we honestly feel, rather than pretending in order to present what we think people will like better? We think it's time for a revolution of honesty. So which will you present to the world: filter, or no filter?



More Human

Last week [a video went viral](#) of a ballet teacher instructing from home while her cat planned to interrupt the class. It was honest; it was real. This week, post something online that is honest and real. Share a struggle, a funny thing that happened, or a thought you can't get out of your head. Let's make the online world a little more human, and post it with the hashtag

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OPPORTUNITY STATUE

[TIME MANAGEMENT]

In ancient Greece there was a statue called "Opportunity." The statue had long flowing hair in front and a bald head in back. Although it was a little strange, it was meant to teach a lesson: opportunity is something you can grab while it's coming at you, but you can't catch hold of it after it's passed. This is why leaders manage opportunities. Everyone has 86,400 seconds each day to use or abuse. If you don't use your time wisely you can't get it back once it's gone.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Make an opportunity board

Similar to a mood board, make a board (physical or in an app like Pinterest or Milanote) of ways you and your family can seize the opportunities and hours you have to uplift those around you, bettering yourself and your family. This can include family projects you want to accomplish, personal skills you can still work toward and people you'd like to uplift as well. Make your plan of action, and then seize these opportunities while they're here now.

Send friend \$5 for coffee	Make an opportunity board
GOALS	
Take groceries to grandma	Continue learning piano

Click [here](#) for additional ideas for creative ways to stay busy

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your plan to leverage your time right now? How can you organize your time to better achieve your goals?
2. Why is it so important to assess your priorities and constantly shift them?
3. How would our world would change if everyone made the most of their free time right now?



SEIZING OPPORTUNITY

Opportunities are things you don't get to take back. Which is why it was devastating when leaders around the world were unprepared for the COVID-19 pandemic. Supplies came late, problems weren't prioritized, and clear directions were not given.

We will never know how the virus could have been slowed if the whole world had moved faster to seize the opportunity to contain it. In the midst of failure, however, there has also been success.

Over the last weeks and months heroes of all kinds have realized that the results of the pandemic have also created an opportunity to meet needs, share kindness, and serve one another. Just [watch this video](#) of all the amazing things that are happening. This moment in history may just be defined by opportunities: both the ones we missed, and the ones that we hit out of the park. So, how are you seizing the opportunities before you?



Being #Thankful

Find something you or your family have seen relating to moments of solidarity or appreciation during this time, and repost it with the hashtag

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