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# Why You Should Spend Money on More Free Time, Not Stuff

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Do you get into bed every night wishing you had more time in your day? Parenting is a full-time job for many, while others are trying to balance work, family life, and other activities. Feeling like you never have enough time – or “time famine” as it is commonly referred to now – is becoming a more widespread and serious issue for many people, especially busy parents juggling multiple responsibilities.

On average, moms spend about 14 hours taking care of the kids, 18 hours on housework, and 21 hours working a paid job each week, according to [Pew Research Center](#). Although the recent trend overall is that dads are helping out more at home, moms still spend twice as much time on childcare and housework. Add in the constant barrage of emails, texts, and social media posts, and it is no wonder we question where the time went.

Constantly feeling the time pressure can lead to stress, insomnia, and overall unhappiness. Science has a solution for your time crunch – although it will cost you. A new study directed by researchers at the University of British Columbia and Harvard Business School found that [using money to buy more free time can make us happier](#).



The researchers evaluated over 6,000 adults in the United States, Canada, Denmark, and the Netherlands to test whether buying time made a difference in their lives. The group was diverse, including 800 millionaires. They were asked questions about how much money they spent on buying time, and discovered that fewer than a third of them spent money to buy themselves time each month.

Those who did spend money on time reported greater life satisfaction than those who did not. The effect was true for people with all income levels, so even the wealthy were reluctant to spend money to save time. Finally, the participants were also asked to rate their feelings about stress related to time issues and their overall life satisfaction.

In another phase of the research, 60 adults in Vancouver, Canada participated in a two-week experiment. On the first weekend, participants were asked to spend forty dollars on a purchase that would save them time, such as paying to have their house cleaned, buying lunches to be delivered to work, or compensating neighborhood kids to run errands for them. On the second weekend, they were told to spend the money on material items like clothing, wine, games, and books. The study showed that people felt happier and less stressed after spending money on ways to save time as opposed to stuff.

So, how can you buy more free time? First, evaluate which of your daily tasks you absolutely dread doing. Then ask yourself whether you can delegate this work to someone else for a fee. Many people feel guilty, inadequate, or lazy if they pay someone else to do chores for them, but the scientists explain that buying time will make you happier, so stop worrying about it. According to one of the researchers involved in the study interviewed in *Science Daily*, “Lots of research has shown that people benefit from buying their way into pleasant experiences, but our research suggests people should also consider buying their way out of unpleasant experiences.”

Of course, not everyone can afford to buy themselves some time. Do what you can. If you are able to manage the extra expenses in your budget, then consider paying for these time-saving jobs:

- Get your groceries delivered
- Hire someone to clean your home
- Call someone to handle household maintenance
- Have your dry cleaning picked up at your front door
- Sign up for a landscape service to mow your lawn, weed your garden, and deal with seasonal nuisances like leaf collection and snow shoveling

If paying for these services is a challenge, then consider hiring kids from your neighborhood for less money or exchanging services with others such as having a teenager mow your lawn in exchange for some tutoring help. You can also budget in a cleaning service for once a month or every other month, which will still make a difference and free up some of your time.

The best part of having extra time is that you can enjoy more of what you love – yes, even parents deserve time for a hobby! You will also have more time to spend with your children – to listen, connect, and hug them. Buying more free time will ultimately improve your quality of life so that you can go to bed at night with a smile and feel satisfied about how you spent the day.



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