

## **Substituting your weekend joys during the lockdown:**

### **Re-arranging your life for another two weeks**

by

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I am not aware of a single person working in both essential and non-essential services who would claim that life is the same during the lockdown as it was before. All of us had to make some major adjustments in our lives to deal with the implications and consequences of the lockdown. In fact, our lives had changed significantly, so much so, that in many cases we can't do what we used to do before the lockdown.

I stay on a wine estate in the Western Cape. As a working farm and vineyard estate, the farming activities and residential life co-exist and it offers a unique blend of work and life experience to see both these two different worlds converging on one piece of land. You may think that it is not too bad to be locked down on a wine farm. While there may be some truth in that, the reality is that I can't enjoy the things I used to do before. You will have similar experiences. Think about all the nice things you do, those things that really give you joy in life particularly over a weekend, that you can no longer do as a result of the lockdown.

It also makes me realise once again how privileged we are in South Africa as one of the top ten countries in the world in terms of the number of hours of sun we have per day, as well as the number of days of sun per year. In fact, South Africa has more sun during winter than many other countries during summer. No wonder that outdoor activities such as camping, cycling, hiking and sport are so popular over weekends. I do realise that there are many people confined to small houses, rooms, flats, townships and shacks who are even more frustrated because of the lockdown. For many it is almost impossible to be locked down. You cannot do the things you wanted to do before, such as visiting friends, neighbours and family, going to a pub or shebeen, or simply walking down the street.

Weekends are important times to recover from the work we do during the week. Even though non-essential employees work from home, it is very stressful to deliver work outputs, in addition to worrying about your family members and friends during the lockdown. Many of my friends and family members are likely to lose their jobs. This week I was inundated with phone calls from people worrying about their own future, as well as the sustainability of their companies during and after the lockdown. Thus, even weekends are not stress-free, because many of us working from home, will continue to work during the weekend, especially because we cannot do the other things we used to do over weekends that are now illegal according to the Disaster Management Act and its regulations. In essence, you can't go out, you have to

stay at home, and we know it is the right thing to do. But maintaining your sanity is of utmost importance. You need to continue doing things you enjoy, or alternatively replace the things you can no longer do with substitute activities. I would suggest that you plan your weekend in a way that you can replace your old joys with different, adjusted or new joys, so that you can still experience a meaningful weekend and maintain some joy in your life irrespective of the lockdown.

Here is an example of how I have managed to change my weekends during the lockdown:

<b>PRE-LOCKDOWN WEEKENDS</b>	<b>LOCKDOWN WEEKENDS</b>
Happy Hour with neighbours and friends	Happy Hour at home with my wife Virtual Happy Hour with friends and family
Parkrun on Saturday	Walking around the house (inside the yard)
Walk on the farm	Working in the garden
Visiting my parents	Phoning my parents Phoning friends and family Cleaning the house, garage and car
Preparing for Monday classes	Preparing for online classes
Writing my journal	Writing my journal and articles Writing a book chapter Reflecting on life and future planning Personal financial planning
Reading magazines and newspapers	Reading online content Reading books
Walking in the nature reserve	Taking an afternoon nap
Watching sport	Spending more time with wife and daughter Listening to radio and watching television
Attending church	Watch video stream of church service
Going to shops	Only buy essential food
Updating social media posts	Generating more social media content
Gym	No gym! Spending more time on patio
Collecting quotes	Collecting more quotes

As you can see, rearranging my life required some re-adjustment, but has not been that difficult. Admittedly, I do have a sense of loss in some areas, such as Happy Hour, Parkrun, other walks, gym and visiting my parents who are also locked down in an old-age home. But replacing or substituting some of these activities helps me to rearrange or reformat my life so that I can still function and experience a meaningful weekend. It is essential to prevent boredom and not to feel hopeless and totally frustrated during the lockdown. Not only does it help me use my time effectively, it also assists me to be focused and to do more of the things that I sometimes neglect or simply don't have time to do. One of my hobbies is to collect great quotes by great people, now I do more of this so that I have quotes at my fingertips when presenting classes and conference talks.

Take stock of your life and ensure that your weekend works for you, while conforming to the lockdown rules. It does require planning, refocusing and adjusting your life to suit the changing circumstances. It also helps to cope with the increased level of stress, fear and anxiety caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Values are also important in family life and while the crisis requires flexibility and adjustments, certain things are non-negotiable. Rudeness, fighting, alcohol and other substance abuse and domestic violence are not allowed at my home. This is also a wonderful time for living together, rediscovering humanity, improving communication, sharing in activities and chores, and building good relationships in families.

I do look forward to the end of the lockdown, and to enjoy the things I miss such as outdoor activities and Parkrun. But if the lockdown is extended, I am ready for it. I also look forward to do some major community work after the lockdown. The inequalities in society were amplified during the lockdown, and if there is anything requiring similar dedicated attention, then it is to tackle unemployment, inequality and poverty as we rebuild the economy after the lockdown. Imagine if we can also have daily ministerial briefings about actions to reduce unemployment in future. Government has been impressive with their speed of actions over the last two weeks, despite their inconsistent regulations and inability to protect health workers and other essential workers.

Millions of people live in poverty and terrible living conditions making it difficult to survive from day to day, and they will indeed struggle to experience any sense of joy during the weekend. A special thought to all health and essential workers, and to all people in isolation and quarantine. In addition, condolences to the nine South African families who have lost their loved ones infected by the coronavirus.

We all have unique circumstances. Our security staff members will continue working on the estate, but our farm workers' jobs may be at risk, especially in view of the fact that government forced us to stop production and sales of wine. South Africa is now the only country in the world not allowed to export wine, despite being one of the top wine producers in the world.

Notwithstanding these challenging times, see how you can rearrange your weekend to still experience continuity, meaning, focus and joy in your life. You also need a break from Microsoft Teams. Weekends are important times to recover, to rest and to recharge your batteries for the next week of working from home during the lockdown. Build your

relationships and resilience during these challenging times. Have fun, joy and happiness with your loved ones this weekend. Try to survive and enjoy another lockdown weekend. Stay at home and be safe and healthy this weekend.

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