**BEING BUSY**

**BrE engaged/ AmE busy tone** →

**Hang up, the line is busy /engaged.** →

**I am very busy.** →

**busy bee** →

**tight/ busy schedule** →

**busy street** →

**The shops are busy before Christmas**. →

**The traffic is usually busy from 3 to 5 pm.** →

**She is always keeping me busy.** →.

**He is such a busybody**. →

**The place was as busy as a beehive.** →

**Listening:** Are you busy? Do \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ busy life? It seems we get busier and busier in our lives. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ busy. I’d much rather have nothing to do. Being busy makes me stressed and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ making mistakes or forgetting something. Who’s the busiest person you know? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or she is really stressed. The busy people I know are always looking \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ their next holiday… and then in their holiday they are busy doing other things. I think we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ourselves with too many things. We need \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ relax \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ slowly. Even at work we have to look busy, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ not. When the boss comes, we tell our friends, “Look busy!” That’s silly. It would be great \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ‘busy’ disappeared from the English language.

Choose one day of your week and tell your partner about your daily schedule starting from when you wake up until you go to sleep.

What activities do you enjoy?

What is the busiest time of day?

Do you like being busy?

What keeps you so busy?

What do you think is the busiest period of life?

Are we busier now than people were in the past?

How do you feel when you are busy?

Do you know anybody who is really busy?

What is positive and negative about being busy?

How do you feel when you have nothing to do?

Is it good to be bored sometimes? Why? Why not?

What do you think about the following quotations? Do you agree with them? Which one best describes what you think?

* **In my experience, being busy and working hard is the key to sanity/happiness.** *Jemima Khan, a journalist*
* **I don't care how busy I am - I will always make time for what's most important to me.** [*Kevin Hart, an actor*](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/k/kevin_hart.html)
* **Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans.** *John Lennon, a musician*
* **Half an hour's meditation each day is essential, except when you are busy. Then a full hour is needed.** [*Saint Francis de Sales*](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/s/saint_francis_de_sales.html)
* **I'm busy and that's the way I like it - when I have too much downtime I get into trouble.** [*Craig Charles*](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/c/craig_charles.html)
* **The busy have no time for tears.** [*Lord Byron*](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/l/lord_byron.html)

**Listening:**

1. What does Susan have to do on Saturday morning?  
A. walk the dog  
B. clean the house  
C. go to the doctor

2. Where does Susan have to go at 12:30?  
A. to school  
B. to the dentist  
C. to the science museum

3. What time is Susan meeting with Julie?  
A. 12:00 PM  
B. 1:00 PM  
C. 2:00 PM

4. What will Susan do after she cooks dinner?  
A. clean the dishes  
B. play soccer with her brother  
C. call a friend

5. Why can't they watch a video at Susan's house?  
A. They can't decide on a video.  
B. Susan's mother is going to use it.  
C. The machine isn't working

**Why don’t we go out for a meal?**

**Student A: Student B:**

Friday morning – **work**  Friday morning – **work**

afternoon – **work** afternoon - **free**

evening – **free**  evening - **English lesson**

Saturday morning – **gym** Saturday morning - **free**

afternoon – **shopping**  afternoon – **golf with a client**

evening – **meeting sister** evening - **free**

Sunday morning – **swimming**  Sunday morning – **homework**

afternoon – **free** afternoon - **free**

evening – **homework** evening – **cinema with friends**

**Make a conversation and use the following phrases:**

Would you like to go…..?

I would love to but ………………

What about………?

Are you free……?

That sounds ……….

When shall we …….?

**Reading: The Disease of Being Busy** by [Omid Safi](http://www.onbeing.org/column/omid-safi) (shortened)

I saw a dear friend a few days ago. I stopped by to ask her how she was doing, how her family was. She looked up, voice lowered, and just whimpered: “I’m so busy… I am so busy… have so much going on.”

Almost immediately after, I ran into another friend and asked him how he was. Again, same tone, same response: “I’m just so busy… got so much to do.”

The tone was tired, even **overwhelmed**.

And it’s not just adults. When we moved to North Carolina about ten years ago, we were thrilled to be moving to a city with a great school system. We found a **diverse** neighbourhood, filled with families. Everything felt good, felt right.

After we settled in, we went to one of the friendly neighbours, asking if their daughter and our daughter could get together and play. The mother, a really lovely person, reached for her phone and pulled out the calendar function. She **scrolled**… and scrolled… and scrolled. She finally said: “She has a 45-minute opening two and half weeks from now. The rest of the time it’s gymnastics, piano, and voice lessons. She’s just…. so busy.”

Horribly destructive habits start early, really early.

How did we end up living like this? Why do we do this to ourselves? Why do we do this to our children? When did we forget that we are human beings, not human doings?

Whatever happened to a world in which kids get muddy, get dirty, get messy, and heavens, get bored? Do we have to love our children so much that we overschedule them, making them stressed and busy — just like us?

What happened to a world in which we can sit with the people we love so much and have slow conversations about the state of our heart and soul, conversations that slowly unfold, conversations with **pregnant pauses** and silences that we are in no rush to fill?

How did we create a world in which we have more and more and more to do with less time for leisure, less time for reflection, less time for community, less time to just… be?

Since the 1950s, we have had so many new technological innovations that we thought (or were promised) would make our lives easier, faster, simpler. Yet, we have no more “free” or leisurely time today than we did decades ago.

For some of us, the “privileged” ones, the lines between work and home have become **blurred**. We are on our devices. All. The. Freaking. Time.

Smart phones and laptops mean that there is no division between the office and home. When the kids are in bed, we are back online.

In many Muslim cultures, when you want to ask them how they’re doing, you ask: in Arabic, *Kayf haal-ik?* or, in Persian, *Haal-e shomaa chetoreh?* In reality, we ask, “How is your heart doing at this very moment, at this breath?” When I ask, “How are you?” that is really what I want to know.

I am not asking how many items are on your to-do list, nor asking how many items are in your inbox. I want to know how your heart is doing, at this very moment. Tell me. Tell me your heart is joyous, tell me your heart is aching, tell me your heart is sad, tell me your heart **craves** a human touch. Examine your own heart, explore your soul, and then tell me something about your heart and your soul.

[W. B. Yeats once wrote](https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/754152-it-takes-more-courage-to-examine-the-dark-corners-of):

*“It takes more courage to examine the dark corners of your own soul than it does for a soldier to fight on a battlefield.”*

How exactly are we supposed to examine the dark corners of our soul when we are so busy? How are we supposed to live the examined life?

I am always a prisoner of hope, but I wonder if we are willing to have the structural conversation necessary about how to do that, how to live like that. Somehow we need a different model of organizing our lives, our societies, our families, our communities.

I want my kids to be dirty, messy, even bored — learning to become human. I want us to have a kind of existence where we can pause, look each other in the eye, touch one another, and **inquire** together: Here is how my heart is doing? I am taking the time to reflect on my own existence; I am in touch enough with my own heart and soul to know how I **fare**, and I know how to express the state of my heart.

How is the state of your heart today?

Let us insist on a type of human-to-human connection where when one of us responds by saying, “I am just so busy,” we can follow up by saying, “I know, love. We all are. But I want to know how your heart is doing.”

Explain the meaning of the words in **bold**.

What is the message of the article?

Do you agree with the author?

Is it true that we overschedule our children?