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Who are the culprits? Start communicating!

Do you think the art of conversation is dying? Yes, I do. Why is it so? Do we have this case? The reasons behind this are very simple. It's just because of our busy lifestyle and the advancement of technology. I will elaborate on both reasons one by one.

How does our hectic lifestyle affect the quality of parent-children conversation and their relationship? Nowadays, students have to stay at school for at least 8 hours, not including the extra-curricular activities or the tutorial classes. When we deduct the time of sleeping, the time spent at school and joining other activities, there is not much time left. On the other hand, our parents have to work for a long time and are often back from work late, so the children may not really have enough time to have any meaningful or in-depth conversation with their parents. How can parents and children develop a close relationship with each other when they don't even have enough time to talk? Parents and children need to spend time having heart-to-heart talks. Children learn so much better when they can exchange their thoughts and often intriguing ideas with their parents who can give them wise advice. Having conversation is crucial to all parents and children.

I remember an auntie, who is a friend of my parents, once shared that she was upset because her children and herself are too busy and cannot afford the time to have a conversation with each other. They don't even have much time to see each other at home. What a pathetic, and yet very common scene! When they have "conversations", all the topics are about school assessments, homework and miscellaneous items such as school fee, pocket money issues and other non-intimate conversational topics. Deep inside this auntie's heart, she very much wants to know what had happened to her children at school. She yearns to find out more about her children's thoughts and feelings too, but she just does not have the time to do so. Isn't this a familiar scene to us as well? Busy parents and busy kids don't seem to click well with each other.

On the other hand, you may be surprised to know that the advancement of technology has been undermining our ability to master the art of conversation. When we expect technology to be a great thing that makes our lives much more convenient, we must be aware of the setback of over-relying on technology. Take the increasing popularity of social media for example, many users suffer more because of online bullying through social media platforms. Social media is neutral itself, but how we use it or manipulate it matters. Very unfortunately, we tend to rely more on texting with the increasing popularity of social media platforms and our ability to

master the art of conversation is gradually undermined. The serious lack of face-to-face conversation thus hinders our natural development of conversational skills, turning many young people into introverts or computer geeks who are afraid of initiating conversations with others.

We know the problems and we have to solve them, but how? I know all people have a jam-packed schedule and want to take some rest at home instead of initiating conversations with others. Is there a way out? In fact, all we need to do is to build up a habit of conversing with others. It just takes 5 - 10 minutes to have a nice conversation with our beloved ones every day. Having a conversation is a great way to relax ourselves. When you have some problems in your daily lives, talk to someone you trust and you will be inspired and strengthened to deal with your problems.

Being motivated in initiating conversations alone is not enough. We need to know how to master the art of conversation. To be a great conversationalist, we have to explore the techniques involved. Actually, empathy is very important, the person whom you are talking with may need your understanding and you need to show empathy so that the person you talked with won't feel their loneliness. Another technique is that you have to ask some good questions. Asking good

questions can help your conversation to go deeper and make the conversation more meaningful.

When we try to look for the culprits of the death of conversation, we may as well think about what exactly we can do to revive the art of conversation. There is only one way out – start communicating genuinely and initiate more heart-to-heart conversations.