

# Getting it All Done in Summertime: Expanded vs. Constricted Consciousness

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***Summertime! – I used to find it so hard, and still do to some extent, to stick to my routines and get things done during times like these...***

And... it is here – summertime! Are your kids home or do you have a couple more weeks? So, here's the thing – I used to find it so hard, and still do to some extent, to stick to my routines and get things done during times like these. The fitness, the healthy eating, the kids' chores, the cleaning, the meal prep, the working. Everything!

Thankfully I'm not a perfectionist so over time, I have

naturally developed the following mindset for such times: I'm going to do it anyway, even if it's not as good, long, healthy or whatever, as it usually is. I will adapt, knowing it will be harder. And I will plan ahead by writing it all down the night before so that I don't have to use my brain to think or figure anything out *on the spot*.

I'm also going to be realistic about it. I'm definitely NOT going to be as productive with work and self-care when all the kids are home. But I WILL do something. Something is definitely better than nothing. Know what I mean?

I'll get up extra early once or twice a week to do my app workout. And I'll walk at night twice a week and work out with the kids once a week. I will take off work and enjoy it, knowing that it's Hashem's will for me to spend time with my children and that I am much more productive and creative in my work after having taken some time off. I'll upgrade the kids' chores schedule with some extra tasks for when everyone's home.

I will make sure my energy levels are up by doing one or more of the following: going to sleep by 10pm, stopping to eat by 7pm, intermittent fasting, not eating gluten.

Another thing I try to do – and I admit it's hard and I'm not always capable, but boy is it the best jumpstart to a great day: waking up early. For me, during summer vacation, that's 6:45 a.m. I get up while the kids are still sleeping, drink water with lemon and have my coffee, do 20-30 minutes of exercise, *daven* and journal. I review my schedule/to-do list for the day that I wrote the night before and I am READY TO GO!

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I used to get so stressed out over irregularly scheduled programming like summer vacations and the holidays. My thinking was so constricted: I can't take off work, I won't be able to get all the extra cooking and cleaning done, I won't have any time for myself, how am I going to entertain them all day, I'm going to be exhausted!

Thankfully, with time and experience, my thinking and state of mind have expanded. There is always a solution, there are many ways to get things done. And, something that I learned from my homeschool/parenting mentor Chana Rus Cohen – it's not my job to entertain or service the children. They can and need to learn how to fend for themselves, how to be bored, and how to not be bored.



*I used to find it so hard, and still do to some extent, to stick to my routines*

This expanded vs. constricted state of mind is actually a concept in kabbalah: *mochin de'gadlus* vs. *mochin de'katnus*, which translates into an expanded consciousness vs. a constricted consciousness. As we go through life, we are supposed to grow from constricted to expanded.

Getting up early, getting the kids to pitch in more, letting go of work for a while, eating for energy... these may sound like a no brainer to some people but it took me years to figure this out as well as a lot of helpful *shlichim* (messengers) on the way. I'm so grateful that I have been able to move from a very constricted consciousness in this area to one that is a lot more expansive (although there is still work to do, don't get me wrong).

We are so blessed to have another day. We are so blessed to have summer! Let's have some fun! Let's try to be happy through an expanded perspective and thinking – everything comes and goes in this physical world so let go of “the story” and bask in the light of receiving another shot at soul expansion in this physical world.

Trust me I am talking to myself here more than anybody else! I'll see you on the other side, okay? ☐