



READING

KITCHEN MOTIVATION

Where do we find our motivation to spend time in the kitchen?

I have discussed this a little already throughout the program, that cooking and taking care of our health is a task that is sometimes easy, and sometimes hard.

I'd be lying if I told you that it was always fun and always easy to cook for the family every day, and prep food for lunches and cut fruit and salads every day.

But the truth is that my wife Michelle and I do eat very healthy meals daily and create virtually all our meals ourselves from scratch, together as a team.

So why do we make that our priority and where does the motivation come from?

Nearly every time I facilitate my health and wellness workshops, during question time I always get someone from the audience saying something along the lines of;

"But Erik you are a qualified chef, so surely it is so much easier for you to cook and look after your health?"

And my answer is always the same.

Just because I can chop an onion faster than most, doesn't make it any easier for me to get the family dinner on the table, day in day out.

What I now know as a busy parent is that apart from learning to cook food from scratch as an apprentice chef (which is an important life skill), I was taught the importance of team work and working together in the kitchen to create a great result.

But as an apprentice chef we were also taught to be very organized when working alone, always thinking ahead, always setting ourselves small goals as we cooked by ourselves.

My head chefs were great mentors that wanted all their apprentices to excel in their careers and in everyday life. I am forever grateful to them, even though there were plenty of times when I questioned why I was working every weekend and during holidays!

There are certainly plenty of times when my wife and I just cannot be bothered cooking. For me as the part time stay at home parent, it is relentless. I often just sigh as I enter the home kitchen and write my daily prep list before grabbing ingredients out of the fridge and get on with the creation of today's dish at hand.

Sometimes I would rather be at work in any other kitchen than my own, or running a workshop, or working on new material for my blog or pursuing one of my hobbies. But the show must go on, and by always discussing, planning and preparing our menu ahead of time, Michelle and I are mentoring each other to stay on track in the preparation of our daily meals.

When alone in the home kitchen what's most important for me is putting in the effort and getting ahead with food preparation – it's a small but vital step in not only making it a little easier to cook the next day's meal, but more importantly giving you a positive moral boost.

After 25 years of professional cooking and home cooking, I still enjoy nothing more than that sense of achievement when pulling pre organised and prepped ingredients out of the fridge ready to stir-fry, braise, sauté etc. It is a small moral boost and it can always boost my mood. Michelle and I always help each other after dinner to put in the extra effort to stay ahead in our home kitchen, it keeps things ticking along, always being ahead of the game.

TIMEWASTING, PROCRASTINATION AND URGENCY

We're always busy these days. But guess what, so were our parents, we just did not notice it so much when we were young.

As we become teenage adults and start working, driving, and move away from home, we learn quite quickly that we have responsibilities, to ourselves, and the people around us.

The every day hard work cannot be explained or taught. It really has to be learnt the hard way. Tasks that we never knew had to be done and chores that we saw and knew were part of life, but did not have to do for ourselves suddenly become apparent, and as we started to live life away from the family home we also started to acknowledge that everyday life is not just fun and games but is sometimes hard work.

To begin with, when Michelle and I first met and moved in together, the amount of tasks and chores were not too bad. Most couples keep up with everyday life and its To Do list. Especially before children, there was usually enough time to do everything that needed to be done around our home and we even had some spare time to indulge in.

As children came along this obviously changed and suddenly we were faced with a brand new challenge that never really seemed to exist before. We became so busy that suddenly there wasn't enough time to do anything. So after thirty or so years of having little urgency in our lives, we were suddenly facing this factor on a daily basis. The big question is what do we need to do to cope? How and what do we prioritise during the day and how do we actually get everything done that needs to be done, and stay healthy physically and mentally at the same time? What we need to do is decide what is most important on our To Do list, and make that decision based on our overall physical and mental health, for all family members.

Cooking home-cooked meals is by far the most important action to be done on a daily basis by all mums and dads. We cannot procrastinate when it comes to cooking healthy meals. This will have an impact on our nutritional intake and diet.

Exercise is something else we need to prioritise.

Healthy meals and exercise are top of the list. The rest still has to get done, but doesn't have the same impact on our health. Time with the children can be incorporated into both of these activities, so that's a win win.

This program has talked about how to implement cooking into your lives. But to chill out / meditate is also important to mentally recharge the batteries.



