# 10-Day ECourse - Having Fun without Spending a Fortune

I’ve added the table to contents so that you can easily find each day.

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# Email 1: Raiding the attic

Subject: Raiding the attic

Dear [Name],

How long has it been since you’ve been up in the attic other than when you dragged down the Christmas decorations? When did you last really go through the stuff up there?

The cool thing about doing it is that you never know what you’ll discover that you can either use for fun or sell. It may be things you simply forgot about. You might as well find them and make use of them.

Discover Old Memories

If you know that there are lots of pictures in the attic, you can get some boxes to organize them. Consider organizing them by timeline, event, or by person, into different boxes, and the next time you can put them into albums and make it a fun arts and craft day.

Find Lost Treasures

You may think you know everything you’ve ever put up in your attic, but people have been known to forget what they put out of the way up there. You may find something that is worth a lot of money, something you thought you lost, or something that simply makes you happy that you want to rescue from the attic and really use.

Make Money

If you find things in your attic that you never use and have not looked at or used (or missed) for a year, it’s time to consider getting rid of them. You can use Craigslist, eBay, or Facebook Marketplace to sell your stuff. You can even plan a yard sale if you want to. Make it more fun by spending the earned money on a fun day of some kind.

Enjoy Togetherness

It is fun being together with your family, digging through boxes, putting on clothing, and looking at pictures, albums, and other memories. Your kids will love hearing all your stories that get jogged from looking in your attic.

Even something like going through your attic to find lost treasures and to discover old memories can be fun and not only is it free to do it, you may even end up making money off the deal if you choose to sell some of the treasures you find.

After all, if you’re not using it and it’s been up there collecting dust for a long time, you may as well sell it. Use the cash you make to do something fun with your family. Whether that involves going to the local miniature golf course or being able to take the family on a bigger vacation, you won’t know until you go on the hunt in your attic for everything you forgot.

The next email has details of ten inexpensive or even free family activities. Don't miss it.

[SIGN OFF]

# Email 2: Ten inexpensive or free family activities

Subject: Ten inexpensive or free family activities

Dear [Name],

When you have a family and work and go to school all week, it’s fun to do something that's not work or school related on occasion. These are all fun things you can do that are free or very inexpensive to do. Your whole family will enjoy each activity and not even care that money is not involved.

1. Work on a Farm

You may have a local farm that accepts workers for a day. They teach you the workings of the farm, and you and your kids do real work depending on the type of farm. You may learn how to feed chickens, milk goats, or something else.

2. Free Local Museum Days

If you have any museums or tourist attractions in your local area, they usually have free days for local people. Find out when those days are so that you can make your plans to visit them on the free days.

3. Go on a Picnic

It’s so expensive to eat out, so why not set up a picnic and take it on the road. Go eat at a picnic table in the park. You can take any food that you’d normally eat at home which is easy to make on a grill, or put together like sandwiches, chips, and fruit. Remember to take fun games like a frisbee or something.

4. Arts and Crafts

Most kids love to get messy, and arts and crafts can do that for you. You may need to buy some supplies for your arts and crafts, but you’ll have something to show for your efforts. Your kids can make useful things like potholders, rock walkways, and art for the wall too.

5. Start a Garden

If you like spending times in the outdoors, you may want to start a garden. Even if you cannot start one outside due to lack of space, you can grow sprouts and herbs indoors. Kids love taking care of spouts and watching them grow.

6. Binge Watch Movies

This is fun to do on bad weather days or even weekly. You can arrange a weekly "junk and movie" night, watching movies from Amazon Prime or other channels. Eat some fun food, set up blankets and comfy seating, and cuddle and enjoy.

7. Bake Something Together

Cooking and baking is always fun for kids because it’s like arts and crafts. They can get messy and get to eat sweets. Plus, when you make things at home, they’re naturally healthier even if it’s a cookie.

8. Volunteer Together

There are many ways you can volunteer as a family depending on the ages of your kids. You can adopt a highway and clean up trash, you can volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, or you can help feed people in a soup kitchen. Maybe pets are more your thing - then you can all spend time helping at your local animal shelter feeding, walking, and cleaning up after animals.

9. Get More Involved in Your Church

If you attend church, this is another inexpensive way to enjoy family activities. Churches, especially large ones, have plenty of activities besides church on the Sabbath. Yes, you will have to join and pay your tithes, but usually, you only pay what you agree to, which can make the activities you do with your church inexpensive.

10. Sightsee Locally

Put on your tourist shoes and visit your own town as if you’re an outsider. What do they look at in your area (or within an hour or so from your home)? Do those touristy things. This may end up costing some money, but it’s one of the few things in this list that does.

Doing fun things with your family without spending a lot of money makes the time together even more enjoyable due to the lack of money-related stress. Remember that no matter what you choose to do, the important factor is spending stress-free time together, fully focused on each other.

Seeing friends can easily become an expensive thing to do, but it doesn't have to cost a lot. We'll talk about that in our next email.

[SIGN OFF]

# Email 3: Where and how to see friends without spending unnecessary money

Subject: Where and how to see friends without spending unnecessary money

Dear [Name],

Everyone likes to spend time with their friends when they’re not at work. But if you’re on a tight budget, it can seem daunting to ever get to be around your friends without blowing it. However, the truth is, most people really don’t want to go out and spend tons of money. They're happy just to see each other.

Stay Home

This works for people who have enough space at home to invite people over. Doing things like playing games, watching movies on TV, and eating a nice meal at home is always fun - especially if you take turns going to each other’s homes so that everyone gets a break eventually.

Go to a Park

Meeting at a park to walk, jog, play frisbee or other things like that is also a fun and inexpensive way to do things with your friends. It’s always more motivating to exercise and do physical activities with friends than alone. Doing it with friends while enjoying deep conversations and laughter makes it better.

Go Hiking

You can make hiking more exciting if you add geocaching to it. This is a fun way to enjoy time with friends without spending money. If you’ve never done geocaching, you’re missing out. It’s very interesting.

Link - https://www.geocaching.com/play

Volunteer Together

Depending on how healthy you all are, you can set up volunteering events together. They can be related to larger events or a regular thing like building houses with Habitat for Humanity. If you can find something that is more regular that you can do on a good schedule, it’ll become a habit to do it.

Start a Book Club

This is a great way to spend an evening. You can host it at home with BYOB drinks and snacks to make it even cheaper. Choose a book, read it, and meet regularly to discuss the reading assignment.

Learn Something New

You don’t have to pay for a costly class. Each of your friends, including you, are an expert at something. Set up a monthly class where you can take turns teaching friends new things. You can do anything anyone is interested in.

You may be one of the first in your friendship group to start planning more inexpensive but fun events, but likely they’ll enjoy it so much they’ll follow suit and start planning free or cheap things themselves to avoid spending unnecessary money.

Eating out can be really expensive. In our next email, find out how to eat out at home at a much lower cost.

[SIGN OFF]

# Email 4: "Eating out" at home

Subject: "Eating out" at home

Dear [Name],

Going to restaurants is expensive in more than one way. It costs a lot, but it’s also usually very unhealthy. Most people don’t even go to expensive places either. They tend to go to the chains which all have very high-calorie meals that are cheap to prepare. The problem is, the price is not low when you do it often, and it’s just not worth it.

Instead of going out to get meals you think you like, you can make them at home. Whether it’s Mexican night, Indian night, Italian night or something else entirely, you and your friends can do it at home. The way to get it done is to make it special.

\* Dress Up – Everyone can dress nicely as if they’re going to whatever place serves the type of food you plan to make. It will feel more like an event to everyone by asking people to dress for the event as if they’re going out in a theme of some kind.

\* Set the Mood – Clean up a little extra, set a centerpiece on the table, fix the lighting, and create a mood with some music. It’s amazing how different eating to music is compared with the TV and random YouTube videos playing in the background.

\* Pot Luck – Regardless of the theme of the dinner, you and your friends can make light work of it all by agreeing to each bring something to the dinner party. So, if it’s Italian night, someone might bring the bread, someone might bring the prepared pasta, and someone else might bring a salad.

\* Cook Together – Set up a griddle in the middle of the table so that everyone can cook together like they do at some fancy places. You can also set up a hot pot to create Laotian food at home. Think a little outside the box to make it more fun.

\* Get Away from the Table – Instead of sitting at the table, you can create something more fun such as an Arabian tent with some sheets and blankets strategically placed with a table and pillows on the floor. It’s all up to you and the type of meal you plan to enjoy, but it does not have to be at the table.

\* Plan Activities – Don’t just plan to eat and drink; also plan some activities such as playing Pictionary or setting up your telescope to enjoy some stargazing. Make it a fun event to come to so that it’s memorable to everyone and feels like a night out.

\* Order a Food Box – There are many food boxes you can order with restaurant-quality meals inside, and they will let you order extras so that you can cook it at home. These meals, for the most part, taste great and have good directions.

Remember that the main point of having dinner out at home is to make having dinner an event. Set the mood, dress the part, and plan some form of activity. Don’t worry about cleaning up until the next day but if you have guests, you can also get everyone to help as part of the activities.

Next time, we'll look at some exercises and sports that are inexpensive or free to do.

[SIGN OFF]

# Email 5: Exercises and sports that are inexpensive or free

Subject: Exercises and sports that are inexpensive or free

Dear [Name],

Getting involved with some sports and exercises can be expensive, but thankfully there are also some that are either inexpensive or close to free (other than the equipment called for). If you have kids, you can point them to these sports and activities to ensure they can take part but less expensively than football and cheerleading.

\* Soccer – You don’t need much equipment for soccer, so that makes it less expensive. You just need soccer cleats, the uniform, and a ball to practice. That will not be very much. Usually, the city or school fees for this sport are a lot less than other activities such as football, cheerleading, and band.

\* Cross-Country Running – When you’re a long-distance runner, you simply need the right shoes, some running clothing, and a place to run. Often in schools, the fees to join cross-country running is a lot less expensive than other more popular sports.

\* Swimming – This is also not very expensive to get involved in if your local city or school has a swim team. Even if you don’t want to do it as a team sport, you can swim on your own in the local city pool or the YMCA (and some gyms) inexpensively, as a swimsuit doesn’t have to cost a fortune.

\* Basketball, Baseball and Softball – These sports are also usually much less expensive to play in terms of equipment needed and fees. Check with your local city for teams for all ages, as well as your child’s school for more information.

\* Walking and Jogging – All you need to jog or walk are the right shoes, comfortable clothing, and a road or path to run on. Both are excellent exercise, and almost anyone can do it with a little practice.

\* Frisbee – There are formal "ultimate frisbee" teams today, but even if you don’t want to join a team, getting family and friends involved in regular frisbee games is good for your health and your friendships.

\* Join a Gym or the YMCA – Today it is not as expensive to join gyms or the YMCA as it once was. Check out your local gyms and the YMCA to find out more. The YMCA will be more expensive, but do look at the benefits and compare the cost of doing the activities elsewhere.

\* Video Exercises at Home – The option is always there to exercise at home, using digital video to help. Via Amazon Prime you have access to yoga videos, aerobics videos, and more, all included in your membership.

Remember that there are likely many free resources in your home town that can give you more information about inexpensive or free exercises and sports for all ages. To find this information, check your local library for more details.

Next time, we're going to look at some inexpensive and fun hobbies.

[SIGN OFF]

# Email 6: Hobbies that are fun without eating into your paycheck

Subject: Hobbies that are fun without eating into your paycheck

Dear [Name],

It’s always good to do something besides work. If you’ve ever wanted to get a hobby, though, you may have discovered how expensive they can be. Having said that, there are still some hobbies that are not only fun but that can also add money in your pocket. So if you want to find out more about hobbies that are fun without eating into your paycheck, read on.

\* Running, Biking, and Walking – While some might not consider these activities to be hobbies, for some people they are. If you love something so much that you consider it more than exercise and something you want to know more about, it can be classified as a hobby.

\* Cooking – If you like to cook but you mostly cook the same things all the time, you may want to expand your horizons and make cooking a hobby. Start learning about new foods and new techniques that you can practice on your friends and family.

\* Writing – Have you ever wanted to write a book? You can probably find a writing club or group through your local library or college for inexpensive or even free writing groups to help you get started. You can also find clubs and groups for any genre online on Facebook groups and on Delphi forums.

Link - https://www.delphiforums.com/index.ptt

\* Sewing, Knitting, and Crafts – This can become a money maker. Find a craft you like, such as sewing and knitting, that helps you learn to make valuable and needed items. Sewing your own clothing can save you money since they’re probably better made and cheaper than store bought.

\* Wine Making or Beer Brewing – The only thing that can stop this activity is space. If you have enough space, it’s relatively inexpensive to get involved in wine making and beer brewing. Plus, you end up with a product that you can give as gifts and really use.

\* Photography – This is very fun and thanks to digital cameras a rather inexpensive hobby to start. In the old days, you would have to get the film developed, which for a photographer could run to hundreds in a week. Now you can spend hundreds on a nice camera, but you won’t spend a dime on film if you don’t want to. This hobby can also lead to money if you’re good at it.

\* Gardening – This is a fun hobby because it gets you outside and in the dirt. Studies show that gardening is a healthy activity that reduces blood pressure and helps protect against cardiovascular disease. Plus, again you produce something that can be used, sold, or given as gifts.

There are many things to get involved in that produce something such as a product, food, or something that can be sold, traded, or given. A hobby like that will become either a money maker or a net zero endeavor that won’t break the bank.

Next time, we'll give some tips on how to save money on social activities so you don't have to miss out.

[SIGN OFF]

# Email 7: Tips for finding discounts and special deals for social activities

Subject: Tips for finding discounts and special deals for social activities

Dear [Name],

Everyone likes to do fun activities, but it can be hard to find things that don’t break the bank. However, today there are ways to find discounts and special deals so that you can be more social and get more involved in social activities. You can try the following ideas.

\* Groupon.com – This site offers discounts on many different things, from food to activities. They change daily so check every day to find out what is being offered in your area.

\* LivingSocial.com – Here you can get discounts for travel and more, with up to 80 percent off. This is a good site to find awesome deals, and the cool thing is if you recruit enough people to do the deal with you, you might even get it free due to referral credit.

\* Your Birthday – You can get free stuff for your birthday at a lot of different places such as Cold Stone Creamery where you can get some free ice cream. Find out the places in your local area that offer freebies for whatever reason, and frequent those places more often.

\* Movies – Many local areas, especially in the summertime, offer very low-cost afternoon movies that get you out of the heat in the summer, and give you a fun break in the AC with some popped corn. Usually, this is going to cost about two to five dollars per person on these special days. You can also watch free movies with Amazon Prime, and if you have a smart TV by using Crackle.com.

\* Your Local Library – Many people forget, but your local library is a wealth of information for anyone to find out what to do locally for free and at a low cost. If you don’t know how to use your library, the librarian will be more than happy to help you get informed about your local area.

\* Get a Local Event App – Numerous local event apps can help you find things to do socially that are free and low cost. DoStuffMedia.com, Eventbrite.com, and AllEvents.in are good apps to download on your phone or to use on your PC to find fun, inexpensive and even free local events.

\* Community Calendars – You can often find these at your local library, the Chamber of Commerce, or nowadays via Facebook too. Many cities have these calendars right on their city websites.

\* Parks and Recreation Department – This is a good way to find any activities and classes for you and your family. Sometimes they’ll even list other things just because they’re part of the community.

\* Local Colleges and Universities – Look at the calendars at your local schools to find activities that are open to the public. Schools often have inexpensive plays, talks, and other activities.

\* Local Publications – Many local publications are good places to look for free and low-cost social activities to do as a family, alone or with your partner.

Finding special deals, low-cost activities and even free stuff to do may take a little work but if you pay attention, ask questions, and keep your eyes open, you’re sure to discover a variety of events that you can do that won’t break your bank.

Next time, find out some great tips for getting cheaper theater and movie tickets.

[SIGN OFF]

# Email 8: Tips for getting your theater and movie fix without overspending

Subject: Tips for getting your theater and movie fix without overspending

Dear [Name],

Going to the movies is a fun activity to do, but it can really add up in terms of the expenses. Tickets are not cheap to start with, and then when you add on food, it can be a high-priced night. One night for a family of four at the movie can run over 100 dollars very easily.

\* Try Sam’s Club and Costco – They often sell tickets at these types of stores that are much lower in price than the cost at the theater. If you’re a member already, you may as well check it out to see what is available. Each local place will offer different things.

\* Stick to Afternoon Movies – The afternoon movies are always more affordable than going at night. Plus, it’s usually less crowded and not as noisy, so that makes the experience even more enjoyable.

\* Go to Late Run Theaters – Sometimes these are only a buck or two, even at night. The movies are still just as good so if you haven’t seen the movie, seeing it at a late run theater over a first run won’t really matter to anyone but your wallet.

\* Avoid Specialty Theaters – IMAX, 3D movies and other specialty theaters are naturally going to be more expensive. Skip those and save that experience for something super-special.

\* Eat Before – The food at the movie theater is so expensive. Paying 22 dollars for a medium popped corn and a drink is not a good deal and never will be. If you eat before you go, you don’t need to buy the snacks at all.

\* Bring Your Own – Now this is very controversial advice regarding snacks at movies. First, find out the rules. You don’t want to get arrested or kicked out due to bringing your own food. Some theaters really don’t care, though, especially the afternoon summer movies they put on for kids. And no one will mind if you bring water.

\* Get Group Deals – For almost any movie, if you have a large group of friends that want to go together, you can call and ask for a special based on the number of tickets you will buy. Don’t forget to check the discount apps.

Remember, only choose movies that you really want to see. Don’t go just because you want something to do. Make the experience an event instead of just robotically doing it because you’re bored. Go to movies you want to see, eat before you go, and bring your own water to drink.

Vacations can be really expensive but there are ways to make them cost less. We'll give some great tips in the next email.

[SIGN OFF]

# Email 9: Vacation and staycation tips

Subject: Vacation and staycation tips

Dear [Name],

If you want to feel as if you had a real vacation, even if you do it inexpensively or enjoy a staycation, you’ll be able to as long as you do it right. The first thing you may want to do is reassess what you think of like a vacation based on your budget.

Keep Your Dates Open

When you want to book a vacation away from home, you may want to be flexible about the dates so that you can get a better deal. There are even last-minute vacation options and if you’re willing to wait until the last minute to choose, it can save you as much as 80 percent. Check out Lastminutetravel.com for some ideas.

Go Off Season

Plenty of vacation spots are still fun and amazing in the off-season. In fact, in many cases, you may enjoy it more because there are shorter lines and fewer people. Some good times to travel are the end of January, early February, and early in December.

Don’t Go on Weekends

If you want to save money on trips, try traveling on Tuesdays and Wednesdays instead of the weekend. So instead of taking a weekend trip Friday through Monday, try one Tuesday through Friday.

Don’t Get Stuck on Your Destination

Instead of choosing your destination first, set your budget and the timeline before you do anything else. Then go look for deals based on that situation. Use sites like Booking.com, Tripadvisor.com, and others to find deals.

Skip Tourist Spots

It might sound strange, but you can travel to so many places that right now aren’t known tourist spots but are still amazing and fun. You can stay in a five star hotel in the Philippines for less than $150 a night, but you can rent an entire apartment in Thailand for a month for $650.

Set a Google Alert

Did you know that you can set up alerts on Google to watch flight prices for the dates you want to go? You can also use Airfarewatchdog.com for this. You can set exact dates or date ranges for this alert.

Clear Your Browser

If you search for tickets and vacations but don’t buy, chances are the next time the prices will go up. The best way to fix this problem is to clear your browser or use an incognito window while you’re shopping around.

Make It Special

Even if you end up staying at home, make it special. A staycation can be really fun if you plan it right. What are the things people do in your town (or within an hour or two's drive) if they’re on vacation?

Go Backpacking

You can go backpacking around the world and stay in hostels inexpensively. Sometimes vacations don’t have to look like luxury but will still be full of adventure and fun. Try learning more by going to Hostels.com.

Going on vacation is fun, and in some ways it’s a necessity. Finding time to rest, to see new things, and to get your mind off the normal daily grind is essential to good health - both mentally and physically. You can go on a vacation, even on the cheap, if you plan it right.

In our last email, we're going to give some tips on how to say no when you're asked to do something that you really can't afford.

[SIGN OFF]

# Email 10: How to say no when you can't afford it

Subject: How to say no when you can't afford it

Dear [Name],

When someone asks you to do something that you cannot afford to do, it can be hard. It’s hard because it dings the self-image a little. Saying out loud that something is not in your budget can make you feel as if you’re not successful. But the truth is, if it’s not in your budget, it’s often not in your friends’ either – they just have different priorities. You never know; being honest might help them too.

\* Be Realistic – It’s hard to say no to your kids, to your friends, and to yourself. However, it’s imperative that you’re realistic about what you really can afford and your budget. It’s so tempting to not stick to a budget when people want to do fun things, but if you do stick to it, it’s going to be so much better for you and your family. But first, you have to convince yourself.

\* Suggest Something Different – One thing that comes to mind is the holidays. Some families are smart and choose one name per person, so that gift giving isn’t a nightmare. Other families sometimes just don’t think. You can suggest it to make it easier.

\* Say No – You don’t owe anyone any explanations when you say no to something. "Now is not the right time", "I can’t do it today," or, "No thanks" are all good enough words to use when someone asks you to do something you cannot afford.

\* Tell the Truth – If someone is your friend, they’re going to understand if you say you really cannot afford it. Let them know that it’s not them, it’s you, and that you would like them to ask you again but that right now it’s outside your budget.

\* Go and Be Careful – It's hard when friends are going out to a restaurant that you cannot afford. Why not go and order water, and an appetizer or side dish for your meal. Call ahead and ask if you can do this for dietary reasons, as some larger cities require you to order.

\* Use Humor – It can be disappointing to have to say no due to money concerns, but being self-deprecating and humorous about something will help. Say something like, "Not this time; I have to get my Lamborghini tuned up." It’ll cut the ice, and your friends will get it.

Saying no is a good idea when it’s true that you cannot fit whatever it is into your budget. But it does depend on who you’re saying no to and what about. If it’s something frivolous, it’s easier, but if it’s something important such as band camp for your kid, it can be a lot harder. Using facts and humor can help a lot, though.

[SIGN OFF]