



GEARS FOR FAMILIES

MAKING THE MOST OF THE TIME
YOU HAVE WITH YOUR FAMILY

AaronLee.co

About GiANT



Gears for Families is based off the incredible work of Jeremie Kubicek and Steve Cockram of GiANT Worldwide in their book 5 Gears: How to Be Present and Productive When There Is Never Enough Time.

Learn more about GiANT Worldwide and how you can pick up a copy of the 5 Gears Book at

AARONLEE.CO/FAMILYGEARS

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Introduction

Ever been at a family dinner and a phone rings?

What happens next?

Before cell phones, the call would often go unanswered. Rules and customs abounded to set aside the dinner table for focused family time. But today, a call or a text message can interrupt the meal and throw off the mealtime conversation.

In a fast-paced, hyper-scheduled world, how do we make more time for the people who are most important to us? How do we elevate and liberate those closest to us in order to bring about the best in them?

This is why we want to introduce the Gears for Families. This simple visual vocabulary can be shared with your whole family and clarify expectations on:

- when it's time for a meaningful connection
- when it's time to cross off a big project
- and when it's time to step back and recharge.

We want to help your family win, and we hope this will help.



TWO STORIES

I want to introduce you to my 7 year old, Teagan.

I was working on a big project in my home office on Friday afternoon. Teagan and her sister stopped by every few minutes with another request, question, or just to tell me a story. They were eager for the weekend to start and enjoying family time.

I really needed to get the project done before the weekend's deadline. And I also didn't want to continue to delay our family night. Every Friday night is pizza and a movie, which I know is important to our girls — and to my wife and I.



I asked Teagan if I could teach her something — the 5 Gears. And what followed is what you're about to read.

At the end, she said, "so if I can let you get your project done now, we'll be able to get to family night sooner?"

Bingo.

I also want to introduce you to Tom and his son, Andrew. At the time of this story, Andrew was 26, and their relationship wasn't strong. As Andrew would later put it, there was no relationship.

One afternoon, in a tension-filled moment of butting heads — yet again — Tom asked Andrew if he could share something. Tom shared the 5 Gears, and that began a significant relationship for father and son.

Fast forward a few years, and the expectations are clear, the communication is open, and they now enjoy a meaningful relationship. This tool didn't heal their relationship. It started their relationship.

All because of simple, shared language. A common vocabulary and a visual idea.

We leave a lot of vacation days on the table, believing work cannot go on without us.

We want to believe something different.

We want to believe nothing is more important than these years with our kids. This is one job that uniquely belongs to each of us.

Ready to dive in? We hope you're ready.



GEARS FOR FAMILIES

ABOUT GEARS

We don't see manual transmissions much on the road anymore, but our cars are shifting gears anyway.

And once kids get their first "grown up" bike, it will probably have more than one gear.

Shifting gears helps us move at the optimal speed to our conditions, maximizing the effort we put in and increasing the output.

Have you ever tried to ride a bike uphill in a higher gear? It takes a lot of extra work. How about driving a car on the highway in low gear? Your engine is going to push hard, harder than it

needs to. Wouldn't it just be easier to shift into the right gear?

We believe our relationships are the same way. We are wired to live at different speeds, and we accomplish different kinds of work in each gear.

If we want to be most effective, we need to be in the **right gear at the right time**.

The 5 Gears were created out of a desire to create liberating leaders in every sector and city of the world. And we want your home life to benefit as well.

Here are the Gears for Families.

A close-up photograph of a mechanical system, likely a bicycle or a small engine. The image shows two large, metallic gears with teeth, and a chain drive mechanism. The background is blurred, showing green foliage. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the number 5 and the text '5th Gear Hard Work'.

5

5th Gear Hard Work



GEARS FOR FAMILIES

HARD WORK

5th Gear is where we shift into high gear. At home, this looks like writing a paper for school, a book report, or creating a science fair project.

Or maybe for the parents, it's painting the kid's bedroom or updating a bathroom.

We all have these major projects, and if we want to be most effective at completing the project, our time needs to be uninterrupted. It takes a while to shift into high gear and get our Hard

Work underway, so we need to be focused.

This is the project I was working on when I taught these tools to Teagan.

Helping everyone in the family understand when it's time for hard work means we can all allow space and time for hard work to happen.

And when the big project is finished and we feel accomplished, we can more comfortably shift into lower gear.



4th Gear Checklist



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CHECKLIST

What's on your checklist? Grocery items? Holiday gift list? Work projects? Emails to return or letters to write? Paperwork for school or signups for the next season of arts or sports?

With the world at our fingertips, we can be bombarded with tasks, messages, and contact from the outside world 24/7/365. And we all have things to accomplish, both from home life and work life.

We want to be productive, and we want to make a good impression. So naturally, we want to check off the boxes and move along.

Like any of our gears, it's important to work in each gear, and when it's appropriate, shift out of gear. With

24/7/365 connectivity, it's easy to let a notification, ding, or phone call bring us out of the present and into the world of the checklist.

Many of us can sit in 4th gear way too long. We come home from work, still on the phone or checking messages as we pull in the driveway.

Or catching up on our social media feed while trying to fix dinner, fold the laundry, and watch our favorite show.

All the while, we're sitting right next to our closest people - our family.

Ready to connect? Then it's time to put 4th Gear in a box, give it a time limit, and be ready to shift gears.

It's time to be present.



3

3rd Gear Family Time



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FAMILY TIME

In our family, every Friday night has been Family Night since our oldest started kindergarten.

Unless another family event fills the calendar, we pick up a pizza, grab a movie, and enjoy the night together.

This is casual, family time. Making memories, being together, lighthearted conversation and banter.

In 3rd Gear, we are fully present.

The phones are away, the computer is closed, and we're ready to take our conversation somewhere deeper if the opportunity presents itself. But mostly, we're focused on being here.

This is also a family vacation, a road trip, or a family dinner out on the town. It can even be as simple as nightly dinner together.

In any of these settings, we want to be present. We want to listen, to laugh, and to love. We want to fully hear and be heard.

We won't be accomplishing anything from our task list like 4th Gear.

And we won't get into deep, connecting moments in 3rd Gear. That's why we have 2nd Gear.



2

2nd Gear

Us Time

You can call this “Us Time.”

Or for dads with daughters, moms with sons, or moms with daughters — these can be “dates.”

Or if you’re a dad with sons, maybe you’ll want to refer to “Man Time.”

No matter what you call it, now you’ll know what it means.



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US TIME

When Teagan was 2, she and I started to go on dates. Nowadays, my wife or I will pick up one of the girls from school, run around town to check a few things off the list, and sneak off to Starbucks or the local ice cream shop for a quick date.

These dates give us meaningful, one-on-one time with our girls. It allows us to focus on each of them, hearing what's on their heart, and devoting our full attention to what they have to say.

And we model this in our marriage, too. Every so often, we'll invite a friend or our girls' grandparents to hang out with the girls while we have a date.

Our in-depth conversations and focused time together "fills our

buckets"¹ and connects us in a deep and meaningful way.

For parents of teenagers, we have had numerous parents talk about the milestone trip they take with each kid. At 13, 16, 18 or some other milestone, the kid gets to pick where they go. And for a short overnight or weekend away, the experience is fully focused on investing one-on-one.

One of our friends alternates birthday parties with friends with a memory trip every-other year.

2nd Gear can be a rich and rewarding time, and we all need it to recharge our relationships.

¹ How Full Is Your Bucket? For Kids by Tom Rath. Available at <https://amzn.to/2WJgGkL>

A first-person perspective of a cyclist on a road. The road is paved and has several cracks. The cyclist's handlebars and front fork are visible at the bottom of the frame. A white rectangular box with a thin purple border is centered in the image, containing the number '1' in a purple circle, followed by the text '1st Gear' and 'Me Time' in purple.

1

1st Gear
Me Time



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ME TIME

Ready to regroup?

Every kid reaches the point in the day where they need to reset and regroup. Something has gone on too long, it's too hot, or there's been too much of something.

Couldn't we all use a little "time alone in our room" during the day?

Whether it's proactive or reactive, 1st Gear time is invaluable to living out a balanced rhythm.

Maybe you love to read a good book or catch up on your favorite show. Maybe it's a chance to daydream or journal. Or perhaps it's time to pray during your day.

No matter what your rhythm of life, 1st Gear time helps us become healthier and more balanced as individuals.



Reverse
Forgive



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FORGIVE

Wait, where did this 6th gear come from?

A lot of times, the tension in our families comes from misunderstanding or stepping out of line based on how we are each operating in the gears.

If someone wants to connect (2nd or 3rd Gear) but someone else in the family is working (4th or 5th Gear), trouble will likely follow.

Reverse gives us a chance to cleanup. To rectify. To put the pieces back in place again.

Sharing a language which gives space for forgiveness allows us to clean up effectively and efficiently, without letting our troubles bring us down.

And if we can catch these challenges in the moment, we won't allow them to fester and grow into bigger problems than they truly are.

Forgiving helps you create an environment of liberation for everyone around you.

SHARING THE LANGUAGE

Visual vocabulary will help this stick for your family.

Visualize the gear in your mind. Share a visual representation of the gear you're in. All of these tools will help you make it stick.

To help you and your family share the language, you'll probably find it helpful to tell a family member when you're in a different gear.

Maybe it means holding up the fingers for the gear - most of us have 5 fingers on each hand, so we just need to hold up the number.

Or have a sign or a marker board at the ready to let them know where you are.

Better yet, let them know what gear you're headed into. When you need 1st Gear time, tell the people around you, "I'm going to take a few minutes for 1st Gear."

You can also indicate Reverse - "reverse" in sign language is indicated by holding up two fingers and crossing them. [sidebar: Tom's son, Andrew, indicates the need for forgiveness with a "beep. Beep. Beep." like a truck backing up.



*Download the Printable
Poster at*

AaronLee.co/FamilyGears



TOOLS FOR TEAMS

Aaron is based in Richmond, Virginia, and serves with Fortis Leadership, helping individuals, teams, and organizations become better versions of themselves.

While much of Fortis' work is focused on teams and organizations, we've shifted into the family space in this eBook.

For more information about the **5 Gears** and using leadership tools like this in your organization, contact Aaron:

AaronLee.co/FamilyGears

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