

The Mayonnaise Jar

Below is a story called *The Mayonnaise Jar*, a reminder at this time of year of what is really important in life...

A professor stood before his philosophy class with some items in front of him. When the class began, he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar, and began to fill it with **golf balls**. He then asked the students if the jar was full, and they agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of **pebbles** and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of **sand** and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous, yes.

The professor then produced **two cups of coffee** from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

“Now,” said the professor, as the laughter subsided, “I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The **golf balls** are the **important things**: God, family, children, health, friends, and favorite passions; things that if everything else was lost, and only they remained, your life would still be full. The **pebbles** are the **things that matter**, like your job, house, and car. The **sand** is **everything else** — the small stuff.”

“If you put the sand into the jar first,” he continued, “there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you.”



So... pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out to dinner. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the dripping tap.”

Take care of the golf balls first — the things that are really important. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand. One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented. The professor smiled.

“I’m glad you asked,” he said. “It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there’s always room for a couple cups of coffee with a friend.”

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day is not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and the two cups of coffee.