

Life's too short for reality TV



MARTY WILSON

Master life or *Masterchef*. You can only choose one. I despise *Masterchef*. Phew, it's good to say that publicly. I hate it not because it is bad television – that's a matter of taste – but because each week more than 1.5 million Australians watch people they don't really care about working their patooties off trying to make their dreams come true. The result? Another 10 hours wasted (multiplied by 1.5 million) that these viewers could have spent working their own patooties off chasing their own aspirations.

So I hate *Masterchef*, *The Block*, *Dancing with the Stars*, *Biggest Loser* – all of them. Reality shows allow us to feel a bland, artificial version of that incredible thrill you get from having a crack and chasing your ambitions, but without having to risk anything. That's unreality TV.

I have nothing against the contestants in there busting their pork buns every week. That's their dream. But if you find your every conversation is about the latest elimination challenge, you are wasting the main raw ingredient of life – time – and making sure your future is a fast food version of the gourmet degustation you could plate up for yourself and your family.

Imagine how you could change your reality if you gave up reality TV. Picture what could happen if you took the time spent watching *The Block* and spent it renovating your own house, with your children. What a difference it would make to their lives if you bonded with them by spending those hours creating a house you all love.

Then add up the time you and your partner have spent watching spray-tanned couples pretend to “have a real connection” on 11 seasons of *Dancing with the Stars*, and imagine spending those hours working on the actual relationship with your spouse.

And consider how different life could be if you spent the 5-15 hours a week you waste on the artificial emotions served up on *Masterchef* trying to achieve your version of Julie Goodwin's life-changing win.

Please stop tuning in to hear how “this time the contestants have pushed themselves to the limits and pulled out all the stops”, and start listening to that persistent voice you hear as you fall asleep every night saying, “Hey, maybe I could write that book, start that business, help those people ...”

A friend in Britain has written what he calls his *Masterchef* novel. Whenever his girlfriend sat down to watch it, he would work. Two years later the girlfriend is gone, but the novel is finished

and he is looking for an agent.

Have a look at the people you admire, the real “get things done” types who go out there and inspire us. Ask them how they spend their time. Follow their Facebook page or Twitter feed for a while, if they even have one.

I bet you won't see Darren Lockyer tweeting about how he “Just can't believe Hayden put ginger AND lemon-grass in that soup. LOL!!!” He's a bit busy getting stuff done. And I bet you won't find Ronni Kahn of Oz Harvest facebooking “Purple?!?!? For a bathroom? OMFG!!!” She's a bit busy getting food to people who can't afford it.

For my three most recent books, on motherhood, cancer and nursing, I interviewed more than 300 people about the nuts and bolts of what our incredibly short time on this planet is really about – life, death, family and love. If there is one thing I can guarantee, it's that there will never be a person who lies on their deathbed, shaking with rage, sobbing, “Dear God, I wish I'd spent more time watching *Masterchef*.”

Marty Wilson is a speaker, stand-up comic and the author of the *What I Wish I Knew...* series.