If someone has sent you this: they're thinking about starting something alongside work and family, and some of the time for it would come from time you share. Tick what you've done, and talk about the rest.

Time: a checklist before you decide

Tick it on your own, or each of you separately and then compare.

The time it needs

- [ ] **You've assessed how much time was spent working on the idea in the past month.**
  Check your calendar rather than relying on an impression.
- [ ] **You've estimated how many hours a week it would need for the next six months.**
  Base it on the tasks you know are coming, such as customer conversations or building a first version.
- [ ] **You know which hours you could set aside without something at work or at home suffering.**
  Evenings and weekends that are already committed don't count.

Where it comes from

- [ ] **You've chosen a regular slot each week.**
  A fixed time is easier to protect than whatever is left over.
- [ ] **You know what that slot replaces.**
  Every hour comes from somewhere: family time, sleep, exercise or rest.
- [ ] **You've considered reducing your paid hours.**
  It costs money, so look at it alongside your financial runway.

The conversation at home

- [ ] **The people affected know when the slot is and how long it lasts.**
  Share or put it in a calendar visible to everyone affected.
- [ ] **You've agreed who covers what during that time.**
  For example, childcare, meals or appointments.
- [ ] **You've each said which evenings or weekends matter most to keep.**
  Separately first, then together.
- [ ] **You've agreed what happens when something clashes with the slot.**
  Clashes will happen, and it's easier when you've decided in advance.
- [ ] **You've agreed how long you'll try this before reviewing it.**
  For example, three months, so you can see whether the arrangement is working.
- [ ] **There's a date in the diary to look at it again.**
  Circumstances change, and a set date means you review it together, not only when someone is unhappy with it.

Why these points are important

Most ideas held alongside a job get worked on in whatever time is left over. Through my experience in coaching clients, the demand on your time is likely to have been significantly underestimated.

Where the time comes from

- Evenings, which are also family time.
- Early mornings, which suit some people and not others.
- Weekends, which are usually shared.
- Holiday days, which are limited.
- Fewer paid hours or unpaid leave, which costs money.

Each of these is time someone else was also counting on.

What I'd do first

I suggest fixed slots in the week, starting at a realistic, sustainable commitment. Keep to this for a month before considering increasing. Share the slots or put them in a calendar visible to everyone affected, and agree in advance what happens if something clashes with them.

Who else pays for it

The hours often come from shared evenings, someone else covering childcare, or plans the other person had for themselves. It helps to say clearly who covers what, rather than assume it will be noticed.

What the answer means

If the time isn't there, that doesn't tell you whether to start. It tells you what would need to change first, at work or at home.

WHERE COACHING FITS

People at this point often use coaching to work out what the idea needs over the next six months, and what they're prepared to change at work or at home to make that time. In a session we'd look at your actual week.

What to look for in any coach
simonbowen.com/guides/choosing-a-coach

A free first conversation
simonbowen.com/enquire/?moment=start