



The Incredible
Journey

RAISING *Happy* FAMILIES

IN A MODERN WORLD



GARY & ROBYN KENT



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RAISING HAPPY FAMILIES

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*RAISING
HAPPY
FAMILIES*

INTRODUCTION

We all want happy families. We all want and need to love and be loved and a happy family is the best place to find that sense of belonging, identity and security. But happy families don't happen by

chance, and the big question often is, how do we get them?

Raising families can be a chaotic time of life. Everyone seems to have a crazy schedule and it can be hard to spend quality time together. But if we want a happy family, then we really need to make it top priority.

Happy families are all about strong relationships. It takes time and commitment to create the loving bonds between parents and their children. It doesn't happen by chance.

Research has shown that families that eat together, pray together and play together are happier, healthier and stronger. When a family actively participates in life together, it produces a positive family identity, that creates a strong sense of belonging and unity.

So, let's have a look at how you can raise your children and find the time to enjoy the journey.

The 10 Basics of a Happy Family

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:6,7).

Happy families generally share several characteristics. They include:

- Giving support to each other.
- Showing love and caring for other family members.
- Providing a sense of belonging and security.
- Having open communication between all members of the family.
- Establishing that the family unity is important and ensuring that each person within the family feels important, valued and respected.

1. SPEND TIME TOGETHER

The biggest challenge that families face today is spending time together. But time is the best investment we can make with our families. It's the time when we develop a very special relationship of trust, respect and love with each other. It's the time that builds a healthy and happy family.

The family that eats, plays and prays together stays together. So how can we spend quality time together?

- Eat your meals together.
- Talk with your children in the car when you are travelling, going for a walk or just at home on the couch. Share your experiences and listen to theirs.
- Find time to have one-on-one chats with each child to build and strengthen your relationships.
- Also remember that children love to have fun, so plan some fun activities together as a family as well.

2. PARENTS NEED TO TAKE THE LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE FAMILY

You have the responsibility of leading and guiding your children through the ups and downs of life. Your children will look to you as their role model for their behaviour. Show respect for others, teach them how to interact with others, how to make friends, how to cope when you are stressed or anxious; and a very important one, how to deal with conflict. Demonstrate how to make right decisions, how to be honest and how to stand for what is right.

3. CREATE CLEAR BOUNDARIES FOR THE FAMILY

Happy families have clear expectations and rules about acceptable behaviour. Develop a set of important boundaries and allow your children to explore their independence by making choices within these boundaries. When they are old enough, explain to them that the reason for the boundaries is to protect them from harm and

danger and they will respect it. Encourage every family member to participate in establishing the household rules.

4. READ TO YOUR CHILDREN EVERY DAY

The time you spend reading stories or books with your children will help create a very special and strong bond. It sends the message to your children; “you are important to me”. It gives them a feeling of security and tells them that their parents value and love them enough to spend time reading to them. It opens a world of knowledge, information and imagination that you can share with your children.

Reading is the basis of all subjects at school, even Mathematics, so by reading to your children you are helping them achieve their potential at school. Your children will carry these precious memories of reading with you for a lifetime.

5. HAVE OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CHILDREN

One of the best times to have family discussions is around the dinner table without the distraction of screens. This is a time to share thoughts, experiences, opinions, and to discuss what is happening in the world and what it means to them. It is also a time to discuss what has happened in their day. Have they been anxious or are they worried about something? Maybe you can take the time to discuss the options or how to deal with a situation before it becomes too big an issue in their lives.

6. SHOW THEM HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT AND HOW TO DEAL WITH AN ABUSIVE SITUATION

One of the simplest and most common areas of conflict in a family is when the children resist doing what the parent has asked them to do. Here's a simple way to overcome one of the daily jobs

that cause an issue. It's time to pack up the toys in the family room. The children are busy building with their Lego, but you want the room cleaned up now. Make your requests positive. Avoid saying no and don't. Rather than saying: pack up your toys right now, say: dinner will be ready in ten minutes, let's pack up the toys before we eat. No child can resist a challenge, so offer a race to pick up the toys or make it a game. It's best to work with your children and avoid creating a major conflict and yelling at them.

7. BE INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY, YOUR CHURCH

It will foster the most basic human need of belonging. Help your children to develop an attitude of service towards one another, the family, friends and their community. Share with your family a time of service, show how important it is to respect, care and support others. Find some form of community service that they can regularly do for

someone else. When the family does community service, it helps to develop compassion, empathy and understanding for others. Research shows that families who volunteer their time are happier.

Have a look at the different opportunities for community service in your area. From soup kitchens to conservation and community gardens. It's important that children learn that they are not the centre of the universe and that they can have an impact on the world around them.

Our family chose to become part of the Guide Dogs Australia Puppy Raising Program. We loved, cared for and helped to train five little Labrador puppies. Although there were many tears and heartache when we returned the puppies to the Guide Dog Centre to be trained for a blind person, the children learnt the intrinsic value of freely helping others in their community.

8. TEACH RESPONSIBILITY EARLY

Little Evie was only three. One day when I was cleaning the toilets in the house, she came running on her little chubby legs into the bathroom. ‘Can I help? Can I help?’ She grabbed another brush and excitedly helped me clean the toilets. Helping the family with the household jobs was an exciting activity for her. Imagine saying to your children, ‘No, you can’t, go back and play.’ What does that say to them? ‘Your efforts aren’t good enough’. It not only dents their growing self-esteem, but the children don’t learn the basic skills around the home, how to be responsible, and the rewards of showing initiative.

If your child goes to kindy or school, consider who carries your child’s bag to the classroom? What am I telling my child by doing everything for him or her? You think you are being kind and helping your child. But the message you are sending them is; I’m not capable enough to do it. You don’t trust me to do this. So I just won’t try anymore.

A mother found ways to teach her teenage children the consequences of their choices and actions. One morning, she entered her son's room, and asked him to bring in the two rubbish bins before she got home. She repeated the request, he agreed, and she left the house for work.

The mother thought to herself, at last my son is becoming responsible. But when she came home from work, the bins were still at the end of the driveway. She was furious as she pulled the bins back to the garage. The mother knew her son needed a consequence for his inaction.

But all she could think of was that she still had many jobs to do that evening. Suddenly, she realised, if I'm doing his chores, he can do mine. She walked to her son's room and with a smile said, "You left the bins at the curb, so I brought them in."

"Oh. I'm sorry," he said. So, she responded, "That's all right. You can do one of my chores

instead. The laundry needs folding.” Her son knew he now had the job of folding the shirts and socks that evening.

Two days later, she asked her nine-year-old daughter Rebekah to put her shoes away before lunch. Lunch came and went. So, she put the shoes away herself, without saying a word then she said, “Rebekah, you didn’t put your shoes away, so I did it.”

“Oh, I’m sorry, Mum,” came the expected reply. “That’s OK,” the mother said, “I need to vacuum the family room, so you can do that for me.” Rebekah’s face fell. She hated vacuuming and grumbled as she did it. But she did learn the value of responsibility.

The mother could only achieve this result because she already had a strong, loving and respectful relationship with her children.

9. ALLOW TIME TO BE CREATIVE, TO THINK, TO EXPERIENCE

Turn off the screens and give your children the opportunity to use their imagination and creativity. You just might be surprised and delighted with the games they invent. Why not let your children experience playing with friends at the park, hiking or camping in the bush, swimming and making sandcastles at the beach or creating a garden at home?

10. SHOW UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Show unconditional love not only when they are good but when things aren't going so well. They will love and respect you if they know your love will never waver or be withdrawn. Your children will not want to disappoint you if they are secure in the knowledge that your love is unconditional. Love is more powerful than rules and regulations and is the bond that glues your relationships together.

Ways to Pass on Your Values

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 1:4).

1. BE THE ROLE MODEL OF WHO YOU WANT YOUR CHILDREN TO BE

Demonstrate the lifestyle you want your children to follow. Remember they are watching your every action and will copy everything you do. They not only carry your family name, but they will demonstrate your family values.

2. HAVE FAMILY MORNING DEVOTIONS

There are many wonderful devotional books available in Christian bookstores or online. Try to have a short Bible reading devotional and prayer before everyone leaves for their day at work or at school. Your children will go to school with a sense of peace and joy in their hearts and more ready to face whatever lies ahead for them that day.

3. HAVE A FAMILY DEVOTIONAL TIME EVERY NIGHT

Read the Bible stories to your children. Gather your children close to you, or as they snuggle in bed, and read the stories from the Bible to your children. Sing some songs and have a prayer with them before they go to sleep. Tell them how they are valued by you and by God. Commit your children by name to God and they will feel the security of not just your love but God's love as well. Studies show that the family needs to open the Bible at least four times a week for it to have an impact on the children.

4. EAT YOUR HOME MEALS TOGETHER AT THE TABLE AND TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN

Make it a screen free zone and chat about the day's activities, their goals at school or in their other activities or sport, their friends, any concerns they may have, or discuss current events. This is such a

valuable time to openly discuss what is happening in their world and look at the best way forward and to make the right choices.

Try to make healthy home cooked meals. Your children will love to help you cook the meal. Remember that healthy foods will give them a more even temperament, less chance of sickness, and lift their mood.

5. MAKE MEMORIES AND FAMILY TRADITIONS RELATED TO YOUR FAITH

Show your children that time spent with God is special and needs to be celebrated as a special time of the day and week. Find ways to include family traditions each day and each week. These memories will provide stability for your children and stay with them all their lives.

6. TAKE YOUR CHILDREN TO CHURCH

Learn verses from the Bible by heart. Make it more

meaningful by finding out historical information about the time and what else was happening in the world.

Make going to church a special event. It's a time for worshipping God, a time to learn more about the Bible and a time of fellowship. Be involved in church activities so that the children feel they belong to a community of believers. Make going to church an integral part of their life and the life of the family. Research shows that a child needs five significant adults to pass on the values of their faith.

7. SPEND TIME PLAYING WITH YOUR CHILDREN

It's important that your children have some fun times with you. Go outside and play games together, or go running, throwing and catching the ball, or any other games. Or if you are inside, there are many fun board games the children will love to play with you. This is a time of bonding with your children and they will be more likely

to follow your example in life if they know you have time to play with them.

8. BE CONSISTENT IN YOUR VALUES, STANDARDS AND BELIEF SYSTEM

You are your children's first teacher. They will learn from you how to face the world and will follow your values and belief system if they feel it has made a difference in your life.

9. LET YOUR CHILDREN EXPERIENCE DIVERSITY

Teach your children to be open-minded, fair, trustworthy and respectful to all people. Your child will see God through your attitude, choices and behaviour.

10. SHOW LOVE EVEN IF YOUR CHILD MAKES UNWISE CHOICES

It is so important to let your children know that you love them unconditionally. Not only when

they are good, but when things aren't going so well for you or them. Your children will feel that love and it will create an inner peace that will make them more settled and content. In addition, when children know they are loved, they will not want to disappoint you by making unwise choices.

Ways to *Hinder* your Children's Success

"All your children will be taught by the Lord, and great will be their peace" (Isaiah 54:13).

1. GIVE YOUR CHILD LOTS AND LOTS OF MATERIAL THINGS BUT NO TIME

Toys don't replace time with you. All your children want is to spend time with you and if they don't get that time, they will feel that you don't value them or even that you don't love them enough to want to spend time with them. If you are playing with your children, and you keep being distracted by your phone or reading your Facebook or Instagram or chatting to your friends, you are sending a very

clear message to your children; my other activities are more important than you.

2. ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PLAY COMPUTER GAMES, NINTENDO, OR BE ON SCREENS WITHOUT ANY LIMITS

It is also harmful to replace your time with screens. Most of these games are violent and can have a negative impact on your child's physical, moral and mental development. Screens are highly addictive and will quickly destroy your children's creativity, imagination, and ability to achieve in sports and school activities. Children become uncooperative, easily upset, and lethargic when they spend time on screens.

3. CALL THEM NAMES LIKE STUPID OR OTHER DEROGATORY OR EMBARRASSING NAMES

This crushes their young self-esteem, destroys

their feelings of self-worth and breaks down the relationship. Those words will be remembered and continue to be replayed in a child's mind, causing painful memories for years to come. In addition to calling them names, criticising or negatively discussing other people in your network will also damage their respect for you and for others.

4. PUNISH THEM HARSHLY AND BE INCONSISTENT WITH YOUR DISCIPLINE

Some parents in exasperation may threaten their children, but then to keep control feel they must follow through with physical actions. Sometimes in frustration, a parent may even destroy a child's favourite toy as a way of showing discipline. These methods lead to unhappiness, hostility, anxiety, angst, and are detrimental to both the parent and the child.

5. HAVE NO BOUNDARIES

Your children may tell you they don't want any boundaries and they don't like the family rules

and that they want to be free to do as they wish, but the idea is actually frightening to them. It has been found that families that have set firm, reasonable boundaries and clear expectations for their children are much happier. It is important to explain that the boundaries are there to protect them from harm or danger.

6. HAVE UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUR CHILDREN OR LABELLING THEM

By labelling your children, as the smart one, the athletic one, or saying, “Why can’t you be like your brother?” causes unsure and upsetting feelings. Rather give honest recognition of your children’s efforts and achievements.

7. DON’T PRIORITISE YOUR FAMILY

When we aren’t around to help them learn the expected social norms in our society and our culture. If you don’t help them learn how to make

friends or mix with other children or adults, who will? If you don't help them develop sportsmanship and their physical skills, so they are able to join in games with other children, who will? Your children will soon internalise feelings of insecurity and begin to believe that they are not valuable enough for you.

8. BE SUCH AN OVERPROTECTIVE PARENT THAT YOUR CHILDREN BECOME USELESS AND APATHETIC

We are all aware that our society has changed and that we need to protect our children, but your children need to learn all the skills necessary to become independent and responsible adults.

9. CONSTANTLY BERATE YOUR CHILDREN WITH WHAT THEY CANNOT DO

A world of 'no's' doesn't inspire any child to try new things, experience their world or make

an effort to achieve. Avoid the words, ‘no’ and ‘don’t’ except for critical events; instead make your requests positive.

10. HAVE A CONFRONTATION WITH YOUR CHILDREN

There are no winners to this melee, only losers. Walk away if you feel your anger rising. Words said in anger are cause for regret and ongoing hostility. So, whenever you feel that you are completely losing it with your kids, take some deep breaths to cool off and think before you act.

10 Healthy Discipline Strategies

“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it”
(Proverbs 22:6).

1. SHOW NOT TELL

You are your children’s ultimate role model. It’s an awesome responsibility. So, decide on the

kind of persons you want them to be and start to model the behaviour you would like to see in your children. Teach your children right from wrong in everyday situations with calm words and measured actions. You can tell your children how they should behave in words, but they will not listen unless you show them what good behaviour looks like by your actions.

2. SET BOUNDARIES OR LIMITS AND BE CONSISTENT

Healthy families have clear and consistent rules that everyone follows. It's better to only have boundaries on the important issues for your family. If your children ask why the family has this rule, then explain and help them understand why you as parents have this boundary. As your children reach their teens, the boundaries may change slightly and the whole family would benefit by discussing the changes necessary to adapt to the age of the children.

3. SHOW THAT THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES

Sir Isaac Newton's third law of physics says that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. This is also true for the choices we make, and our behaviour. There is always a consequence for every choice we make and everything we do. Share with your child how lives are successful or destroyed by the choices we make. Remind them of the butterfly effect: the small choices we make every day that build up and eventually have a great impact.

4. GIVE THEM YOUR ATTENTION

All children want is their parent's attention. You will often hear a parent say: my child just wants my attention, and I'm too busy or too tired. But the most powerful tool you have as a parent, for effective discipline, is your time and attention. When you give your children your attention, you are sending a message; you are important to me, you are valued. It's the perfect time when you can

model and reinforce good behaviour and gently discourage bad behaviour.

5. HEAR THEM OUT

Watch and listen to your children. You will learn a lot about your children's thoughts and the reasons for their behaviour just by listening to them when they talk to you and by listening when they talk to their siblings or friends. Listening to your children is very important. It shows your children that you respect them and value their opinion or their story about their day at school, their friends, their problems. If you listen to your children with the little stories they tell, they will feel comfortable sharing with you the bigger issues that arise as they grow up.

6. CATCH THEM BEING GOOD

There is no better way to have children improve their behaviour than to notice and appreciate good behaviour. Positive affirmation sends a powerful message to your children. So, watch for the times when they are doing the right thing and tell them.

It might be something as simple as playing quietly with a brother, reading a book, helping to bring in the washing, or responding immediately to a request.

Your praise will inspire them to continue to do that specific activity and may even spread to other activities. Your children are desperate for your approval. If you only give them attention when they are doing the wrong thing, then you are reinforcing their behaviour as this is the time they receive your attention. So instead of constantly pointing out the wrong actions of your children, why not try recognising the good behaviour. It will truly make a difference to your children's attitude and behaviour.

7. BE PREPARED FOR TIMES WHEN THERE MAY BE MISBEHAVIOUR

Every parent knows that some situations are a trigger or an opportunity for troubling behaviour. If you are aware of an event or a situation that

may cause an issue, then prepare for it. If your child is old enough, you may be able to discuss the situation and the options to avoid a bad situation. If your child is still young, then decide on a way to mitigate the probability of creating a difficult situation.

A classic everyday example is the tidying up of the toys or the Lego. This can lead to an unpleasant scene. Why not try to use some of the positive affirmation tactics combined with giving your child notice that it will soon be time to pack up? You could say to your child; “I love the way you are playing so happily with your Lego, you have made the most amazing fire-engine. Would you like to keep the fire-engine and show it to Dad when he gets home? In ten minutes, it will be time to pack up your Lego so the family room is tidy for dinner. And remember to keep your fire-engine out ready to show Dad”. The positive attention your child will receive from showing their Lego creation to their Dad will lift your child’s spirits, make them feel valued, and there will be no need

for misbehaviour.

It's always better to preempt a situation and avoid a head-on clash of wills, and the best way to do this is to provide a simple choice within guidelines. If you offer them the choice of A or B, then they still feel they are in control and haven't lost face. Of course, there are other more serious problems that may show up, at the supermarket, at a friend's place, at a birthday party; but if you use the same positive tactics, then you will soon see amazing behaviour from your children.

8. REDIRECT BAD BEHAVIOUR

Sometimes children will misbehave when they are bored, afraid, feeling alone or insecure. These are all feelings that lead to the children seeking attention and often the best way to get noticed quickly is by displaying bad behaviour. As parents, our goal is to teach responsibility and self-control, so try to find the reason behind the bad behaviour and look for a way to redirect their energy and attention in a more positive direction.

9. KNOW WHEN NOT TO RESPOND

There are times when it is best not to respond to a child's deliberate misbehaviour. As long as your child is getting lots of positive affirmation and attention for their good behaviour, then ignoring minor bad behaviour can be a way of stopping it. It is best to avoid a constant barrage on your children, as they will soon block out what you are saying. If your child keeps dropping her cookies on the floor, soon she won't have any more to eat. If you don't react, she soon learns the consequence of that behaviour. It's a small but significant way to alert the child to the consequences of actions. But if she is looking for your attention, then you will need to find time to give her the positive attention she is craving.

10. TEACH SELF-MANAGEMENT AND HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT

One of the best skills you can teach your children is how to self-manage their feelings, emotions and

behaviour. Every person is going to find themselves in a situation where they have to self-manage and make choices. That's what being an adult is all about. Being a child is a training ground and so remember your children are watching how you deal with these challenging situations. Be aware of this and model how to deal with difficult situations, how to handle your emotions when they are racing out of control and how to make the right choices when in a conflict.

When looking for ways to handle conflict, try to stop and remember these three points.

- i.* Don't jump to conclusions. Take a deep breath and think about what the real issue is.
- ii.* Don't over-react. Ask questions. Find out all the details about the situation.
- iii.* Don't take the situation personally. It might have nothing to do with you and taking it personally could make the situation much worse.

Our role as parents is huge, in fact it can be overwhelming. But if we follow some basic guidelines on developing self-discipline in our children, we will be rewarded by a lifetime of happy relationships with our children.

The Best Chance to Succeed

“Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him” (Psalm 127:3).

1. PARENTS ARE THE CHILD’S FIRST TEACHER

Did you know that 50% of your children’s success comes from their home life? Your lifestyle, your attitudes, values, your ways of dealing with conflict, are all passed on with your IQ to your children.

We all want our children to do well at school, so please avoid telling them; I hated Maths at school, or I hate Reading. Your child wants to be just like you, so now they think; I’m going to hate those subjects at school too, or I’m not even going to try at those subjects. A better approach would be;

sometimes I find Maths challenging but let's see if we can work on it together.

2. HELP THEM TO MAKE WISE CHOICES

Decision-making is one of the most important skills your children need to develop to become healthy and independent adults. Making wise choices is crucial because the decisions your children make will have an effect on their lives. When your children make a good decision, they will gain a lot of satisfaction and fulfilment because of their choice.

But if your children make a bad decision, they need to learn there are consequences. If a child continually makes poor decisions and the parent doesn't hold the child responsible for the wrong choice, then the child learns they don't need to be responsible for their decisions and don't fear the consequences.

We all make mistakes and it is part of the process

of learning how to make the best decisions in life. One way to help is to read short stories of the decisions people made and the consequences of those decisions. The Old Testament in the Bible is full of stories of people who made right and wrong decisions and the consequences they faced. Parents will be more successful in helping their children if they already have a strong relationship with them and can discuss the decision together. Here are three questions to discuss with your children to help them make good decisions:

- i.* Why do I want to do this?
- ii.* What are my options?
- iii.* What are the consequences for my actions?

If you help them to make small choices when they are little, it will help them to be rational when they are making the bigger choices in life.

3. TEACH THEM RESILIENCE AND THE PHYSICAL SKILLS TO BE READY FOR SCHOOL

It's very important to send your children to school ready to learn. Send them with a positive attitude to education and make them responsible for their actions at school. If there are difficulties at school, show them how to be resilient and encourage them to move forward. Try to be involved in the school community and show an interest in your child's activities, interests and progress at school.

Do some form of physical activity with your children every day. Teach them sportsmanship and sports skills that will set them up for success and involvement in school sports. This boosts your children's self-esteem and gives them the positive recognition they are seeking.

Apart from developing their skills, this time will create stronger family bonds, give you a shared experience, and it also uses up all their pent-up

energy. You will be amazed at how happy and compliant children can be after they have been playing with you.

4. CREATE A FAMILY IDENTITY

A strong family identity built on shared time, shared traditions and shared values, helps children develop a healthy self-identity and self-worth. Your children want to be proud of their family. They want to experience the feelings of belonging and unity that come from family traditions, values, and relationships. They want to feel secure and know that they can rely on you and every member of the family. Children with a strong connection to their family are more equipped to thrive when they discover their own place in the world.

5. TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN. TELL THEM HOW MUCH YOU LOVE THEM

Tell them how glad you are that they are in the

family. You could make a habit at the dinner table of sharing the nicest thing that happened to each of you today.

A wonderful idea is to give each of your children the opportunity to spend one hour alone with you each week. Let your children choose the activity and give them your undivided attention.

6. ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILDREN TO BE COMMITTED, HAVE GOALS BOTH AT SCHOOL AND IN LIFE

We all have goals in life and setting goals isn't just about creating a plan but about commitment and holding yourself accountable. Goals can push us to achieve even difficult or seemingly impossible tasks.

A valuable mindset to encourage in your children is to be dedicated to achieving a new skill or working hard to complete a task well. When your children start an activity or begin learning a new skill,

it is important to encourage them to commit to its success.

Sadly, there was a very capable young boy who would become very excited and keen to start a new activity but when the practise got boring or the weather was cold and the going got tough, he was quickly able to convince his mother that it was too hard for him and he gave up. This lack of commitment affected his schoolwork and his ability to make friends. Your children need to learn the value of commitment and that success only comes from dedication and hard work.

It is really helpful to spend time with your children and find what activity or subject inspires them and what their natural talent may be. It might be in art, sport, academics, music, drama, science, or even leadership. Help your children to find their talent.

It's a basic human need to feel recognised, to be noticed, to feel special and excel at something. It gives your children an identity, that will boost

their self-esteem and encourage them to work towards a goal.

7. KEEP YOUR MARRIAGE STRONG

Set an example of love for your children. Children learn about relationships from their parents and thrive in a calm, stable and united environment.

When children know their parents love each other, they do better in school, challenging misbehaviour is reduced, and it positively influences a child's future choice of a partner.

8. CELEBRATE YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

Share details from your family tree and it will help your children feel like they belong to an extended family. Make opportunities for your children to spend time with their grandparents and relatives, look through old photo albums, share family memories, stories, and adventures.

9. MAKE FAMILY TRADITIONS AND HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Happy families have traditions for birthdays, holidays, their beliefs and weekly family time. These celebrations bring the family closer, create happy memories and show your children that you enjoy being with them.

10. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT GOD AND ASK GOD TO BLESS YOUR FAMILY

If you have children, then you are blessed beyond measure. Children are a gift from God. They brighten our days, warm our hearts and help us to create a home. Why not take some moments every day to acknowledge God and to thank Him for your children, your family and the many blessings in your life?

Parenting is a higher calling that comes with a lifetime of happy relationships, challenges and amazing experiences. It's reassuring that good

parenting can be learned, and a fulfilling family life with eternal rewards can be yours. It's certainly worth the investment of your time and effort.

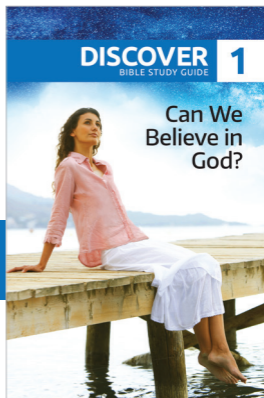
“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is His reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them” (Psalm 127:3).

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In our modern world of technology, work pressures, changing family structures and social influences, a growing number of parents are worried about the future for their kids. Is it possible among all the turmoil to have a truly happy family?

Raising children that become balanced, contributing adults that make a difference in the world will be less daunting when you understand the principles of success found in the pages of this book.



Gary and Robyn Kent feel privileged to have shared the journey of life with their children.

Drawing on their experience of bringing up four children, they are sharing their insights into the joys and challenges of modern family life.

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