

CREATING BRIGHT AND CHEERFUL HOMES




Family Camp Busselton Feb 2018

The most important work you and I will ever do will be within the walls of our own homes.

Harold B. Lee



Families come in all shapes and sizes with its own complexities and different personalities. To add to all this there are so many external pressures, like work deadlines, job insecurity, financial problems, kids going through their own growing challenges... you name it. The family today is not only trying to cope with all these external pressures but trying to go against trends and form kids that have character, faith, morals and virtues.

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We all know how important the family is and how important is its preservation and depth if we need to enrich society. All the points I have today are not from any books or family manual but my personal experience of very good families who have been meeting for many-many years after a first steps course we did about eighteen years ago.

The family needs to be a place where the kids love to come back to, where they feel secure, happy and understood. They need to feel they have come back to good friends. Good friends always like to be with each other.

If we want our children to grow up to be very stately young men and women who carry themselves very well, we need to put a few structures in place. Today we will talk about one of those structures “Building a happy and cheerful home”.

Unfortunately we cannot feed the family “happy pills” it is all very hard work.

1. Since the family is a school of virtue, being happy and cheerful (from supernatural optimism) is a commitment lived first by the parents (who lead by example) and then by the kids who need to respond because they are a part of this family.
2. Everybody leaves their problems at the door when they enter. Always welcome each other and talk of positive things that happened during the day, later the dinner table can be a place when challenges are talked about.
3. Phone calls from home are more important than your most important client. When you answer the phone at work make it sound like you have been waiting for that call all day.

4. Take an active interest in little details (the cooking, class, the sports practice, the assignment at work, and the headache someone left the house with....)

5. Spend quantity time together. Quality time comes from quantity time.

Dr James Dobson was asked “What is the best disciplinary advice you can offer”

He answered ““The best way to get children to do what you want is to spend time with them before disciplinary problems occur—having fun together and enjoying mutual laughter and joy. When those moments of love and closeness happen, kids are not as tempted to challenge and test the limits. Many confrontations can be avoided by building friendships with kids and thereby making them want to cooperate at home.”

6. Show how much you genuinely enjoy each other's company. Friends enjoy being with each. Go out individually with each kid and do something they enjoy doing.

7. Play interactive games – board games, (TV and other gadgets are used sparingly), like UNO, Monopoly, Cards, Chess they encourage conversation, interaction and good humour.
8. Everyone studies/spends time in the living area (or study room if studying) and not in their rooms. Their room is only to change clothes and sleep, and occasionally for them to spend some quite time.
9. Be quick to compliment achievements. If good deeds are acknowledged and they will be reinforced. (The piano class they someone may be putting more time into)

10. Actively participate in projects (the Mock Law Project the daughter has to participate in, helping your son develop a batting technique or a particular tackle in rugby)

11. Listen without judging and listen with a genuine interest (put the newspaper away, or shut the laptop)

12. Correct with charity. Target the problem and not the person. It is never “you always”....but that action was inappropriate.

13. Set predictable boundaries (certain behaviour attracts certain responses consistently, and not on the mood of the person at that time)

14. Use birthdays and special days to make others do something special for that person. (let's make a banner and bake a cake)

15. As part of the family even the parents should be open to correction.

16. The car is not an opportunity to drive home points forcefully. (It should be an exciting time to know that dad is driving us to school). Respect their need to be silent or be pensive because they have to prepare themselves to face the many challenges in their day.

17. Teach by example (we cannot ask them to be people of character if we lack in that area ourselves). The way the dad and mum interact is a very silent but powerful testimony.

18. Lastly I cannot stress how important it is to have your brother's help you bring up your children. If our family is our greatest project, isn't it just common-sense we spend a lot of time with people who can shape them very well.