



The Way Of The Happy Family

The old saying goes that it takes a village to raise a child, but there's a lot that goes into creating that village for a happy and healthy child. A happy family is not just about members and what they do, it's about how everyone in the family can love, trust, and rely on each other through the best and worst times.

Some common traits of a happy and healthy family are affection, respectful communication, the ability to deal with stress and resolve conflict together, and the enjoyment of each other's company through shared experiences. Key to making these traits present in a family is through understanding and acceptance of each individual family member of each other. But of course that's easier said than done!

One good tip to start is in recognizing the different modes of affection, sometimes cataloged as "love languages" as popularized by American family counselor, Gary Chapman. While most are familiar with the physical modes of affection such as hugs and kisses, affection can be relayed through other love languages such as compliments, quality time, acts of service (like helping with work or around the house), or even giving gifts. Recognizing and understanding one's love language is good practice for clear communication among family members.



While communication is key to any relationship, this is one of the biggest hurdles for families to overcome. Family members are advised to listen in carefully and take note of body language, especially in times of conflict, to see and understand what each member values. For authoritative members of the family such as parents, part of communication is in the boundaries set by them. One popular example of communicating effectively while enforcing boundaries are expressions, such as, "I know you like playing with the tablet, but you need to greet your parents when they arrive home." This shows an acknowledgement of importance while still setting necessary boundaries.



Good communication also helps a family in times of conflict. Shying away from conflict builds resentment, so it is best to communicate well and work towards a mutual understanding among those in conflict. While it's best to work together to resolve conflict, in some cases, it may help to have a trusted and impartial third party mediate for an objective view of the problems at hand.



But through conflict and the inevitable in-family squabbling, it's what is shared among families that lasts. Share routines together such as meal times, or have a mutual hobby such as following a TV show, cooking, making crafts or playing games together.



In as much as there's order in the home, don't forget to make time for fun and happy memories for the family to look back on. That's what makes and keeps a happy family together.

Sources:

The Building Blocks Of Healthy Family Relationships, <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/families/about-families/family-relationships/building-blocks-healthy-family-relationships>

Building Positive Relationships With Families, http://gov.mb.ca/fs/pwd/pubs/js_manual/ja_build_rel.pdf