

Top 10 Hits for a Happy Family

By Pat Sauls

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As a mother and a grandmother, I believe “family time” is extremely important. So often, however, we forget that being husband and wife is just as important as being a mother or father. In other words, find time for one another. I am a firm believer that you cannot succeed in the bedroom, if you cannot make it in the living room. Having that special one-on-one time together as friends and lovers brings true meaning to commitment. But not without sacrifice.....Over the years, one of the most important, but consistent pieces of information shared with me in initial interviews with new clients, is “I never saw it coming.....when he or she said he no longer loved me.”

Here are **10** suggestions I solicited from experts for improving your family and relationship with your significant other. Hindsight is always 20/20 but foresight is worth its weight in gold. Click here for the list.

1) Commit to one “date night” a week for you and your spouse to go out. Although this means getting a babysitter, the one-on-one time spent together for a romantic evening by far outweighs the expense of a sitter. And, if there are grandparents around, they would certainly love the opportunity to spend time with the grandkids! This is your adult time together without interruptions. Take advantage of this time to search each other's mind and spirit. Communication is a real life necessity.

2) Make an effort to communicate how you feel about certain issues involving family. More often than not, I am told “my spouse and I cannot agree on anything. He or she thinks the kids should be in bed by 8:00 pm and I think 9:00 pm. My son does not want to play baseball but my husband makes him because he never got to play.” Or.....”my wife gives in after only two days of restrictions for a bad report card for my nine-year-old, when we both originally agreed on one week of no TV.”

3) Most women expect flowers once in a while or even a nice card other than on birthdays, just to feel appreciated. You know we do ladies! Why not buy a bottle of your husband’s favorite cologne or pick a new one out for him? Or, a nice tie or a set of golf balls for the golfer enthusiast. Whatever you buy, it is the thought that counts. Speaking of thoughtfulness....

4) Just be thoughtful..... it is that easy.....one of my clients said, “just once in a while hug me or walk into the kitchen and help me load the dishwasher.” Or, “she is a stay-at-home-mom, and this is what we both agreed on, but when I come home from work, it would be nice for her to acknowledge me and give me a peck on the cheek wearing something besides jogging pants.”

5) Understand a budget for the family and stick with it. Arguments over money will definitely wreak havoc in anyone’s living room. Put away the charge cards and adopt a better practice, if you cannot write a check for it you do not need it! Or if you cannot buy it without charging, consider the fact you may not be able to afford it.

6) Sit as a family at the dinner table with everyone present. This is extremely important, so you can spend time together and everyone can talk about school, work or friends. You will be surprised how much can be shared when someone has an arena of support.

7) Take a family vacation once a year that everyone in the family can agree upon. Whatever the location or activity, let everyone weigh in and take a vote. Most teenagers will tell you they are never asked where they want to go as the parents decide, plan, and tell them where they are going. Make your vacation selection a family discussion.

8) Have a family outing planned once a month; go out to eat or to the movies, or attend an event such as a trip to the museum or a hockey game.

9) If you or another family member senses something is wrong..., your spouse is becoming a little distant, your children's grades start to decline,.....get in touch with someone who can help your family member cope and talk about what is bothering them. People don't usually quickly change their pattern of behavior for no reason. Don't ignore the obvious.

10) Last but not least, part of being a parent is to teach right from wrong but sometimes you should just LISTEN to your children. Even though they may not be old enough to make some decisions on their own, allow them to have a voice. Listening to one another could make the difference in whether they sneak around or choose to be open and honest with you about their happiness as well as the disappointments. Encourage your child's honesty and help them understand they can talk with Mom and Dad about anything.

Pat Sauls has been a Private Investigator for 24 years. She specializes in Family Law Investigations. Not such happy family situation? Contact Pat at <http://patsaulspi.com/index.html>.