

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT E-BOOK 16: FAMILY LIFE REPORT



By The American Institute of Health Care Professionals, Inc

Table Of Content

2	Family Comes First
3	How to Raise a Happy Family
4	Fitness Fun with Your Family
5	Family Communication
6	Celebrate Your Family
8	What Makes a Happy Family?
9	Unwinding with Your Family
10	Top Tips for Building a Good Family Life

Table Of Content

12	Living a Good Marriage
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Family Comes First

Can you truly say that you put your family first all of the time? If you don't, there is no need to feel guilty. Many people unintentionally let other things get in the way when they shouldn't. All that it takes to start putting your family first is a shift in your priorities.

A great example of this is when you start to work crazy hours. While your objective may be to provide those "extras" for your family, it results in you neglecting them. So you may come home with gifts and new toys, but is that what your family really wants? They would probably prefer to spend more time with you instead.

The next time you are asked to work late or immediately offer to stay when overtime is offered, think about your reason why. Do you really need the extra money? Or do you get bored when you get home and would prefer to stay at work? Whatever the intention is you need to look at your reasons and be honest with yourself. Staying away from home could indicate that there is a problem in your marriage that you don't want to deal with.

One way to put your family first is by being there for them. When your son or daughter has a sports event, or is in the school play, make of point of attending. If a family member gets sick, help them out as much as possible.

Creating stability within your family is a good way of putting your family first. Everyone loves to know that they have someone who they can count on. You can easily do this by creating family routines such as:

- Regular dinner times
- Chores for each family member
- Set bed times
- Movie night

Though, these things may sound trivial they are very important. By creating a structured routine you are also setting expectations for your family. They know that they are expected for dinner at 6pm each day. Or that every Saturday they have to spend an hour or two helping out with chores.

When you, as the parent, put your family first, each family member will start to follow suit. In turn this creates a caring family that will always be around for each other.

Family is important so don't neglect what you have worked so hard to build. Yes work and being social is important, but they shouldn't always take precedence over your family.

How to Raise a Happy Family

How happy would you say your family life is? Are you content or do you find yourself wishing that you had more time to spend with your family? Let's take a look at how you can raise a happy family even with a busy work schedule.

It's no secret that today both parents are usually working and this means that lives are more stressful than ever before. It is so easy to let this stress transfer onto family members.

In order to prevent this you want to start scheduling time for your family. Even if it is just one afternoon on the weekends. Then keep this appointment no matter what. During this time do something fun with everyone, maybe let each family pick an activity they want to do each weekend? This could be something as simple as enjoying a movie together or going for a swim or hike in a local park.

Another area that seems to have been forgotten is the family dinner hour. Make a point of eating dinner together as often as possible. While eating encourage family members to share stories of how their day went. You could even share stories from your own childhood! Use this time to have a conversation with your family and be interested in what they did by asking questions.

If you have young children there is no reason why you can't spend a few minutes each evening with them. Give them a bath and get into the habit of reading them a bed time story. Just grabbing a few moments each day can mean so much to a young child.

Another key area of raising a happy family is to show your family that you and your spouse are happy. Show your children that you both care about each other by doing small things. This may be helping prepare dinner, rubbing your spouse's feet while watching TV or in other small ways. Remember it is those small gestures that mean so much.

It is so easy these days to keep your kids busy by putting them in after school activities. While this may be good to some extent, it can also strain the family. Kids become overwhelmed and tired because they have so much to do. Parents are stressed because they have so much running around to do. So try to limit how many after school activities your kids do. They will be happier for it.

No matter how busy you are, find a few minutes each day to chat with your family and show them that they are important to you.

Fitness Fun with Your Family

How fit would you say your family is? Does everyone spend too much time playing computer games or watching TV? Sadly the average child today spends almost 30 hours per week playing games and watching TV. Did you know that fitness can help create tighter bonds within your family, resulting in a much happier one?

Doing some type of family fitness activity allows everyone to spend some fun time together. As the parent you need to have the intuition to start some type of family fitness routine. Maybe, you need to lose a few pounds so you could enlist the help of your kids to keep you company on your walks or bike ride.

Family fitness doesn't have to be a strict fitness type activity either. You don't have to take up training for a 5K or start working out with weights. Try to come up with something that is fun for the entire family. This might be going for a family hike to see some scenic waterfalls. Or you could start playing basketball or soccer together.

When choosing a fitness activity make sure that it is one that every family member can take part in. If you have small kids you could set up an obstacle course in your backyard. Just have easier hurdles for them to tackle. Summer time is great for water games and guns and for jumping rope.

Your kids will be more likely to join your new activity if it is a fun one. How about suggesting that you go swimming down at the lake in the summer? Or go garage sale shopping for new bikes for everyone. Even a family camping trip is exercise!

Toddlers and babies enjoy fitness too and you can easily find classes where you can take them with you. Small children love to dance and jump around, and at least this gets them active and enjoying themselves.

If your children are older they might enjoy playing a game of tennis or volleyball. Or you might consider enrolling everyone in golf or self-defence lessons.

Family fitness does not have to be rigid. It can be a fun time for everyone involved. Why not let each family member choose an activity to do each week? This way no-one is left out and you all get to try lots of new activities. So what fitness activity are you going to do this weekend with your family

Family Communication

One of the reasons why any type of relationship fails is due to lack of communication. This can also be applied when looking for ways to lead a good family life together. If your communication skills are lacking then the entire family may be unhappy and feel alone.

In a happy family all members know how to communicate. How many times have you done the following?

Mom, can you please tell, name of person, that I will be late, or another reason.

This scenario normally happens when the flow of communication is not running smoothly in the household. Whereas if communication is good no-one thinks twice of sending messages to each other without a middle man.

One of the most important skills to have when it comes to communication is that of listening. Do you truly listen to what your spouse or child has to say? Or do you interrupt them before they have finished speaking?

Next time allow the person to finish what they say, then recap what they just told you. Repeating a summary back, actually shows the person that you did listen and that you understand their point of view.

A good place and time to have a family discussion is at the dinner table. Spend some time talking about the day's activities and don't judge anyone. Let everyone air their concerns and points of view.

One thing that a happy family doesn't do is argue and then not talk to each other for days on end. Instead the family can disagree and then move forward without any type of resentment.

Communication can also be done by actions instead of words. Hugging your child when you see they are upset speaks volumes. Displaying signs of affections to your spouse does too. Plus this teaches your children not to be scared of showing their emotions.

Not showing emotions is another reason why some family members may feel alone. They are either too scared to show their true feelings, for fear of retribution. Or they have been brought up to be that "tough guy" instead.

Teach your children that showing fear is perfectly natural and that it isn't a sign of weakness. If your family is open with communication there is no reason why you can't have healthy, heated discussions, which bear no malice to anyone. Being allowed to vent is a great way to de-stress for both adults and children alike.

Celebrate Your Family

One way to create a happy and caring environment for your family is by taking the time to celebrate with them. When was the last time you were actively involved in any type of family celebration?

Family traditions can be created around celebrations. Is there something that your family does differently for Christmas? If so, this can become a family tradition that is passed down to your children.

When you think about it there are a ton of days that you can celebrate with your family throughout the year.

- Birthdays
- Anniversaries
- Christmas
- Easter
- Thanksgiving
- Mother's Day
- Father's Day
- Birth of a new family member
- A wedding
- Graduation or going to College

Let's look at some ways you can celebrate with your family.

While just about every family celebrates events these days, you want to make your celebration memorable. You can achieve this by getting into the habit of baking certain foods. My mother used to bake a wonderful Christmas Cake filled with fruit, covered in marzipan and covered in white icing. The icing was then adorned with miniature Christmas figures and animals. It truly was a special site. Why not do something like this too?

Traditions that you could start include playing the same music at certain celebrations. Having all family members make a homemade gift. Allowing everyone to help to name the new baby.

Another great idea is to start off these family occasions by telling stories. Grandparents would be a perfect choice here. Ask them to tell stories of what life was like when they were small. You could even share photos or create new family albums.

Many families celebrate religious events together. This is a great way to teach your children about faith and instill in them this family tradition. Many faiths have excellent spiritual foundations that can help nurture your children as they grow.

Regardless of what you celebrate try to find a new way of adding an extra meaning to your next celebration. Discuss with your family what you could do to make this celebration unique to you all. You might be surprised at what ideas you can come up with.

By making time for celebrations you are creating a tightly knit family unit. One that understands what being there for each other really means. This will help in good times as well as bad. Family members will automatically unite when the going gets a little tough for someone, creating a strong support system.

What Makes a Happy Family?

Creating a happy environment for your family is not just one person's responsibility. It requires time and effort from each family member every day. Each person chooses to be part of the family and this will be demonstrated by their actions.

While a family starts out with a marriage it requires additional building blocks to turn the marriage into a happy family. One main ingredient is that of love. Love creates a family bond that will usually last a life time. Though sometimes these bonds can be broken and this causes a family to fall apart.

As a parent you teach your children how to love by demonstrating affection with your spouse. This means having a cuddle on the couch, looking after them when they are sick or hurt, and just being there for each other.

Of course there will be times when family members disagree and that is all part of having a healthy relationship. Being part of a happy family means that the family can get through these times and come out smiling.

When things go wrong a happy and strong family will know when to leave the person alone for a while. They will understand that shouts of frustration are not directed at them personally. But, best of all, they will be there to pick this person up when the time is right.

During your daily routines you need to be aware of your choice of words. The wrong words can easily disrupt any family. Do not be quick to judge and don't put people down with uncaring words. Communication is one of the keys to a happy family, don't let badly worded conversations destroy this.

Members of a happy family also know that telling the truth is important. This may mean telling your daughter that she really doesn't look great in that outfit. Or it might entail telling your spouse that you need some quiet time alone for a change. Telling the truth does not hurt a person. It is the lies and playing with a person's emotions that hurts.

A happy family knows that they are expected to show up at family events, and happily do so. They also understand the importance of spending time with each other. Having quality time together helps to strengthen family bonds and reinforces the message that they are not alone.

If you feel that your family is not as happy as they should be, use the advice in this article and start showing your family that you truly care about them.

Unwinding with Your Family

One of the most important aspects of enjoying a happy family life is ensuring that you make time to unwind. This means making time for PLAY! When was the last time you played as a family together?

Everyone leads a busy life these days, but that doesn't mean you can't add that fun aspect to your life. It is not as though you have to schedule hours and hours of play time. Just work on fitting in time to unwind with your family every day.

Unwinding with your family could entail playing a game, going for a short walk, rough-housing with your kids or enjoying an evening barbeque together. It is too easy to become rigid and strict in your daily routines. While this might get your kids to do their homework. It doesn't do much when it comes to relaxing together. Do your kids even ask you to snuggle up on the couch and watch the TV anymore?

If you are having trouble finding time to play with your family, can you miss seeing your friends for one evening per week instead? While it is important for everyone to have friends and socialize, your family should still come first. Is working that extra overtime absolutely necessary or would you rather be at home enjoying your family?

Your goal should be to get to a point where your children are happy to see you each evening, and you are glad to see them. Once you have gotten to this point you can say that you do have a happy family life.

Here's some additional ways you can spend time playing and unwinding with your family.

- Limit after-school activities for your kids
- Miss that after work drink with your buddies now and again
- Go swimming together
- Go on family bike rides or hikes
- Enjoy a summer family picnic at the local park or beach
- Cook together
- Set up a family ritual for one night a week such as movie night, pizza night etc.

When you make time to unwind you are helping your mind and body de-stress too. It is healthy to allow your mind to do something fun and not to always be thinking about work and priorities. You may actually start to feel younger too!

If you haven't spent much time lately playing with your family, start today by making a point to do exactly that. Ask your kids what game they would like to play when you get home from work tonight.

Top Tips for Building a Good Family Life

Use the following tips to help you create a caring and happy environment for your family.

Be available: Always ensure that your spouse and your kids know that you are there for them. This helps them feel secure and shows them that you care about them.

Show affection: Make time to tell your family that you care about them. Show affection and always encourage your children in their endeavours. A good family life begins with you and your spouse. Don't forget to show each other that the love is still alive in your relationship. It can be so easy to take each other for granted. Remember actions speak louder than words.

Be a role model: As much as possible you want to teach your children morals and values by "showing" them what you mean. It is much easier for a child to follow in your example, when they see you actually putting what you say into practice. Start when your children are small and teach them what it means to have a healthy outlook on life.

Discipline: The worst mistake parents make is not to discipline with any type of consistency. Your goal here is to teach your children how to be responsible by making good decisions. In order for this to work you need to discipline each child in the same way.

Stress: Stress can be a killer for everyone, parents and children alike. These days there is much more social stress than when you were a child. This can really affect your children and it is one reason why teenage suicides are on the rise. Learn how to balance your life so you can teach your children how to do the same.

Communication: Make time to communicate with your family, including your spouse. Have dinner time discussions, listen to what your children are telling you and take the time to have fun with your family. Instill in your children that points of view can be different, and that it doesn't mean anyone is treated differently because of it.

Activities: It is so important to spend time together as a family. Instead of shipping everyone off to an after school club, do a family activity instead. This may be taking the dog for a walk together. Or buying everyone a bike and going for rides on the weekend. When was the last time you went camping together or even spent the day visiting a local attraction?

Health: Working on raising a healthy family in all areas. This includes not only eating correctly and exercising regularly. It includes making healthy decisions when it comes to your finances, work, and life in general.

Nurturing Your Family

Have you ever sat down and thought about what a family really is? A family is a unit of people that belong together, not always by birth. The main goal of each family member is to feel as though they are part of this unit. As one of the parents, it is your responsibility to nurture your family so that everyone feels accepted. Here's how you can go about this.

See your family as a work in progress, each day strive to do something that helps improve your family situation. This might be helping out a specific family member or it might entail spending time with everyone.

Of course you need the time to actually do this, and this can be a problem for many parents today. So start off by making a concentrated effort to spend more time with your family. See if you can reschedule work to free up some time, or stop bringing work home with you on the weekends.

Make time to sit down with your children and help them set goals and help them actually achieve them. Try and see if you cannot free up one hour each day for your family.

No matter how many children you have, remember that each one has their own set of skills and characteristics. Help your child discover what their talents are and help them showcase them to family and friends. Always encourage your child in everything they do. Don't automatically tell them they can't do something, let them try. Whether they succeed or fail they will have made the effort to take on a new challenge. As a parent you should be proud of this quality.

While it is easy to scold your child for doing something wrong, you may not always give praise as easily. Not because you don't want to, but because you assume they know that something went right. Be on the look out to give praise where praise is due. This will help boost your child's self-confidence and shows them that you do notice things.

Another way to nurture your family is by making them feel safe and secure. Children look to their parents for comfort and security, if it is not there, they will become insecure not just at home but at school too.

You can create a safe, secure and happy home by not arguing in front of your children. Don't engage in any type of verbal abuse with anyone and remember that you don't always have to be in the right.

All it takes to nurture your family is a little time and effort, are you prepared to take actions in this direction?

Living a Good Marriage

Leading a healthy and happy family life depends upon the state of your marriage. If both of you are happy then this transfers over to your children. If you are not then most likely your children will pick up on this and respond by being unhappy too.

So how do you ensure that your marriage stays happy and healthy? Well the most important aspect is by communicating effectively with each other. This means showing each other that you still love one another, and being there for them no matter what.

A happy marriage can be demonstrated by picking up on things as they need to be done, without waiting to be asked. For example if one of you is cooking dinner, the other person automatically starts laying out the dinner table. When it's laundry day or garbage day you both pick up items and get them ready. No one is forced to ask for help, or made to feel that they have to do the job alone.

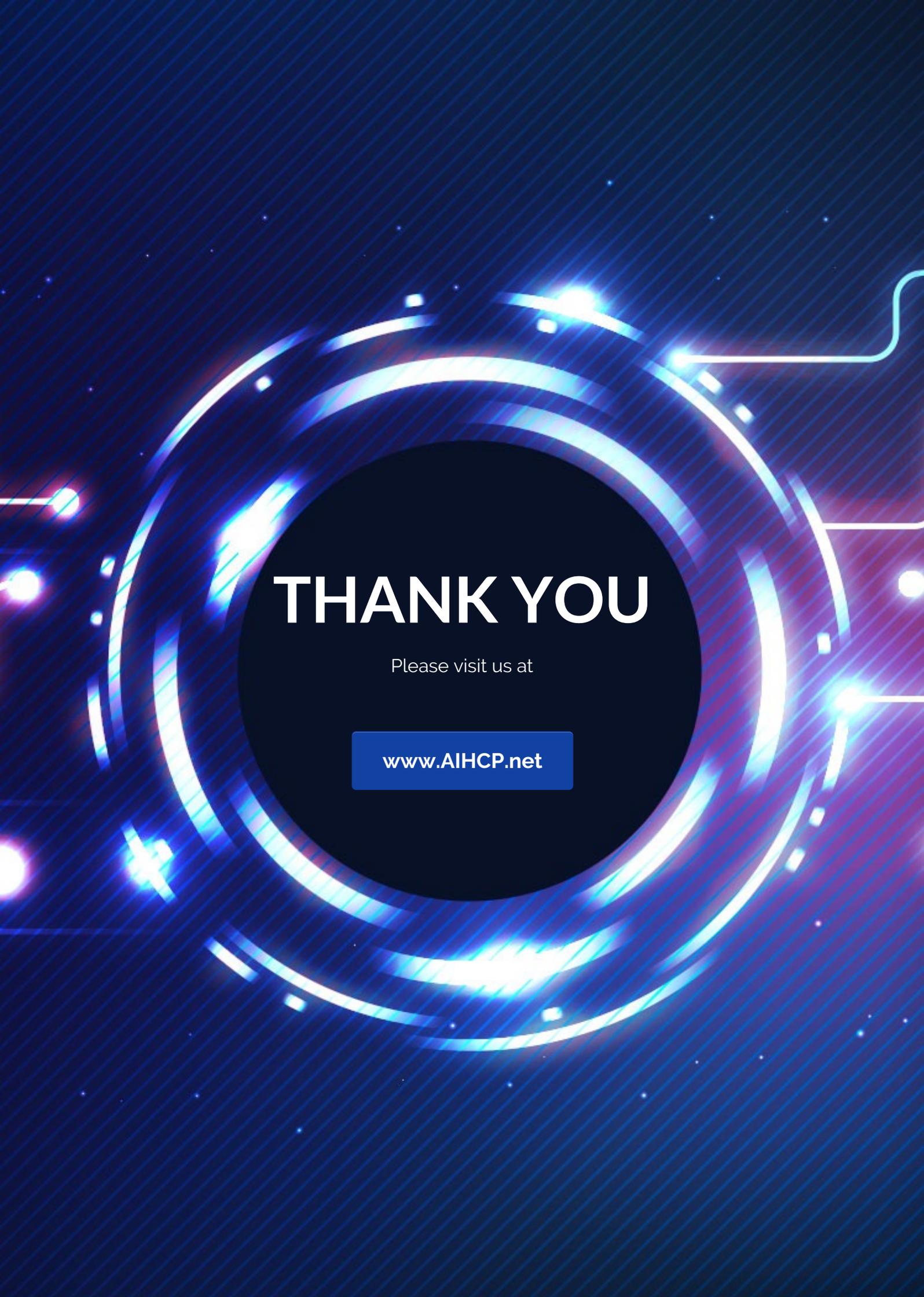
Living a good marriage means understanding that you both need some time alone now and again. If your spouse tends to spend more time with the kids, why not take them out and give her a break? It also means not getting mad when one of you spends time chatting on the phone with an old friend.

While being a newlywed is wonderful, it is so easy to start taking each other for granted as the years wear on. If you want your marriage to last for 25 or 50 years then you are going to have to work on keeping your marriage healthy.

Showing your spouse that you still love them is key, and this can be done in lots of small ways:

1. Surprise your spouse with a quick phone call at lunch time.
2. Bring home a gift now and again.
3. Don't forget birthdays and anniversaries, it's not the gift that is important but remembering the day.
4. Give each other a massage.
5. Watch their favorite movie with them.
6. Compliment the way your spouse looks.
7. Tell each other that you are great parents.
8. Thank each other for just being there.
9. Send them out with their friends.
10. Go shopping together.

You entered into your marriage because you wanted to spend time together, so don't forget this. Always be appreciative of each other by showing your true feelings. This will spillover to your children who will grow up knowing what a good relationship really means.



THANK YOU

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