



The Family Friend

A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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Are You Nagging or Communicating?

by Al Menconi

How is your communication with your children? Do you feel there is a strong connection, or does there seem to be something missing? Are your kids drawn to talk to you, or do they spend a lot of time away from the family either on the phone, listening to music in their rooms, or playing computer games? If they seem to be drifting away, maybe there's a problem in communication. Let's see if we can find out what it is.

First of all, try listening to your self closely sometime. Do you find your self constantly correcting and directing your kids? "Pick up your clothes. Put that away! Don't do that! Do this! Don't wear that! Sit up straight! Lean over your plate! Turn that off! Quit listening to that! Please be quiet! Etc., etc.!" Is this the way you communicate with your children?

Maybe your rationale is, "I need to constantly correct and instruct them. If I don't, they're libel to make mistakes." Hey, I'm a parent. I can understand how you can feel that way, but let's put it in a different context. How would you feel if your spouse constantly talked to you in the way you talk to

your children? What would be your response? "Quit nagging!" Right?

Isn't it funny that when we "correct" others, it's for their own good? But when we are "corrected," it's called nagging! Do you want to be around someone who nags? Neither do I! Think about it. You may intend your instruction for good, but your kids probably see it as a negative. Maybe your children see you as a nag. Regardless, whether you call it instruction or nagging, the important question is what the results are. Do you find the more you instruct (nag), the more your children emotionally back away from you? Then, when they back up, you NAG LOUDER. And, they get further AND FURTHER away! Does this sound familiar?

A suggestion, if you want to really communicate with your child, try listening more and talk less. If you feel that you must correct and direct, try to balance your communication with ten positive affirmations for every negative one. Evaluate your conversations with your child. How many encouraging statements pepper your conversations? "I'm proud of you. I believe the best for you. I'm glad you're my child. Etc. etc."

I'm sorry to report that in the

average home, it is ten negative statements for every positive one. No wonder your 15-year-old goes into her room, closes the door, puts on her headphones, cranks it up to 11, and doesn't come out until graduation. Are you beginning to understand why she won't talk to you?

But she is talking to somebody. She comes home after school and talks to her friends for hours on the phone. She's communicating with someone who doesn't nag her and is willing to listen. That someone could be you.

Three Things They Remember

Best-selling author and psychologist, Mary Pipher, says there are three things that we usually remember with great happiness from our childhood—time outdoors, vacations, and family meals. So how does your family rank in all three? How much time do you all spend together outdoors? Are your family vacations filled with joy? Remember, vacations don't have to be expensive to be fun. And how many dinners do you all share? Answer these three questions well and you'll be guaranteed to have kids who will remember the great Daddy they had.

Via <http://www.allprodad.com>

MILITARY MARRIAGES

by Norman Bales

Conventional wisdom suggests that the stresses of long wars in Afghanistan and Iraq would escalate the divorce rate among military services personnel. According to an article recently published by the Associated Press, conventional wisdom is wrong. The article, written by Pauline Jelinek, indicates the annual divorce rate among all service personnel holds steady at about 3.3 percent. Given the amount of stress placed on military families, this is phenomenal. Several factors keep the divorce rate low.

1. Team work. In one sense of the term you can say that service personnel belong to a larger family. They are there to support and encourage one another. Our son is a colonel in the U. S. Army. As an officer, he feels a sense of responsibility toward personnel under his command, and to their families. Our daughter-in-law, Melanie, is heavily involved in providing support and encouragement to the families of service men and women. They don't adopt a "hands off" approach when family crises arise. If someone in their group has a problem, it's everybody's problem.

2. Family Support Programs. Every branch of the service offers workshops, groups, retreats, and encouragement for relationship building. They address con-

flict management, quality of life, health care, housing, child care, schools and many other issues.

3. Family "Covenant." This is an army program concerned with a wide variety of facilities and resources to help improve the quality of life both overseas and in the United States.

4. The Person Who Stays Behind Steps up to the Plate. Perhaps this is the reason women in the military have a much higher divorce rate than the men. Maybe the guys who stay here don't take care of business at home the way they should. I cannot say enough about the contributions our daughter-in-law makes to family life. If the plumbing is going to break, or if there's health crisis, or if there is a school difficulty, it will happen when our son is somewhere "saving the country." She steps in and gets it done. I am amazed at her resourcefulness.

It occurs to me that we could all learn something about handling marriage better, if we would take an objective look at military families. There are some horror stories to be sure, but there's more good news than bad.

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Good Advice From a Prison

- ◆ Get involved in the lives of your children.
- ◆ Keep them busy.
- ◆ Moving for some children can

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be traumatic.

- ◆ Don't shelter your children from problems.
- ◆ Divorce is extremely difficult for children. *"I never really knew my father when I attended his funeral! Therefore, it was very difficult to know what I should feel."* Keep in mind that divorce bothers children more than you realize.
- ◆ Parents cannot buy love.
- ◆ Teach the Word of God on a daily basis.
- ◆ Take them to church.
- ◆ Talk with them more and with respect—especially when they become teenagers.
- ◆ Remember all children are different.
- ◆ Teach them when they get older that they are accountable to God, but refrain from implying that: *"God will get you for that!"*
- ◆ Children need people who have their priorities in order.
- ◆ Be an example on how to live in front of your children—be mindful of what you do in the presence of your children.
- ◆ Don't fear your children.

Survey from McNairy Co. (TN)
Inmates Cellblock by Mark
Massey & Wayne Meddlers