

(Style on a Dime) Putting family first during tough times

Written by Marcia Humphrey
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Once upon a time there was a happy family of four who lived in their dream home, and drove their dream cars to their dream jobs. All seemed perfect, that is until a stranger came to town. What the family didn't know about the stranger is that he was a thief. One night, while the entire family slept, the thief came and began stealing from this family...

Before long the family's dream home was gone, along with their dream vehicles (which was kind of OK because they lost the dream jobs that they used to drive to). They were forced to take lower paying jobs and buy used economy cars.

Soon the family began arguing and fighting all the time. Feeling stress from every direction, this once happy family found themselves at a crossroads. How could they ever recover from their losses and begin to rebuild their lives? Suddenly the husband had a revelation. He realized that the most important thing that was missing from their lives was peace. He gathered his wife and two children and together they committed to weathering the storm as a family. They bowed and offered thanks for the blessings that they still enjoyed-the love and support of family. Are you wondering about the keys to strengthening family bonds when times are tight? Spend time (not money) together with one another building memories, character, and learning important life lessons.

Memory Making:

To remain in touch with your family, beat boredom (and depression) by organizing a weekly or monthly game night. Remember games like checkers, dominoes, Monopoly, Sorry, and Life? What about Cranium or Uno? My all-time favorite game is charades! The joking and laughter you'll enjoy is sure to help relieve stress and chase away any blues you may have (at least for a while). Another way to tickle your funny bone- watch a few cartoons with your kids, or even by yourself. Finally, don't forget to invite your extended family in on the fun. A few families getting together for games, relaxation, and encouragement are often the best way to relieve the inevitable stresses of life.

Developing Diligence:

The funny thing about kids is that they are always watching grown folks. They watch how we respond to adversity and basically copy us. When you find yourself in transition, use this opportunity to teach your kids healthy coping skills like goal setting and perseverance, and

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anticipating pitfalls. For instance, if you are job-hunting, talk with your spouse and children about your strategy and how they can help. Maybe your teenager can help you get more comfortable with computer skills, or even help write letters. This way they will pick up on your persistence and your child will be less likely to give up easily.

Life Lessons

I bet you are wondering what ever happened to that once-happy family. Well, after facing about a year of transition and challenges, the family is again on solid ground. The lessons they all learned during this tough time of their life made them more appreciative of what truly makes one happy- sharing your life and spending your time with those you love and who love you. Once they learned that important lesson, they all lived happily ever after....Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at a low cost. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.