

SEARCH FOR

Search

[Advanced Search](#) · [Help](#)YOU ARE HERE: [Articles](#) > [Vibrant Life](#) > [May-June, 2002](#) > Article[Print article](#) [Tell a friend](#) [Find subscription deals](#)

Get closer to your kids: eight ways to make your family a refuge from the storms of life's events.

Vibrant Life, May-June, 2002, by [Victor M. Parachin](#)

Eight ways to make your family a refuge from the storms of life's events.

A Young woman named Cynthia vividly recalls one of the high points in her life. It took place when she was 12 years old. Her father promised to take her with him on a business trip to San Francisco. For months the two of them talked about the trip.

"After his meetings we planned to take a cab to Chinatown and have our favorite food, ride on the trolley, and then have hot fudge sundaes. I was dying with anticipation," she remembers. When the day for their excursion finally arrived, Cynthia waited eagerly for her father to finish work. At 6:30 he arrived, but with an influential business client who offered to take the father and daughter out for dinner. "My disappointment was bigger than life," she says.

In a never-to-be-forgotten moment, her father simply said to his client: "I'd love to see you, but this is a special time with my girl. We've got it planned to the minute." Together father and daughter did everything according to their plans. "That was just about the happiest time of my life. I don't think any young girl ever loved her father as much as I loved mine that night," she says.

That true story is reported by Cynthia's father, Stephen R. Covey, in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families*. Clearly, Stephen Covey knows that one ingredient common to close families is the ability to make and keep promises. Here are eight other tips for getting close to your children.

1. Make family your top priority.

Close families get that way because they have chosen to make family life their number one priority. "If you decide your kids come before your sales quota or bridge game, you will find that all the other pieces [of parenting] fall into place. When you put your kids first, you're getting the most value for every hour on earth," concludes writer Benjamin J. Stein.

2. Spend time with your kids.

There is no substitute for spending time with your children. Just as friendships need time to nurture and bond, the same is true for family

Sponsored Links

Ads by Google

[Learn more about ADHD](#)

Receive a free DVD or CD. Get information and success stories
www.infoadhd.com

[Natural ADHD Remedy](#)

Focus for ADHD is a Proven Herbal Remedy. No Side Effects. Guaranteed
www.nativeremedies.com

[Adhd](#)

ADHD help for troubled teens. Info on schools and programs .
<http://www.teenhelp.us>

["How to Treat ADD/ADHD"](#)

Affordable new Tomatis CD uses sound to re-wire brain. Guaranteed!
www.mind-stim.com/ADD

Content provided in partnership with



relationships. "Children cherish special time alone with a parent," says Nancy Samalin, director of Parent Guidance Workshops in New York City. "These memories are happy ones because they recall times when a parent was totally in the moment and solely focused on being with the child, one on one."

Samalin stresses the importance of parents carving out time for children even if their own schedules are packed and frenzied. She cites these positive examples: "A mother in my workshop makes it a point to take a 20-minute walk with her 7-year-old daughter every evening after dinner--weather permitting. Another parent has a 10-minute evening ritual that begins with her saying to her 5-year-old, 'Tell me four things that were funny today.' An artist I know spends a half hour every night drawing with his son. Together they choose their favorites to put up on the door."

3. Never neglect these three important words.

Close families know the healing power of forgiveness. They often say these three words: Please forgive me! or I forgive you! They know that forgiveness has the power to warm the heart while cooling the sting.

1 · [2](#) · [3](#) · [4](#) | [Next](#) »

RELATED TERMS

- _____
- _____
- _____

DIRECTORY

WEB

ARTICLES

SEARCH FOR

Search

· [Advanced Search](#) · [Help](#)

©2003 LookSmart, Ltd. All rights reserved. - [About Us](#) · [Advertise with Us](#) · [Advertiser Log-in](#) · [Privacy Policy](#) · [Terms of Service](#)

food, and they set the table in the same area of the restaurant each week. Now that our children are in their 20s and living away from home but in the area, they sometimes call me or their mother at work during the day and say, 'Let's do pizza tonight.' We know what they are asking for, and it's much more than pizza."

5. Be available.

No matter how busy you are with your job and other responsibilities, let your children know you are always available to them. Close families operate on the understanding that members can call on each other or interrupt schedules when necessary. John E. Obedzinski, M.D., a behavioral pediatrician in Corte Madera, California, tells of being summoned from a university conference by a call from his older daughter, then about four. "We had just moved to a home in the country with a stream on the property," he explains. "Alarmed, I hurried to the phone. 'The salmon are running!' Mariska told me. She wanted someone to share her excitement. Such special moments simply can't be scheduled," Dr. Obedzinski says.

« [Previous](#) | [1](#) · [2](#) · [3](#) · [4](#) | [Next](#) »

RELATED TERMS

- _____
- _____
- _____

DIRECTORY

WEB

ARTICLES

SEARCH

all magazines ▾

FOR

Search

· [Advanced Search](#) · [Help](#)

©2003 LookSmart, Ltd. All rights reserved. - [About Us](#) · [Advertise with Us](#) · [Advertiser Log-in](#) · [Privacy Policy](#) · [Terms of Service](#)

SEARCH FOR

Search

[Advanced Search](#) · [Help](#)YOU ARE HERE: [Articles](#) > [Vibrant Life](#) > [May-June, 2002](#) > Article[Print article](#) [Tell a friend](#) [Find subscription deals](#)

Get closer to your kids: eight ways to make your family a refuge from the storms of life's events.

[Vibrant Life](#), May-June, 2002, by [Victor M. Parachin](#)

Continued from page 2

6. Teach children to love and feel loved.

Loving smiles, loving words, loving actions, loving thoughts, loving gestures within a family create an emotionally healthy home where all the members express and experience closeness because of that love.

"Nothing is as important to a child's feelings of self-worth as the knowledge that he is unequivocally loved by the people who are important in his life," says James M. Harris, Ph.D., a professor in the Department of Psychology at Brigham Young University. "Many mistakes that we might make as parents can be overcome if our children have this knowledge. Love to a child is like sunshine to a flower, like water to a thirsty plant, like honey to a bee. Your children need to know beyond any doubt that they are lovable, and that you love them."

7. Use words wisely.

"Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing," declares the writer of Proverbs 12:18. Always try to speak in ways that affirm and assure, not attack and abuse, your children. How we speak to each other within families will either pull people together or push them apart. When you speak, choose and use your words wisely, because they have a lingering power. Consider this partial list of the "Worst Things an Adult Ever Said to a Child"-- phrases compiled from an informal survey of adults in the recently published *The Parent's Little Book of Lists*, by Jane Bluestein:

- * "You'll never amount to anything."
- * "I wish I'd never had you."
- * "You'll never be college material."
- * "Why can't you be more like your [brother or sister]?"
- * "Your mother and I wouldn't be getting divorced if it weren't for you."
- * "I love you, but ..."

Thankfully, the survey respondents also remember the best things

Sponsored Links

Ads by Google

[UCP](#)

Powerful advocates for people with disabilities. You can help!
www.ucp.org

[Save Canada's Wilderness](#)

Join the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.
cpaws.org

[Humanitarian Aid](#)

Providing medicine & supplies. Healthy people. Better world.
www.directrelief.org

[Want to Volunteer?](#)

We'll help you find an opportunity for whatever you like doing, today!
www.VolunteerMatch.org

Content provided in partnership with

THOMSON
GALE

adults said to them. Some of those "bests" include:

- * "You can do anything you choose to do."
- * "You're very smart."
- * "I'm so glad we've got you."
- * "Congratulations! You deserve this?"
- * "You're beautiful."
- * "You're more responsible than a lot of adults I know."
- * "I believe in you."
- * "I love you!"

8. Praise your kids privately and publicly.

A word of praise is verbal sunshine to the spirit. Just as we are drawn to people who shower us with compliments and praise, children are drawn closer to parents who are generous in praising them. Along with complimenting your children privately in the home, be sure to sing their praises publicly as well. Consider the love and affirmation the children of film director Ron Howard must have felt when reading this response to a reporter who asked him to describe his ideal vacation: "I find car trips to be the greatest. Just driving down the road, talking to the kids, listening to the radio, explaining things, hearing what they have to say, talking to my wife, hitting the motel, jumping in the pool, watching a little television. I get a week of that and I come away stimulated, ready to work, full of ideas."

Surely Howard's children, upon reading his answer, would feel highly affirmed and loved to learn his "ideal vacation" is a week spent with family, talking and listening, swimming, and watching television together; that his renewal and stimulation come directly from time with family.

« [Previous](#) | [1](#) · [2](#) · [3](#) · [4](#) | [Next](#) »

RELATED TERMS

- _____
- _____
- _____

DIRECTORY

WEB

ARTICLES

SEARCH FOR

Search

[Advanced Search](#) · [Help](#)

SEARCH FOR

Search

· [Advanced Search](#) · [Help](#)

YOU ARE HERE: [Articles](#) > [Vibrant Life](#) > [May-June, 2002](#) > Article

[Print article](#) [Tell a friend](#) [Find subscription deals](#)

Get closer to your kids: eight ways to make your family a refuge from the storms of life's events.

[Vibrant Life](#), May-June, 2002, by [Victor M. Parachin](#)

Continued from page 3

Ultimately, by working to cultivate closeness within your family, you effectively create a peaceful, harmonious home life where members experience love and support, as well as find refuge from the storms of life. Close families know the truth and wisdom of these words from German philosopher Johann Goethe: "He is happiest, be he king or peasant, who finds peace in his home."

Scripture quotations in this article are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright [C] 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Victor M. Parachin writes on health and family issues from Tulsa, Oklahoma.

COPYRIGHT 2002 Review and Herald Publishing Association
COPYRIGHT 2002 Gale Group

« [Previous](#) | [1](#) · [2](#) · [3](#) · [4](#)

Sponsored Links

Ads by Google

[Easy To Be A Christian?](#)

No. What It Means To Follow Jesus. Lessons Of Faith For Today's World
www.changedlives.com

[Discount Audio Bibles](#)

Great savings on audio Bibles on cassettes and CDs.
www.allBibles.com

[Save 20-30% on Bibles](#)

Find a large selection of Bibles and books at The Bible Gift Store
www.biblegiftstore.com

[Free Bible Software](#)

Nonprofit gives away free Bible Study software
FreeBibleSoftware.com

Content provided in partnership with



RELATED TERMS

- _____
- _____
- _____