

# **THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE FAMILIES (Part 1)**

Copyright © Family Council of Queensland 2001

**Edited transcript of presentation at the Brisbane Family Expo on July 14, 2001 by Dr John Covey, director of the home and family division of Franklin Covey, and his wife Jane**

**JOHN:** We're going to try to talk about effective parenting, and we would like to talk about nurturing parenting versus perhaps troubled parenting. We'd like to give you some hope. We love you and we love Australia and I say that from the bottom of my heart. As a matter of fact, Jane's greatest attribute is she is a fair dinkum, true blue mum. Is that good language?

I want to say that one thing I want you to remember and that's this. Behaviour is governed by your values and by what you think. But the results of your life, are governed by universal principles. Principles such as trust, love and respect. We can go throughout the world and it's the same for all families worldwide. We are saying value principles, the universal natural laws in your life.

We are going to be talking about four roles of nurturing parents and I'm going to begin by talking about modelling. What do your children, what does your spouse see? What they see is your behaviour and if you're a nurturing parent then they begin to build trust in you; they begin to build faith in you.

**JANE:** We're going to be talking about four effective things in parenting and the first one is modelling; then we're going to be talking about mentoring, organising your family and teaching. And under mentoring, I'd just like to share a story with you.

We were leaving to go on a trip to London to do some work with Conoco and our youngest child was 14, I had a suitcase on the bed and it was open and I was just throwing things in it getting ready to go on this plane trip together. Our youngest child plopped herself down the bed on the side of bed and she said: 'Don't go mum, you can't go. You and dad are going to cross that ocean and you're never going to come back. That plane's going to go down, don't go mum. I said, of course it's not going to go down; we're going to come back Chrissy. She said: "Please don't go, you're going to leave me all alone" - and she was just moaning about it. I said: "Chrissy, we're going to be fine, honey. People cross the ocean every day, nothing's going to happen, we're going to come back. She said: "I know you won't and you know Mum, I couldn't live without Dad; if something happened to Dad I couldn't go on.

"You know how Dad believes in me." I said: "Really!" I walked down stairs to the kitchen, fussed around for a little bit, came upstairs she was still on the bed. I

said: “Well, do you think I believe in you?” She said: “You’re okay. But Mum, Dad believes in me. You’ve just got to come back I can't live without him.” And I thought to myself what does John do to help her to think that strongly that “my dad believes in me”. That's what were talking about in modelling.

**JOHN:** Now the reason why we gave you that story is so it would give me credibility. It's all phony. No, it did happen! But what your children see is what they'll begin to trust. They need to have examples. Let me give you a non-example. How many here have heard of Tim McVeigh, that blew up the building in Oklahoma City, killed over 150 people, 19 children. He was stone, he had no feeling, he had no empathy, he never broke down, he never said I'm sorry, he was against the government. Well, his attorney said: “I'll tell you exactly what happened to Tim McVeigh. I worked with him for two years. He told me over that two year period of time that when he was a young man, a very young child, his parents fought so bitterly that he would be up in his room on his bed just literally quaking as they would fight and yell. He said I thought they would kill each other. He had nightmares.” A young child can't handle that. What does a child do, they put a protective coating around themselves, they protect themselves, they insulate themselves so they have no feeling. Then he found an enemy which was the government and so he blew that building up and he had no feeling.

Now, here's a principle, the child is father of the man. The scripting that a child gets when they're young, what they begin to think and see in the models becomes their mind set; their heart is set when they grow up. How many of you have ever felt like you're parenting like your parents parented? Anybody? How many have ever felt like you're parenting because you realise that your parents were doing maybe not the right thing and you went counter to that? “I'm not going to do that,” you make a resolve, “I'm not going to be that way, I'm not going to do that.” What we're saying is this modelling is absolutely critical and the nurturing parent that is trying more nurturing than a problem, tries to be a nurturing model and tries to believe in the child.

Let me just tell you a personal story of my own life and my own older brother Stephen, who is the author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. When I was about 7 and Steve was about 10, my father used to take us hunting - pheasant hunting and in those days, 40, 50 years ago it was legitimate and we would eat our birds. Okay, it wasn't just a waste. We were so excited and my father would prepare the location and would pack the automobile and we would do all those kind of things. We were really just thrilled and my mother would pack a lunch for us and the boys would get in the car. Well in the state we lived in, down in the south, where we would go hunting would take us a couple of hours and the actual official time that you could start to hunt was eight o'clock. And so we'd leave around five in the morning and we'd get to our spot around 7 or 6.30. We would look at the birds flying around and there was the stalks of wheat and you could see the pheasants and se we'd take a side here and take a side there and that was our field. Then other hunters would come and take their fields. I'll never forget around 7.30 we were crouched very quiet waiting to enter into the field. All of a sudden we heard pow, pow and people were starting to go into their fields and we

would look at our father and he would look at his watch and he'd say, eight o'clock boys. Well we waited and I'll never forget at about 10 minutes to eight, somebody rushed by me and hit me and I was just shocked and three or four men went right into the fields all the birds went up, they fired on all the birds and kind of cleaned us out. We looked at our dad. Eight o'clock. When we went into the field at eight o'clock do you think we got any birds? Ah ah, they were gone. What did he get, he got two boys who absolutely trusted their father. His word was his bond.

Now contrast that with my daughter who is in Washington DC, going through a car wash, she's 21 and the car wash attendant who's about the same 21 years of age, says kind of making a little pass at her, I'll give you the deluxe wash for the regular wash. Christine said: "No, I just want the regular wash for the regular price." Well the car went through and it came out and sure enough it was the deluxe wash for the regular price. This attendant's mother happened to work at the car wash and she started to chew him out. Swearing at him and this is what she said: "You stupid... if the boss were here and he caught you he would can your ....."

What was the modelling? What was she teaching that boy? It doesn't matter to be honest, just don't get caught. Ever heard of Bill Clinton? That's the kind of modelling we're talking about. Now how do you get to be an effective model?

You want to be a model so that your child can see an impression, you want to be a mentor so that they can feel your love and value themselves, self-worth. You want to organise so that they experience family and trust the structure of the family and you want to teach so that they hear and do the principles and trust themselves. Now here's the way that you get to build your examples your modelling. It's called being pro-active. Being reactive is that here is the stimulus of what's going on and here is your chosen response and there's no space between what's happening to you and your chosen response. So you're driving around down the road, somebody cuts in front of you. You give them the bird. We call that in America giving them the bird. You get mad. Why are you mad? Because look what he did! Or you're home, you're exhausted somebody spills something at the table and you yell at them. You're reactive. You act based upon what's happening to you. We are human beings; we are not animals. We can be pro-active.

**There is a space between that stimulus response and that is our freedom to choose. Habit number one, be pro-active.**

**We have a space; we don't need to react. We have a conscience, we have our self-awareness, we have an imagination, we have the power to choose.** So that there is this space and in this space that's the way you begin to react, when you begin to choose your response based on your deepest values.

**JANE:** I'm going to give an example of this. What we are trying to say in this first habit about being proactive is that many people say I'm like I am because of my early environment, I was born poor. People who are born poor, act like this. Or they say I act like I do because I was born rich, I'm just not a responsible person, I've had everything done for me, I just can't take responsibility. They

blame other early environment or they say I'm like I am because of my genes. I was born with a short temper, my dad's got a short temper, my grand-father's got a short temper, we can't help ourselves, we were just born with a short fuse - that's how the McIntyre's are. Or they say it's because of our current environment. We would be delightful, wonderful people if we didn't not have that 15-year-old son in our house. You should see how charming I would be if I wasn't married to him.

So what we are saying is that the first habit is that, yes you're influenced by your genes, **yes you're influenced by your early environment, yes you're influenced by the environment that you have now, that current environment, but you're not determined by it. You are not determined by it. There is a huge volume of information out there, stories of people who have overcome their environment, been in concentration camps, and chosen not to hate, who have chosen their response based on what they value and as human beings every one of us can do this. We have a space there where we can choose.**

Let me give you an example of this. We had a daughter and when she was in high school she had a boyfriend. Now if any one of you can figure out a way to prevent this from happening, please tell me. I don't know. It's one of the worst things, a mother's worst nightmare that your daughter's going to have a boyfriend when she's in high school. But what can you do? I don't know. This boy was hanging around our house constantly, to be with her. We had rules, we talked about, plenty of rules - win-win agreements, what time she'd be in. On a weeknight she'd be in our house at 9.30 - no exceptions. Wherever she was she would leave at 9.00 and she would be in our house at 9.30. We talked about this and everything was all agreed upon. It was a Wednesday night and John and I decided to go to a late movie. We didn't get home from this movie until 11.30 at night.

I went to her sister and I said: "Where's Rachel?" She said: "I don't know, Brad came over and they went out." By now it was 11.45, I was pacing around the kitchen, John of course had gone up to bed.

I was so angry I was shaking, I was out of control, angry, thinking about her and thinking about him, and what a waste of time this whole thing is, knowing that she had a big biology test tomorrow and she was studying for her college exams. I was raging inside, thinking why are they doing this? And so by now it was midnight. I thought I don't care what is going on, I'm going to call his family. I bet they are over his house. So I called his home. His dad answered the phone. "Oh yeah, we're all over here watching a video, you want to talk to Rachel?" All I said to her was: "Come home fast."

I knew it would take about 10 minutes for her to drive from his house to ours and in that time I started thinking about my girl. I thought: "This is my girl, I love her, we have a good relationship, do I really want to make an emotional withdrawal from her right now?" I don't think so. I started thinking about her, and knowing you can choose your response based on what you value, and I valued this girl and our relationship. By the time she walked in that door, even though I felt like yelling at her: "Where have you been; why did you do this?" I said to her: "Tell

me about tonight, Rachel.” She said: “Well, Brad came over at 9.00 and we went to get something to eat and it was already after 9.30 and I thought: ‘Well, I’ve already blown it, so I might as well stay out till midnight.’” I said: “I see.” And she said: “I’m sorry, mum, I know what the consequences are; I know I won’t go out this weekend. I’m sorry mum; I promise mum I’ll never do it again.” She did it again, they always do it again. This is habit. The first habit, be proactive - you can choose your response, based on what you value. Yes we are influenced by our genetic makeup, by our environment by our childhood but we are not determined by it. We can choose based on what we care about.

**JOHN:** Now the next role, these are inescapable roles. You’re either doing them well or your not doing them well. They are inescapable, you can’t get away from it. The child, the spouse, feels your love like Rachel felt Jane’s love, and what happens is they begin to value themselves they begin to develop their self-worth.

**JANE:** I am going to talk about **mentoring**. In this mentoring I am going to talk about something called the **emotional bank account**. We use the metaphor of a bank account because everybody knows what a bank account is. If you put \$500 in the bank, you get to draw out \$10 or \$50 or \$100 and you’re okay. If you try to draw out \$1000, you’re in big trouble. We have an emotional bank account with everyone we know. You have emotional bank accounts with everybody at work, you are making emotional deposits or withdrawals everyday in your conversation the way you treat each other, the way you talk to each other. You have an emotional bank account with the people here. If you came with a little group of people and you’re smiling, come and sit by us and you’re kind and good to each other, you’re making deposits. At lunch time if you say: “Let’s not let her sit with us,” you may be making a withdrawal. **You have an emotional bank account with everyone you know.**

**All the time you are making deposits or withdrawals. Now nature of this bank account is entirely different in a family situation. With friends you can make a deposit and it will last for 10 years. You haven’t seen an old friend for 10 years and you go back and pick right back with him like it was yesterday. You can’t make a deposit every 10 years with your family, or you won’t have a family. Relationships in a family need to have emotional deposits every single day.**

So what is an emotional deposit and an emotional withdrawal? Social scientists tell us that 80% of the time the talk in a family is negative talk. “You’re not wearing that, are you?” “Oh my gosh, look at your hair.” “You are lazy, you are slow, get up, go to sleep, eat faster, what are you reading? Why did you do that?. You’ve got terrible grades again.” **Eighty percent of our talk in the family is negative. Negative talk from parents to children disempowers children; it lowers self esteem.** Negative talk is detrimental in a marriage. It is harmful. How would you like to be an adolescent in your teenage years and never hear a positive thing said to you from the time you get up in the morning to the time you go to bed at night? How would you feel about yourself? You get it from you teachers at school and you get home and your mother says: “Turn that music off; oh my gosh, you look terrible; you never do what you’re supposed to do; you’re

always late.” How would you feel? It erodes your self-esteem, it erodes your feeling of self-worth. It is wrong in families. We have to stop it. There is a man by the name of John Gottman. John Gottman has written a very successful book in the United States and worldwide. It's called *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail*. Probably nobody has done more research on marriage than John Gottman. He has tested thousands of couples. I've read pages and pages of research.

Here is the bottom line of what he says in his book. **If you make five positive deposits to every one withdrawal you have a stable marriage. If you are making five negative comments to your husband or your wife for every one positive, you have an unstable marriage and you may end in divorce.** He has come up with this as the magic number five to one. In a family when you start to look at strengths I think this particular thing is the most important of all the deposits. When you centre on strengths of a child when you talk about strengths, you change the culture in your home. **Do you know what the greatest determiner of success will be with your children? What is the greatest determiner of success for a child? It is not IQ. There are children with high IQ's who do not do well in school; it is not money, it is not position, it is not the family into which you are born - no. None of those things are the greatest determiners of success in a child. The greatest determiner of success in a child is how he feels about himself as a person. It's his feeling of self-worth. If he has high self-worth, he will be better academically, he will be able to hold a job, he will be able to marry and have children. No self-esteem is the greatest determiner of failure on our culture, and you have a great influence on that as a parent.**

Negative talk contributes. Criticism of children constantly and as a marriage partner contributes to low self esteem and a feeling of lack of self-worth. John Gottman says to think of somebody you love, write down your name, with whom you would like to improve your relationship. Think of three strengths that they have, write them down and you keep them right here all the time. You talk about strengths, you dwell on strengths, you centre on the strengths all the time, with your children and with each other in a marriage. It works. It sounds so simple, you think well anybody could have thought of that, but what is common sense is not always common practice.

I'd like to give you an example. Jeanine is a single mother. Jeanine has two children, she has little boy Scott who's eleven and a little girl Debbie who's four. Jeanine is upstairs getting ready for work this morning, Scottie is downstairs fixing the breakfast for himself, and his little sister and for her.

She comes down into the kitchen and Scott says: “Mom, it's time for parent teacher conference. Okay Scott, I'll go to school and talk to your teacher to see how you're doing.” Jeanine is sitting across from Scott's teacher and she says to her: “How is Scottie doing?” She gets out her grade book and she says: Well, he is reading below grade average.” She says: “I see.” She said I guess he could be considered to be average. She said: “How is he doing in maths?” “He is performing below grade level in maths too. But I guess it could be considered average.” How about on the school ground? Well he doesn't have a lot of friends,

but he seems to have one friend or two friends sometimes, he's never chosen first on teams but he's chosen. He's average. The teacher says: "Scott's a nice boy a nice average boy."

Jeanine is sitting there thinking: "Are we talking about the same boy? This is the boy who gets up every morning and fixes breakfast for me and for his little sister. This is the boy who shovels the walks every time it snows without whining because he knows it's his job. This is the boy who mows the lawn every Saturday, because he knows it's his job and he doesn't complain about it, who carries out the tray, unloads the dishwasher, who helps me, who is my best friend, my confidant, who picks up his little sister and cares for her until I get there and you're telling me he's average." Jeanine is thinking Scottie is not average; he is a champion. Well, who's right, who's right, the mom or the teacher? Who? The mom you bet. What is the teacher saying to Scott everyday in silent ways, because that's her paradox, I was a school teacher, give them credit. They do the best they can and they do well. What is she saying to Scott in silent ways, your average, because that's how she sees him, isn't it? Hopefully what is the mother saying to Scott everyday? You're a champion Scott, You are a champion. What would be the greatest determiner of Scott's success in life, how he sees himself? If he sees himself as a champion, that will make all the difference.

Look for strengths, biggest deposit, talk about them, dwell on them, give compliments in your family. **Avoid negative talk, avoid it like the plague in your family, don't bring it in. There are families who never do it, never do it. There are couples in relationships who totally avoid it. You can do it. You can choose your response. Children during their adolescent years, their teenage years, have to have a supply of emotional deposits all the time. An adolescent child literally would rather be dead than not be given a supply of positive feedback. They have to have it and they will go where they can get it. If they are getting nothing but criticism at home, they will go where they can get it. Maybe it will be sex, or drugs or drinking or friends you don't like, whatever. They will go where someone or something is giving them a positive feedback, making deposits in their emotional bank account. If you have a child and you feel so angry with him, you can't even stand to see him walk in the house, you must know you can not let that thread of emotional deposits break, you cannot. He has to have them. You may not approve of his behaviour but you have to communicate to him always: I love you and I value you as a person. I value you. When you look for strengths, you say I value you. You are of value.**

Second, **say the words I love you to the people you love.** If I were to ask you here, by a show of hands, which I don't want you to do, how many of you grew up in homes, where you heard the words repeatedly said to you on a constant basis, I love you. Very few of you would raise your hands. You would say I felt loved, but I never heard those words. Say those words. Say those words everyday to your child. Look him in the eye, even if he is bigger than you are, and say I love you Tommy, I love you Sarah, I love you Emily, goodbye I love you. Even if they

were never said to you, even if you have to choke them to get them out, they are always a deposit, **they are magic words in a relationship.**

When does the emotional bank account begin, when do you start making deposits. Social scientists disagree on a lot of things, but there is one thing that they agree on, that the most important time in a child's life is from birth to three years. Brain cells are growing, brain cells are exploding in a child's mind, between birth and three years of age. The second most important critical time in a human beings life is from three to six. If you're wanting to invest time in your child from birth to six is a very critical time for building self-esteem. The ground work for how you feel about yourself as a human being is laid down in those first six years. It is a very special time and how do you do it? It is not rocket science. You hold, you touch, you kiss, you stroke, you say I love you, you read to a child, you sing to a child, you do baby talk, that high pitched baby talk that works for babies. That's how you make deposits.

The most detrimental thing for a child is a cold care giver. The most important thing is a warm care giver. Children have to have it, we all have to have it. We have to have it for always. It's very critical for establishing self-esteem in the first six years of life.

In every culture studies have found that mothers and fathers play differently with children. It's different in Australia, it's different in Samoa, it's different in Tonga, it's different in Western Europe, it's different in America. Fathers play differently with children than mothers do, they play rougher. It is more like the father who will come home and pick the little two year old up and twirl him around his head and pretend like he his like an aeroplane while he squeals. It is the father who says I am the big bear coming after you, as the little toddler runs around the house squealing and hiding from the dad. This is important play for children. This is very important, this is exciting, wonderful play for children. Wrestling, rough play from a father and a child is important play for children, it's a huge deposit in the emotional bank account and it's that way in every single culture. Dads are different and children need it, they need it from the beginning.

We have a little grandson, named Nelson. Nelson is four years old this month. When I go over to Nelson's house, I put him on my lap, I look into his eyes and talk to him. We have a fragmented conversation, every time we talk, Nelson talks to me about his dad. He will say just out of the blue: "My dad knows about sharks." "Good, Nelson. He'll say" "My dad killed a snake in the forest once, he had to." "Good." He'll say: "My dad's stronger than anybody." "Good, Nelson." I said to his father: "You know Ryan, I have never seen a little boy have such a hero worship of his dad as Nelson does of you."

Ryan said: "Oh!" No more than that. A few weeks later John and I had an afternoon free and invited our daughter-in-law Irene, to "get Ryan and let's go to lunch together; isn't it Ryan's day off?" She said: "Oh, he can't, Ryan is going to take the train into the city." I said: "Really, what is he going to do?" She said: "Nothing." I said: "He's taking the train into the city for nothing?" She said: "That's right, he's not doing anything. Nelson likes to go on the train. So Ryan



said to him, Nelson 7.00 Wednesday morning, you and I are going to get on the train, and ride into the city, and say hello to grandpa in Eaton Hedge and come back.” About a week after that, I picked up Nelson and looked into his eyes and said: “Did you go on the train?” He said: “Oh, me and my dad went on the train.” Big deposit, big deposit. He’ll talk about it this year, he’ll talk about it next year, talk about it – a high trust level.

Children are very aware of the emotional climate in a home. We have a daughter who lives in California, she lives in San Diego. Her husband’s also a student, a med student. She drives him to school often in the mornings, and she told me this story. “Usually when I drive him to school we have a nice conversation, but this particular morning we quarrelled. On the way to school we were angry we were just exchanging angry remarks with each other. He’d say something and I’d say something angry back. When we got to school, he opened the door, got out of the car, slammed the door, and walked off.

As he did so, our little two-year-old boy who was strapped in the back seat in the car seat, reached his hand forward and tried to touch my shoulder and said: ‘I sorry mommy, I sorry mommy, I sorry.’” Children know the emotional climate in their home. It affects them.

We have a little girl, and when she was little and when she was unhappy with something in the home, she would come to me and say: “Nobody cares about me around here; I’m just going to run away from home.” And I’d say to her, don’t run away Rachel.” “Nobody cares about me around here, I’m just going to run away from home.” When she would do this, she’d run outside, she’d hide in a corner of the porch, or she’d run in the back yard by a tree, and she’d just curl up in a little ball. She’d wait for me to come. I’d always come out, put my arms around her and say: “I’m sorry honey, tell me how you feel, I’m sorry that your sad, please come back in.” It was in summer and I felt a little tug, I looked down at those brown eyes and she said: “I’m going to run away from home, nobody cares about me.” I said: “Don’t Rachel.” She said: “Yes, I am going to; I am running away.” She ran out and I got busy and I forgot to go. About an hour, about an hour and a half went by, and I felt a little tug and looked down, and she said: “You didn’t come, you didn’t come.” I said: “I’m sorry Rachel, I got busy and I forgot.” She said: “Momma always comes after me, always comes after me, momma.” She’s a grown-up girl now; she lives in North Carolina, far away from where we live, her husband’s in school. She has a little girl and when I call her on the phone I still hear in her voice: “Always come after me momma and now come after my little girl too.” Making deposits in the emotional bank accounts of children is important and we can all do it. It really doesn’t take a genius to do it.

**JOHN:** If you wanted to look at that page four again you could see the modelling and under there the principle is Be proactive. Make decisions based upon your values, then we talked about mentoring and if you wanted to put there emotional bank accounts. Make deposits in you emotional bank account. That helps them build their self-worth. Now the next role that is inescapable is **organisation** and what your children or your spouse experiences and they begin to trust what is

going on, they begin to trust the family. Now there is several things that we will be talking about, some finishing this morning and some this afternoon when we conclude. I want to talk to you about one of the most important things you can do in your family. It has been the most significant thing we have done other than try to model and mentor in terms of our own family; it's called the **family mission statement**.

You wouldn't think of running a business without a mission statement, you wouldn't think of having a footy game without having a game plan. What this is, is a game plan for your family. Why a game plan? How many of you have had a family mission statement growing up? Not a hand. You know why, because you didn't have to. In the early years, at least when I was a kid, it was a Leave it to Beaver culture. You know what I mean by Leave it to Beaver? Today it's a Leave it to Butthead. Isn't it? **The media will destroy your family. It's toxic.** Without any question, you let a child watch two, three, four, five hours of that media, or get on the internet with the pornography, which is the number one program on the internet is pornography. Genealogy, family history is number two. Isn't that interesting? So you must decide two things. Who is going to raise your children? That's the first thing. Who is going to raise my children, the media, the schools, the churches? If they help wonderful, but don't bank on it. Secondly, what is going to be the culture in my family, will it be nurturing or will it be problems? Problems, well of course everybody has problems, there isn't anybody that doesn't have problems. To establish a family mission statement is important.

What is a family mission statement? Families are like a flight of an aeroplane. We flew from Los Angeles to Auckland, there was a clear destination, a spot right over here and the plane had an absolute direct flight plan. But the second that we took off the ground, what happened. The wind started to blow it back and forth and you could see the curvature, back and forth. What families need in today's toxic society are three things. One is a clear destination, you need a vision of what you want to be as a family. Number two you need a flight, a mission statement, so that you know the principles that you want to operate on and number three, you've got to have an inner compass in every one of you children so that you keep getting them back on track. Do you know that the best family is our family. We're off track 90% of the time. Do you feel that way? The best families are off 90% of the time. But if the family has a vision, has a flight plan, has a compass, you keep on getting back on, you keep on changing, you're repenting, you're just getting back on. You don't lose, you don't become discouraged. This should build hope - a family mission statement.

In a nut shell, **a family mission statement is what you stand for.** Ours took us eighteen months to develop. It isn't just something you figure out, and just give to them. This is the family mission statement. You start a process, you say what do you want to stand for and you know what teenagers say, what a stupid thing to say, what do we stand for, what do you mean? Then you have to turn it, you have to be a little bit smart. Emotional bank account and you have to say what would you like to bring your friends home to. Well, we want this we want music, we want food, and stay out of our face. So you start to work with people where they are

and then they start to get a feeling well that benefits me. We had a scribe, our 21 year old Joseph, every comment was legitimate. We didn't evaluate any of it. We said what do we want to stand for - world peace, love, kindness and people said this was stupid. So he finished that conversation, but Joe wrote everything down, sent it to everybody. We had people living outside our state and we sent it around, we said please give us feedback. What do we want to stand for? You know what we got back? Nothing. People don't even know what you're doing. Stupid. You're just proactive, you just smile a lot, and you just keep on going because you know that's what you want.

Well we kept on going and to make a long story short we got into our San Diego daughter's home, we got into our chairs. I can feel it to this moment and you know with little children, you play games, we were holding hands, passing loves. I love you, and it goes around, I got it when you're passing. Somebody said, there's a wonderful love; there are no empty chairs, except for just one son who was on a mission. There are no empty chairs. There is a wonderful spirit there and they said why do we have that? **No empty chairs.** One son-in-law said, what if you don't like somebody in the family? Realistic. One of the little kids said, Paul I thought you were suppose to go that person and make up. Everybody thought what do you know, we are going to have to live what we teach. Paul, said yes, no empty chairs. So that was our family mission statement, if I told you no empty chairs, that wouldn't mean anything to you. I'll tell you in our children it's everything, because we had a discussion about being kind, about forgiving, about apologising, about being loving, about trying to serve in the community, that's what no empty chairs, we actually have a little plaque - no empty chairs to serve society. So that's our mission statement, and it guides every decision that's made.

One time, my son-in-law, came to me, three years after that, the same Paul, papa, that's what he calls me, that's what they call the grandfather, there's an empty chair. I could feel the emotion, and so we got in the car and we started to drive for three hours, and I just listened and I just let him get it all out. "Nobody likes me in the family, I don't like water skiing, and everybody else is water skiing. I don't like this family," and I just listened and listened and reflected back what he was saying and towards the end he said (his father passed away when he was eight): "I'd never been in a happy family; all we do is ever fight. Papa, thank you for being so kind to me, I want to be a better person, I want to do this, help me." I could've judged him and shut it off just like that. No empty chairs. It's a standard of what you stand for. It's what we Coveys stand for.

When you think about these mission statements and there are all kinds of phrases, and it can be a song. There are always four characteristics that are key. One characteristic is that it has a spiritual dimension to it; another characteristic is that it has a physical dimension; another is a social-emotional, having fun and loving; another is mental. When you put those four characteristics together - **to live, to love, to learn, to live a legacy** - then there is a power that comes from that mission statement.

We want to be as good an example as we can and you don't have to be perfect, that is not the point. The point is you apologise. The old macho thing of "I've got to always be right." Instead, you apologise and you thank goodness for the good things you do. You're real, you're genuine. You want to build emotional deposits in the bank account to build the self-worth. You want to organise activities, and if there is one thing that I can recommend, turn that television off most of the time. Don't let that be the controlling factor.

Some people are literally grazing. They never eat together, they never play together, they never sing together, they never read together and they have got this tube that is controlling and raising their family. Turn it off most of the time. Organisation.

The final point is, **teach your children correct principles.** What you want them to know. What do you stand for, teach them that. I had one man say: "I'm not going to teach my children, they are going to make their own choices." I said: "You know what you're teaching them? 'I don't care about what I believe. I don't really believe it. You just do anything you want.' So you are teaching them indifference." Decide what you stand for. We recommend first a family mission statement, second and promise you this will make a huge difference, a **regular family time.**

For those who are already doing it, be grateful that you're doing it. What is this? It's on a weekly basis. Block out a point of time. Here is a manual to help you, it comes from *The Guide for Strengthening Families*, it's an international manual and it gives you things you can do. Singing songs, lessons you can teach, how to be kind and loving. It got an incredible lesson one, family togetherness, lesson two individual talents, strengthen our families. Three playing together as a family, family communication, problem solving and decision-making. These are the real issues and you talk about it together as a family. It is a powerful kind of thing. Teach your children what you want them to do. How many have a regular family time blocked out? Look at that. Can I say to those who do, keep it up. It will make all the difference. In our family, we just ring a bell and our 10 children walk in and little white robes and sit down very quietly, this is the Covey family. They never squirm - wrong. We go: "Come on," and everything else is happening, people are laying around. "Do we have to have family time? I've got to..." But you block out the time you have an identity. You now what's happening to our 10 married children, they are all doing it with their own children. You've got to be strong, you've got to be proactive, you've got to have vision and passion and discipline. It takes quite a couple to raise a wonderful family.

**JANE:** Here's a book you can buy it in book stores everywhere in the US and probably over here. It's written by a man by the name of Ben Carson; it's called *Gifted Hands*. He is an African-American and Ben Carson grew up in the streets of Detroit, Michigan and became a neuro-surgeon at Johns Hopkins Medical Centre. He wrote this book talking about some of the cases that he'd had that were more interesting. One of the chapters he talks about Susanne and Craig. Susanne and Craig grew up in a small mid-western town in Indiana, and they were high school sweethearts. They married after high school and after they were married Craig

started to develop a disease where tumours began to grow on different parts of his body. These tumours were benign but they always had to be surgically removed. Susanne became just obsessed with this, she said: "Craig, we are not going to let this ruin our lives. Other people have had this. This is a disease that has a name; we are going to find out about it." She started to travel all over to talk to people about it. She travelled to foreign places and they said: "Yes it has a name and yes there isn't a cure, but this is what we know about it."

Finally after one surgery, one of the doctors said to her: "Susanne, you've got to be prepared to know that there is a certain part of Craig's brain and if a tumour ever develops there it is inoperable and no one will remove it for him. You've got to prepare your self for that." When they were 28 years old, a tumour developed in this part in Craig's brain. Susanne and Craig went to different doctors; nobody would operate on Craig. They said: "No, it won't work." Finally she found this Ben Carson at Johns Hopkins and she pled with him if he'd do this surgery on her husband. First he said no; then he said alright. During the surgery in the waiting room in the hospital, there was Susanne, Craig's parents and her parents. Susanne was a Christian, she read the Bible, she prayed, she brought her Bible into the hospital with her. She was praying and reading while everybody was there talking. Finally she decided that she couldn't be around everybody and she went and found a room alone in the hospital. She went in by herself, she took her Bible in there, she knelt down, she started to cry and she said: "You can't take him, you can not take him. We've loved each other since we were children, we are only 28 years old, I don't even have Craig's child yet. You can't take him." And she said as she was crying and reading, these words came into her mind: "He doesn't belong to you Susanne, he belongs to me." That's how we feel about children and about families. Thank you for letting us come today.

**JOHN:** A little teaching, just to be a little personal. We teach our children this. You are not human beings having a spiritual experience. "I'm not a human being, daddy?" **You're not a human being having a spiritual experience. You are a spiritual being having a human experience.** That's what you are. Be true to that. That's what the Covey's stand for, that's what our children stand for, that's what we believe, that's what we teach. We sincerely pray you strive to be proactive and a good model; you'll strive to make deposits and build the self-esteem of your children; you'll strive to organise wonderful activities so that they will enjoy your family and look forward to being there - make family, family (not gangs) family; that you'll strive to teach principles, so the children say: "I want to be honest, for honesty's sake." Thank you very much.