

FamilyEXPO²⁰⁰²

STRENGTHENING MARRIAGE & FAMILY

A one-day parenting seminar full of effective and practical ideas and strategies

An Edited Transcript of the Presentation by
Professor Jeff Hill
with his wife Juanita and three of their nine children, Abigail, Hannah and
Emily
on
**The Intentional Family: Habits and Traditions to Strengthen
the Home**

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JEFF: We really appreciate the warm welcome that we've received here in Australia. We love your fair country. We visited the Gold Coast yesterday where two of my daughters tried their hand at the bungy rocket, and lived to tell about it. We are delighted to be here. As I thought about the content of this presentation, I decided to take a chance. I decided to share more from a family perspective than a PhD perspective on a topic that I think is very important. So to introduce this topic, I've invited my three daughters to take their place up here and they will share some of their talent or lack thereof with you.

HILL SISTER TRIO:

*Sisters, sisters, never were there such devoted sisters,
Never had to have a chaperone, No sir,
I'm here to keep my eye on her,
Caring, sharing, every little thing that we are wearing,
We always share all the friends we have,
We even share our mum and dad.*

*All kinds of weather, we stick together,
The same in the rain or sun,
The rain never passes and in tight places,
We think and we act as one.
Aha*

*Those who know us,
Know there's not a thing to come between us,
We will always stick together, be it thick or thin,
Please help the mister, who comes between me and my sister,
And please help the sister, who comes between me and my man.*

JEFF: We appreciate Abbey, Hannah and Emily for those words. Also, at my side is the love of my life, Juanita.

JUANITA: You have to say that here, right?

JEFF: She really is! Now, my daughters didn't just come up here and unprepared share that song. It took many years of practice, many days of practising intentionally at certain times each day.

JUANITA: Sometimes even a few tears along the way.

JEFF: But it happened. Our point today is about traditions and about habits in the home. Not the glorified grand things, but the day- to-day fabric of daily living, and how that contributes to a happy family.

A little while ago, I took an exciting adventure on the Colorado River in the United States. In the Colorado River, there are many stretches of pleasant, peaceful, relaxing times, but every once in a while there were swirling rapids that threatened to devour our craft. Also on the river there are dams that feed electricity to millions of those in the western United States and it's very important to get out of the current of the river before you reach the dam. Because if you don't you'll be sucked into the turbines and ground to smithereens. Fortunately we had a guide, who would warn us and tell us to take pro-active action, so that the rapids did not swallow us up, and also saw to it that we got out of the currents before we reached the dam.

JUANITA: Our family life in today's society is often much like this river trip. **There are dangerous currents and undertows that can destroy us if we're not careful. But unlike the river trip, we can't just glide along sometimes and let life's current take us where it will, or we may end up at places we really don't want to be. So we have to take a pro-active stance.** For example, the media - it showers us with lots of anti-family messages. I mean, can you think of television shows or plays and that sort of thing, that have a lot of family values? A husband and wife who love each other and are faithful and their children are trying to be good? That's not very common.

JEFF: And even the good media, even the outstanding wonderful media, has that undercurrent of not supporting the family. For example, we had the privilege of going to *Mamma Mia* here; it was just a spectacular production with excellent music, sets that were out of this world. And yet even in that wonderful production, the underlining theme was, that marriage wasn't worth it that at the very end. I just thought "Oh, no!", because the couple chooses well, marriage isn't really that important and they go off into the sunset to have romantic intimacy without being married.

Also we have a very work-orientated culture - it's likely for two parents to both be working. In the United States, for example I think we're more workaholics than in Australia. But we just surpassed Japan, as the country with the longest work hours. The average work week in the United States now is approximately 47 hours per week and those kinds of work hours do not lead to sensitive family processes that result in strong families. Also, the reality is that now with cell phones and pagers, you can often be interrupted at any time of the day and night and that doesn't bode well for family. Along with the work culture, we adopt a me-first attitude, heathenism - if it feels good, do it and that is also negative for family life.

JUANITA: We've also become rather materialistic. Some of you think, "Oh, how much are these children going to cost us?" instead of thinking of the joy they can bring and the joy we can feel together. So we realise that **for our families to survive, and maybe even more than that, to thrive, we have to intentionally do things that will make us cohesive and make us love each other and want to be together.**

JEFF: Bill Doherty is a noted family scholar in the United States and he wrote a book, that we're going to share some of the ideas from, It is called *The Intentional Family: Simple Rituals to Strengthen Family Ties*. I know Bill personally, he loves his family, he tries to be a good husband, a good father and it's good to take information from someone who is an example of what you want to become like. Dr Doherty says that **with so many currents in today's world pulling against families, that unless we take intentional action, we are likely to drift "towards diminishing connection, meaning and community."** It used to be that the good of the world, the currents of society would lead towards families being together. Now the currents do not. If we want a strong family, we have to take action or else our families will fall apart.

JUANITA: So today we were going to share some things that we try to do pro-actively in our family and a lot of it's just family traditions and rituals. We'll talk about some that can bring families closer together. For example, one little experience that we had when we became engaged about 26 years ago.

JEFF: As you can see, a lot's happened in the last 26 years. We are the parents of nine children and have had lots and lots of experiences. Of course, standing up here before you, in Australia, we're going to make our family sound really good. It's probably not as good...

JUANITA: Probably? It's not!

JEFF: But anyway we hope to share some things. When we were - when Juanita and I - well, we're still in love, we really are.

JUANITA: Just go ahead. He's a very romantic kind of person, in case you can't tell! He gets a little off track sometimes.

JEFF: Occasionally. Anyway, I wanted to give Juanita her diamond ring in a venue that she would remember. You know, a place that she would always have in her memories. So I chose to give her the ring in an elevator, or I guess a lift is what you call it here. And so, between the 2nd floor and the 6th floor of the Wilkinson Centre at Brigham Young University, I gave her the ring, we embraced warmly, and I gave her a wonderful kiss. Smooch! (Jeff kisses Juanita for effect.)

JUANITA: A better kiss than that!

JEFF: But an interesting thing happened. From that moment elevators were never the same to us, and we established a tradition, a ritual, that when ever we're alone in an elevator...

JUANITA: And a lot of times when we're not, it's a problem. So if you happen to catch an elevator we're on, just...

JEFF: If we're alone, the kiss is more passionate. In fact the other evening I was working late and one of my kids had taken the car, and my office is on the 10th floor of the Kimball Tower. So Juanita picked me up about 9:30 at night and we got in the elevator and what a wonderful experience, I mean it was just, and ah, it...

JUANITA: ... went on and on and on, and then we realized we had not pushed the button, and we were still there. Hadn't gotten too far. Anyway, elevators are meaningful to us and even though we don't really go out of our way to find an elevator to get on, every time we're in an elevator, and even if we're not together I think, "Poor Jeff", you know. Elevators are meaningful to us, where, probably most of you ride in an elevator... Anyway that's a type of ritual that doesn't take extra

time or planning or thought, but if you have some things that are special between you, or that you have memories from, that have become rituals - their meaningful - they bring you closer.

JEFF: So I'd like to encourage you to think of little things like this, rituals. Or think of other ideas. As you do so, then just the day-to-day things will take on added meaning, and even an elevator can strengthen your marriage.

JUANITA: Which in turn can strengthen our families; hopefully, if marriage is strong, that really helps.

JEFF: The definition of a family ritual by Dr Doherty is "repeated and co-ordinated activities that have significance for family members". I was asking my daughter what kind of a tradition we ought to establish, and she said that we ought to have a tradition of coming to Australia! But it is not a tradition yet ,we've only been to Australia once. For a family tradition, it doesn't have to include the entire family. It needs to include at least two, so that you can establish some relationship through the ritual, but there are, and we'll be talking about them, there are a variety of different kinds of rituals.

JUANITA: Like kissing in an elevator.

JEFF: The first type of rituals that Dr Doherty brings out are those of family connections. They enable two or more family members to connect in a positive way, that would probably not happen, except for the ritual. Examples of connection rituals would be eating together as a family or bedtime stories, hugging and kissing as one spouse leaves, or I guess more importantly, according to Dr Sanders, when you come back to avoid the "arsenic hour", also having a weekly planning time where you get organised as a family, or if you are religious, perhaps praying together as a family, or taking your child with you, when you go to run errands.

JUANITA: Going on a date on Friday or Saturday nights, or even going for walks together; that's something that we do quite frequently, is walking together. Even doing household chores together, can become a ritual you know, if on Saturday mornings it's your ritual to get together and clean the house, then that's a lot better than if your saying, "OK, everybody stop what your doing and we're going to work on the house for two hours"; it's not quite as well received than if expected.

JEFF: Everyone knows what to expect and it's just easier. The second type of traditions and rituals, are rituals of celebration. They are ways that the family celebrates together in a positive way.

JUANITA: We have a tradition of having a red plate, and any time it's something special for any member of the family, we'll put the red plate on where they sit, and so you know if you come dinner and there's a red plate, something has happened in somebody's life, and so it's interesting to find out what it is and praise them for it and that sort of thing. Our most recent thing is when Abbey got her college placement scores and we were happy to be able to put a red plate on her place.

JEFF: I saw the results had come in the mail, Abbey hadn't opened them up, and so it was a relief to see the red plate on the table, to see that we were celebrating. Other examples of celebration rituals would be how you celebrate birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Christmas or other family holidays. The final form of rituals we will be talking about are those of connecting the family to the broader community. It's much easier to have a strong family, if you belong to some other group, a faith-based group, a community group, that also values family, so that you're not just dependant on your own self, but that you can connect with another family.

JUANITA: Even things like marriages; we had a son get married a month ago and the receptions that we had, you know that includes our friends and family, that's kind of a community.

JEFF: The community comes in then, to wish the bride and groom well and to show their support. So, we'll go in to some more detail about some of these connections, and again think of what you do at these times, or what you might do that would strengthen your family. We're going to be sharing these ideas and most of them are not original ideas, and one of our traditions in our family is whenever we see another family that we like or that we want to be a part, to have some of their joy, why we ask them what do you do and we invite them over for dinner and so forth and when we get a good idea we shamelessly steal it. I don't know that we've had an original idea in our entire lives.

JUANITA: We must have. But we do watch people and enjoy emulating lots of great things people do.

JEFF: So, the coming and going then, a lot of couples may give a kiss, I am the romantic one, or a wink or a hug or some other positive affirmation, it doesn't take any extra time, but that little warmth will strengthen others.

JUANITA: And it may not be habit at first because you have to think about it, but if you do that and take that minute to think about it. Pretty soon you don't even have to think about it, it just brings the good feelings. I don't know who of you here take your children to school, but often when I drop my children off at the school, I'll see mothers or fathers saying goodbye to their children, and giving them a hug and telling them, I love you or whatever and it just makes me feel good. You know often times when people are going to school it's not the most relaxing, pleasant time when they've forgotten three things and can't find their notebook.. But if you can say, "I love you, have a good day", it's a better atmosphere. Jeff had been working at home for a while, his office was in New York and he had been just telecommuting from home and so he didn't really leave in the morning and come back in the afternoon, but when he became a Professor, he then started leaving home in the morning and coming home in the evening and he would just kind of come home and...

JEFF: No one would even notice that I came home! I thought, I've been away all day working and I should come back and there should be some recognition that I'm here. So I told them a story by George Durant about how he was having the same problems that I had when he came home. He had nine children as well and no one came to pay any attention to him except for the dog. Only the dog was happy to see him. He would come in the door and the dog would jump up on him and lick him and be glad to see him. And so he said...

JUANITA: Jeff said, "You have to be at least as happy as the dog is that I'm home; this has to be a family rule!" It was just kind of funny because you know he had got no reaction the first day. The next day he came home and obviously said, "I'm home!" We thought, "Oh yeah, we're meant to be happy," so Emily said, "Daddy, Daddy you're home!", and then I joined in. You know, it's kind of a fakey thing but...

JEFF: It still makes me feel good, it still does!

JUANITA: Since then it's gotten to be a tradition rather than fakey. Then we realised we are happy and we might as well act like it you know, instead of ignore it. So anyway, there's now a big reaction when Dad comes home.

JEFF: Second, Rising and Retiring. Hopefully on most days we all retire and most mornings we all wake up, and there are a lot of rituals that can strengthen the family based on those times. Juanita taught me when we had four young children, I'm kind of a romantic, she said, "If you really want to

be romantic don't take me to a fancy dinner, don't bring me flowers, don't bring me chocolate, just put the kids to bed." And so, I like being romantic and I want her to be in a romantic mood and so I started putting kids to bed,

JUANITA: Except he falls asleep with them doing that; anyway we'll get off that...

JEFF: It doesn't always lead - anyway we won't talk about that.

JUANITA: Dr Lund's the one who will talk about that ...

JEFF: So we've established a series of routines, putting the kids to bed and it ended up being quite enjoyable. One of the things we do is tell stories. I developed a whole genre of stories about Big Foot, the abominable snowman and involving family members in stories about that. I'm not nearly talented as a singer as my daughters, but I would put my children to bed singing them songs the best that I could, and they tell me that they still like this, even though I'm not quite on tune as they are.

JUANITA: And it was interesting because when I would try to put them to bed, 5minutes is a long time because I'm tired but, he'll be a half hour and 45minutes and they'll all just be having such a great time and I think this is a great tradition, I like this.

JEFF: I still don't do the laundry or any of those kinds of things.

JUANITA: I don't mind laundry. Another thing that came from that, that I have appreciated is that he started telling specific stories (we have a four year old named Seth). We call them "Ugg" stories. Ugg is this mythical sibling type thing that gets into trouble sometimes.

JEFF: And poor Ugg always does all of the negative things that we have seen...

JUANITA: ...Seth doing during the day. I mean, we just kind of keep our eye out. So if Seth has had a problem telling a lie that day or being unkind, Ugg had a terrible time and was mean to someone and told lies and did this and that and the "wo be unto him", you know. Seth comes in and talks to Ugg and works with him and shows him how to be kind. Seth is the hero. Kindness and telling the truth is wonderful. I think those stories have really been helpful, because they've been a pro-active thing, not getting after Seth and saying "How come you told a lie?", but teaching him in a fun way that is good to be honest.

JEFF: The other thing we've done is use this bedtime as an area where we have to have a theme for the week. We'll talk together and decide, "Oh, we need help with honesty." and so we'll teach the children a song about honesty, we may have a poem about honesty or a scripture that relates to honesty and...

JUANITA: Kind of gear into that theme for a week.

JEFF: And so I'd like to invite my girls again to share a song that we learned related to honesty called, *Never Tell a Lie*.

*My mummy told me I should never tell a lie,
Because a lie will bring you trouble sure as pie.
It's an awful thing to do, and it's true as true as true,
You'll get caught and then you'll start to cry.
You'll feel a horrid painful pounding in your head,
And you will feel your face get hot and turn bright red.*

*And your heart will start to thump.
In your throat you'll get a lump, and you'll feel so bad
You'll wish that you could lie right down and die.
You're much better off to never tell a lie.
Not even sometimes. Remember never, never tell a lie.*

JUANITA: So these might be just kind of childish things but things have been good traditions.

JEFF: According to Dr Doherty, **the single most important thing in the world that a family can do, that would most strengthen their relationships, would be to have a calm, loving, peaceful, family dinner time.**

JUANITA: Isn't that how all of you are? – relaxed - gourmet food?

JEFF: And in the western world we used to eat with our families, much more than we do now. The research has shown that the invention of the microwave, did more to hurt families, as far as meal times than anything else, because with the microwave, individuals then were able to fix a satisfying meal individually without having to rely on the family coming all together.

JUANITA: With the students who have high test scores, the one common denominator they find is that they eat together with their families. That's very interesting. But Dr Doherty explains that good family rituals have a definite beginning and ending. When he talked about meal times he said that the family in the book lit candles at the beginning of the evening and people knew that that was the gathering time, when they blew them out, that was the dismissal or people could leave. In our family it's a little different, we have a blessing on the food, that's kind of when everybody knows to be there and then when we're finished with the dishes, not just dinner but the dishes, then people are free to leave.

JEFF: One of the things that has encouraged conversation at meal time is that, if we're having a really good conversation we don't start on the dishes yet and so it's a kind of a motivator to have good conversations.

JUANITA: Put off the dishes until someone has to leave.

JEFF: Juanita has really helped us in this respect. She always had this dream of having a large dining room table, that we could all sit around and have room to invite others so she kept saying that she wanted this table, and so one move, when we moved from Arizona to Utah...

JUANITA: Ah, the table didn't get in the moving van.

JEFF: She gave the table away. I went to the moving van and it wasn't there and I said: "Juanita, where's the table?" She says, "I gave it away", and so I showed her, I brought in a ping pong table, I showed her for a little while.

JUANITA: We finally got a nice long oak table.

JEFF: That's right, we can fit 16 or 17 people around it, if we need to. But one of the things that she's done that's really neat, is, she'll have a nice tablecloth on that table but she covers the tablecloth with clear vinyl plastic so she has a long roll and then just puts all kinds of treasures under the plastic, you know, poems that we're memorising, the maps from the National Geographic,

JUANITA: Spelling words.

JEFF: All those kinds of things, and so it makes meal time even more of an educational experience.

JUANITA: What we always wanted.

JEFF: But we're there and we talk and we talk and have a pretty good time at it.

JUANITA: So, we knew this dinner time was important, and we tried to eat together but we got to a point, probably just last year, that even though we wanted to do that it was very difficult to get the children together because there was so many varying activities.

JEFF: And we won't name any names, but there was one of our daughters who is sitting up at the table here, who's 17 years old, who is so active...

JUANITA: Involved in everything.

JEFF: Volleyball, orchestra, everything, we found that we were rarely eating with her, so I said, we sat down as a family and I said this is important to me, I want us to eat together as a family, and so I have something called a Palm Pilot, and so we ask every day, what is a time we can all be together here for dinner?

JUANITA: It was kind of the end of the school year, so there were a lot of things going on at this particular time, so...

JEFF: And it was amazing on one day the only time we could eat together was 3:30 in the afternoon.

JUANITA: Our neighbors thought we were really strange calling the kids in at 3:30 for dinner, but he had a flexible work schedule, so that was very helpful, but you know one time we had between 5:00 and 5:20 between lessons and between things, but Jeff made it enough of a priority that it was important for people to be there. They didn't always all have to, but they had to try.

JEFF: Now a word of caution about **meal time. It should be a time that's pleasant. Parents sometimes get all their kids there and say well, now this is a good time for discipline and correction. No, that's not a good time. It will cause indigestion and your children will not want to come to dinner and they'll find ways not to be there.**

JUANITA: And then one other thing, family meals and TV don't mix too well, so kind of nix the TV during the meal time generally.

JEFF: Another time is that of family work, the work needs to get done, so why not make it, what's the song, "in every job that must be done, there is an element of fun, so snap to, find the fun and..." No, I got it wrong.

JUANITA: But all mothers know and most fathers, that it takes a great deal of work to have a home run smoothly. Especially if you have several people in it, and so if you have rituals and traditions with the work, you can make things go a lot more smoothly.

JEFF: One of the things that we learn from a family is, something we call the D's. We have approximately 7 responsible people in our family, and so each person gets a day that they're responsible for the dishes and for dinner, probably the dinner first and then the dishes. So on that day each of us, we have a day each...

JUANITA: And do you remember what day it is?

JEFF: Yes, I do.

JUANITA: What day is it?

JEFF: It's Monday, my day is Monday, I have it in my Palm Pilot. If it's in my Palm Pilot it happens. My Palm Pilot beeps ½ an hour before dinner time in case I've forgotten, and then I can get pizza on the way home!

JUANITA: It doesn't always work exactly as planned. You know, often times I'll fix his dinner for him and if I'm busy on my day then he'll do it for me; vice versa type of thing; and I work with the younger children; but they seem to enjoy it - sometimes they don't enjoy it, but they do it anyway.

JEFF: They enjoy picking what they're going to have for dinner because if you're in charge you get to choose. So if you like macaroni and cheese that's what we have, but we will step in and provide a little salad or something if we don't really like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for dinner.

JUANITA: But it's kind of nice to say, what can I do to help you, instead of will you please come to the table or something. I try to be there and available to help them, especially with the younger ones, but it's their responsibility. So it's been helpful. Then with the dishes thing, that goes along with the responsibility with dinner, we all work together. We have what we call the 10 minutes, and we try to get the dishes done in 10 minutes. We started doing this when some extended family were going to go away to Disneyland and they invited us to go with them. We thought we ought to be able to get something out of this with our kids, right, we're going to get them help pay for this. So we said if we can get the dishes done within 10 minutes we'll put \$2 dollars in our jar. We have this big jar in our kitchen on the ledge that we put our Disneyland money in. So, we'd all work feverishly together to try and have it done within that 10 minutes. The person that's in charge that night, will say, "Clear the table you do this, you do that", they're the boss, but everyone tries quickly to get it done. We had our Disneyland trip and it's just kind of remained a tradition that we do the dishes together.

JEFF: The other day, why I said, "A 100 dollars towards Australia if you can get the dishes done in 10 minutes." We were going to pay for them to come to Australia anyway, but it was a motivating thing.

JUANITA: It isn't always pleasant. "They're not working fast enough and dida dida da" you know how that goes. But I just remember as a child when I did dishes, my night, we had lots of people in our family and my mother made everything from scratch. The whole kitchen was, you know - it took hours to do the dishes and now it's so nice that 10 minutes after dinner it's done, the house is straight and the people are still pleasant.

JEFF: Another thing that we do is have a vegetable garden and this is a real picture of our family working in the vegetable garden, but I think it teaches the children the Law of the Harvest. You see what happens to a garden that you do not tend, when it's overrun by weeds. You see that unless you water the garden, you don't get any fruit, and do children really love the vegetable garden?. No, they do not. But it teaches them some good things.

JUANITA: They were excited when we got a 42 pound watermelon, when we lived down in Arizona, they liked that.

JEFF: And they were good watermelons. OK, we've mentioned this before about music and we'll have our daughters sing one more song, but music carries feeling, there's something about music and having the tradition of music. You can have individuals that are musical, or you can just appreciate good music that comes pre-packaged on CDs. But music can, the tradition of music can bring a lot of strength to the family, and so I'll let them sing one more song.

JUANITA: And we are not professional musicians by any means as you can tell, but we have had a lot of fun with music, especially on Sunday afternoons we get together and just sing and play instruments and invite other families over. It's just been a real fun tradition.

SONG

I've asked each of the girls to just share one tradition that they either appreciate or do not appreciate in our family.

ABBEY: One of my favorite ones, is that I'm involved in some sports and I play the violin, so I have lots of recitals and it's always fun to have a big fan club of my family. They always cheer for me really loud and it's fun to go out and have shakes with them afterwards, and they're just great to have along.

EMILY: One of the family traditions I don't like is, some days the 10 minutes of cleaning up after dinner, some people work faster than other people, and so you can get frustrated with certain people, but most of the time it's OK.

HANNAH: One thing I really like is, my Dad will take me to work with him, usually once a semester, sometimes more than that, and I'll help him record grades and it's really fun just to spend time with him.

JUANITA: One thing Jeff did start doing when we were doing the 10 minutes, if people were getting a little agitated or frustrated he'll say, "OK, if you girls want to go sing or play the piano or something than you can be excused for 10 minutes", and boy, they're off, so...

JEFF: That's contributing to their musicality. We'll just cover a few more of these briefly and again I would encourage each of you to look at your own traditions. At the beginning of the lecture notes there is a form that you can fill out that will help you identify areas that you have opportunity to make traditions.

JUANITA: And I think often times, you know if you're going home and starting these things with your family, with little kids it's easy because their always excited to try something new and it's fun. Teenagers it's not quite so much, but one thing that we've done is say, "You know we think this would help our family, let's try it for a week and see how it goes." So it's not like, forever more we have to do this thing that Dad wants. We can renovate it and change it a little bit. "Put some of your thinking into it or whatever , but try it out."

JEFF: Couple rituals are very important we've talked about some of these but, as you try to be a better parent, **remember that the best way to improve your parenting is to improve the relationship that you have with your children's other parent. Most of the time that would be your spouse, but even if you're divorced, one of the best things you can do is improve the relationship with your ex-spouse, so that the children don't have to suffer as much.** So to strengthen a marriage a couple of traditions that we've had, we've had the tradition of the elevator of course and we have a tradition of going on a weekly date. Do we go every week? No we do not, but...

JUANITA: We go twice, it's a tradition, right? No!

JEFF: But a couple of times a month, why we end up going out, but even more important than that, I think as a husband and wife to be able to get away overnight without the children, is a great blessing. I worked for IBM and we had a tradition that when the quarterly dividend cheque came, once every 3 months, we would take that and go out overnight somewhere and we'd have our parents or someone who we could trust watch the kids. Our first dividend cheque was 56 cents.

JUANITA: A real winger of a time, we went camping I think that time. It's gotten better!

JEFF: But after 20 years of being with IBM we started being able to have some really good times. It's important to have parent-child rituals that strengthen the relationship between husband and wife. We've talked a little about the bedtime and the daily examples.

JUANITA: I just wanted to bring up one of these parent-child things, I was thinking of. We were talking about comings and goings and Jeff when he was working at home in his home office, you know he'd need some time to unwind in the afternoon. High school son would come home from school, and Jeff and our son Jeffrey, had often wrestled through the years, often enjoyed tugging around on the floor and stuff. But, Jeffrey now was getting taller than his dad and bigger and...

JEFF: He could beat me every time we wrestle.

JUANITA: And so it wasn't so much fun for Jeff. Anyway, what he started to realise was, if he caught him unawares he could still get him to the floor because he had a little bit of weight on him. So, he would hide behind the kitchen counter or behind the refrigerator or something when he heard Jeffrey coming home. It was so odd to see this grown man hiding. As soon as Jeffrey came through the door, he would jump on him and throw him on the ground. Pretty soon when Jeffrey would come home from school he would start looking around for his Dad, and you never knew when one was expecting the other or when they weren't. You know, it was just hilarious and everyone would burst out laughing.

JEFF: Vacations - just having some time going to the Gold Coast, or some place where you can be together as a family, is very, very significant in being able to build a strong family. Family organisation and planning is very important. We do something what we call a zip meeting. A zip meeting any member of the family can call any time they want, but you have to be at least 8 years of age to be involved in a zip meeting, and it's really the governing organisation of the family. In the zip meeting we try to meet every one's needs, and as many wants as we can. We try to share the idea that we're all in this together, we all want to support one another. For example, one time I had the need that our children spend less time watching TV.

JUANITA: We weren't real big TV watchers so, we didn't think it was a big deal, and Jeff said, "It seems like when I get home people are watching TV all the time and I have a need that we do not do this.

JEFF: So the kids said, "Well, it sounds like it's your problem, lets figure out how we can deal with it." So their first solution was that whenever I was home they wouldn't watch TV and then after I went to bed then they could watch TV or other times. Actually they came up with a reasonable solution, that because they came up with it, because we came up with it together, they created it, they were willing to do it. Whereas, if we had imposed it upon them they would have fought it tooth and nail.

JUANITA: But isn't that nice, he goes around in the circle and asks each one, "What are your needs, what are your wants?" Sometimes we've had to explain that that isn't really a need, that's only a want, like when Emily said she needed a viola. We said, "Well, excuse me, but that's probably a want." But it was interesting in that just a few days later Abbey came home from the high school and said, "Guess what, I found a viola! My teacher said that he had one that we could rent for \$70 a year!" Whoa, what a steal. and so the next week Emily had a viola because she brought that up in our family meeting, and everybody was aware of that. That has seemed to work well. A lot of times it takes some good planning to have things run fairly smoothly.

JEFF: As far as the rituals of celebration, it's good to know what to expect on some of these days. For example, on Mother's Day, the children get up, they make breakfast in bed, and Juanita knows on Mother's Day not to get up until they've brought her breakfast in bed. In fact, I think it was last year she said, "Jeff, would you see if they're making me breakfast yet, I need to get out." Of course, Christmas time is a time of great tradition and one of the traditions you can maybe tell them about is the candle time.

JUANITA: I don't know exactly where to begin, but every Christmas we get a new candle. Candles aren't really expensive and we get a fairly large one. Starting the first day of December, which of course is winter time so it gets dark very early and it's kind of cold and snowy, we light the candle. We all gather together in the living room and we read a Christmas story together, some emotional satisfying or pleasant or relationship-building story about the Christmas season or something. We usually sing a Christmas song together and in the end we blow out the candle and then do it again next evening, every night in December. Everyone isn't always there, but it's just a tradition that is a very pleasant, nice thing for us. Everyone likes candle time, I think. Sometimes it's just 5 minutes because we have other things to do and other times, it'll be 45 minutes and the kids will fall asleep on the couch, but we like it.

JEFF: And then, finally, make those times special where you're connecting with the greater community. In the United States now, there's a trend when a couple gets married the parents will start offering them the option of \$5000 dollars cash or the reception. That's not a good thing. It's good to invite the family to be part of the wedding. Oh, I hope that in our discussion of these traditions, you can think of ways that you can create family rituals in your own family, that will strengthen them. Rituals of connection, rituals of celebration and rituals that bring you together as a family with the greater community. To close our presentation today, we're going to attempt to sing a family song. In the United States we have something called American Football, and the universities all have what is called a Fight Song. So whenever the home team scores a touchdown, then everyone gets to their feet, and they sing a fight song, and there's just electricity. We thought why don't we capitalise on that type of a ritual, and so we've written what's called the Hill Family fight song.

JUANITA: That we can sing while we're fighting.

JEFF: And actually you have just the first verse there, we have created a number of verses over the years, we have approximately 6 or 7 verses. We're going to sing the first 2 verses of the Hill family fight song.

JUANITA: And again, you know it's just for fun, nothing wonderful.

We all belong to the happy Hill family,
Brothers and sisters of the happy Hill family.
We're for each other, one for another,
We'll serve the Lord so we can fight for right,

Come join our family as we work and sing and play,
We read the scriptures every day.
So when it starts to get night,
We will pray with our might,
That we can always choose the right.

We like to hike in the happy Hill family,
We like to bike in the happy Hill family.
We ride up and down, we ride all around,
We love to see the world that God has made,
So come join the family as we hike and bike and sing,
We praise the Lord in everything.
So when we hike down the trail,
And we ride down the road,
We hope our family's good as gold.

MC, MARK HOLZWORTH: Jeff and Juanita, I think we should tell you that most Australian lifts have security video cameras in them. So I think Funniest Home Videos would be very interested.