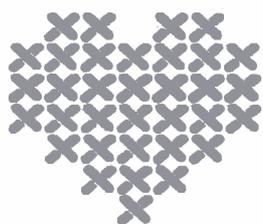


# PARADE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2013

# The SECRETS TO A HAPPY FAMILY



In his new book, best-selling author (and dad) Bruce Feiler reveals the smartest ways to teach kids values, calm chaos at home, and draw families closer together. Take his quiz (p. 6) to learn how *your* family can be happier and more resilient.

# ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY

AS THE SAYING GOES, ALL HAPPY FAMILIES ARE ALIKE. BUT WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON? TAKE OUR QUIZ TO FIND OUT—AND DISCOVER HOW YOU CAN HAVE ONE, TOO.

There comes a moment in the life of nearly every parent when you look at the chaos around you and think: There must be a better way! For me, that happened a few years ago. Having survived the slog of sippy cups and diaper caddies with our then 5-year-old twin daughters, my wife and I were ready to develop a family culture. But what are the ingredients that make families effective, resilient, and happy? • It's actually a great time to ask that question: Recently we've seen a stunning breakthrough in knowledge about how to make families run more smoothly. I spent the past few years meeting with scholars, peace negotiators, online-game designers, the Green Berets, even Warren Buffett's bankers to try to glean the secrets to happy families. The questions here are meant to help you do the same.

BY  
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**1** When a team of psychologists measured children's resilience, they found that the kids who \_\_\_\_\_ were best able to handle stress.

- (a) Ate the same breakfast every day
- (b) Knew the most about their family's history
- (c) Played team sports
- (d) Attended regular religious services

**Answer:** (b). The more children know about their family's history, the stronger their sense of control over their lives and the higher their self-esteem. The reason: These children have a strong sense of "intergenerational self"—they understand that they belong to something bigger than themselves, and that families naturally experience both highs and lows.

# 2

**Children are expected to learn how many new words per year during grades 3 through 12?**

- (a) 500
- (b) 1,500
- (c) 3,000

**Answer:** (c). It may sound daunting, but you can help by teaching kids one new word every day. Three simple games are effective at building vocabulary. First, throw out a word like *bird* or *white* and have everyone list as many related words as possible. Second, introduce a prefix or suffix and see how many words can be created from it. Third, open a newspaper or magazine and ask the kids to find a word they don't know, then look up the definitions and discuss.

**3** True or false: When giving children an allowance, parents should force them to divide their money into equal piles for spending, saving, and giving away.

**Answer:** False. An allowance gives kids a chance to practice something they



won't learn in school: money management. Dividing allowance money into different pots is a popular tactic, but you shouldn't force it on a child. Instead, let him or her decide how to spend the cash. As one of Warren Buffett's bankers said, it's better to make a mistake "with a \$6 allowance than a \$60,000 salary or a \$6 million inheritance."

**4** What do surveys show that children want most from their parents?

- (a) To spend more time with them
- (b) For the parents to be less tired and stressed
- (c) A bigger allowance

**Answer:** (b). An effective way to cut down on stress is to hold a weekly meeting to review how your family is functioning. Sit together with everyone and pose three questions: "What worked well in our family last week?" "What didn't work well?" And "What can we work on now?" The following week, adjust and try again.

**5**

Eating dinner together as a family has been shown to benefit children, but at least a third of Americans rarely do so. Which of these alternatives can offer the same benefits?

- (a) Eating breakfast together
- (b) Having a bedtime snack as a family
- (c) Scheduling a once-a-week Sunday supper
- (d) All of the above

**Answer:** (d). Children who eat dinner with their families do better in school and are less likely to drink, smoke, do drugs, or develop eating disorders, yet one study found Americans rank 23rd out of 25 countries when it comes to family meals. Still, research shows that you can reap most of the same benefits by gathering at other times, like at breakfast—even if it's just once a week.

**6** To encourage conversation and draw your family closer, arrange your living room seating in a:

- (a) U shape
- (b) Circle
- (c) L shape

**Answer:** (b). A study of hospital patients in Saskatchewan, Canada, found that subjects were friendlier to one another when they were seated face-to-face. The ideal distance is about five feet away, the same vantage from which Rembrandt and Leonardo da Vinci painted portraits. At that distance, the eye can comfortably take in the torso, hands, and face.

**7** The most common time of day for family fights is:

- (a) Morning
- (b) Dinnertime
- (c) Weekends

**Answer:** (b). Psychologists in Chicago studied interactions between moms, dads, and kids and found that the most highly charged time was from 6 to 8 p.m., when parents are returning from work and everybody is hungry. To reduce fighting, hold off on difficult topics until everyone's looked through the mail, eaten, and changed clothes.

**8** When it comes to discipline, who should pick the punishments?

- (a) Parents
- (b) Kids

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# 10

**answer:** (b). When kids have a role in picking their own punishments, it can give them a "greater sense of ownership" over their behavior and may increase the likelihood they'll follow through on changing it, said Carol Dweck, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at Stanford University.

**9** The worst word you can say in a fight with a spouse is:

- (a) Me
- (b) We
- (c) You
- (d) Your mother

**Answer:** (c). Pronouns are the canaries in the coal mine of conflict. James Pennebaker, Ph.D., chair of the psychology department at the University of Texas at Austin, citing studies of married couples, says that using a lot of first-person pronouns ("I" or "we") is a sign of a healthy relationship; using "you" (as in "You always say that" or "You never do this") indicates poor problem solving.

**If you're having an argument with your partner or teenager, you can help reduce feelings of resentment if you:**

- (a) Lie down and stretch out
- (b) Sit up with good posture
- (c) Lean forward and nod
- (d) Any of the above, as long as you're both doing the same thing

**Answer:** (d). People who assume power positions (feet up; leaning over a table) tend to have increased feelings of superiority, while those in less powerful poses (sitting lower; arms crossed) tend to feel defensive and resentful. To reduce feelings of power imbalances, says environmental psychologist Sally Augustin, Ph.D., everyone in a conversation should be at the same level, with the same posture.

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**1** When men and women were asked the top three reasons

they argue with their spouse, they agreed on only one.

What was it?

- a) Housework
- b) Children
- c) Money
- d) Sex

**Answer: (c).** The cliché is accurate. Scientists posed this question to about 4,000 men and women, and money was the only answer cited by both sides. Couples can cut down on financial conflicts by dividing money into three accounts—"yours," "mine," and "ours"—and holding quarterly meetings to discuss finances.

**2** When siblings between the ages of 3 and 7 are

together, how many times per hour do they fight?

- a) One to two
- b) Two to three
- c) Three to four

**Answer: (c).** Siblings clash an average of 3.5 times per hour, studies show, with those fights lasting a total of 10 minutes. To reduce squabbles, spend a few minutes every day alone with each child (so they're not jockeying for attention), and give them chores to do jointly to build trust.

**3** Difficult conversations among groups of family

members will go better if you have two what?

- a) Coffee breaks
- b) Moderators
- c) Women
- d) Bottles of wine

**16** Which of these out-of-school activities is more popular for American children ages 7 to 10? (a) Music lessons (b) Religious activities (c) Team sports

**Answer:** (c). Nearly three-quarters of

American children play team sports, but parents often put too much pressure on their kids. To make sports more family-friendly: Don't push athletics on your child. Don't use commands during games [say "good pass," not "pass the ball"]. And



Read an exclusive excerpt from Bruce Feiler's *The Secrets of Happy Families* at [Parade.com/happyfamilies](http://Parade.com/happyfamilies). Plus, go to [Facebook.com/parademag](http://Facebook.com/parademag) today at 3 p.m. ET for a live chat with Bruce about how to create a meaningful family life.

#### Legal Notice

## If You Were an AOL Member Between March 1, 2006 and May 31, 2006, You May Be Eligible for a Payment from a Class Action Lawsuit

### What is the lawsuit about?

In 2006, AOL made files containing some users' search queries available on the Internet. AOL said that the data was anonymous. The lawsuit claims, however, that: 1) some users' identities could be determined from the data, and 2) that AOL violated certain privacy and consumer protection laws by making it available on the Internet. AOL denies that it did anything wrong, and the Settlement does not prove otherwise. Both sides have agreed to settle to avoid the costs and risks of trial. A Court has not decided which side is right.

### Am I included?

You are a Class Member if: 1) You lived in the U.S. or its territories at any time between March and May of 2006, and 2) Your search query data was available for download from [research.aol.com](http://research.aol.com) in 2006. There is no way to determine based on your username alone whether your search data was included.

### What does the Settlement provide?

The Settlement will provide up to \$5 million in payments to Class Members. AOL has taken certain steps to reduce the possibility of a similar data release. They will try to help Class Members who have been, or could be, identified by third-party websites that claim to host the search data by asking those sites to remove that data. AOL will also pay certain fees and expenses.

### How much money could I get?

You may be eligible for a cash payment of at least \$50 from the Settlement. You will need to file

a claim to get a payment. Your actual payment amount may be less than \$50 depending on the number of valid claims received.

### How do I get benefits?

The deadline for filing a claim has not yet been set, but you should file a claim as soon as possible because the claim deadline could be as early as **July 26, 2013**. Claim forms and details on how to file are available at [www.AOLSearchDataSettlement.com](http://www.AOLSearchDataSettlement.com) or by calling 1-855-575-0127.

### What are my options?

You do not have to do anything to remain in the Class, but you need to submit a Claim Form to receive a payment. Remaining in the Class will mean that you are bound by all orders of the Court and will not be able to sue AOL for the claims being resolved by the Settlement. If you want to sue AOL separately about the claims in this case, you must exclude yourself in writing by **May 3, 2013**. If you ask to be excluded, you cannot get a payment from this Settlement. If you stay in the Settlement, you may object to it in writing by **May 3, 2013**.

The Court will hold a hearing on **May 17, 2013** to consider whether to approve the Settlement, a request for attorneys' fees and expenses of up to \$1.5 million (the amount of which AOL reserves the right to contest), and a payment of \$9,900 for the Class Representative who helped the lawyers on behalf of the whole Class. If you wish, you or your own lawyer may ask to appear or speak at the hearing at your own expense.

For more information: 1-855-575-0127 [www.AOLSearchDataSettlement.com](http://www.AOLSearchDataSettlement.com)

don't engage in post-game analysis (let the coaches coach; parents should be supportive).

**17** Which behavior is more vital to a happy relationship?

(a) Supporting your partner during a difficult period (b) Celebrating your partner after an accomplishment

**Answer:** (b). Researchers at the University of California at Santa Barbara asked men and women to share good news with their partners. Those with the strongest relationships didn't just toast their partner's achievement ("Good job, honey") but attributed it to their unique self ("Only someone with your ingenuity could have won that big account"). The scientists concluded that it's more important to congratulate your partner when things go right than to console when things go wrong.

**18** How many Americans attend a family reunion every year?

(a) 25 million (b) 50 million (c) 100 million

**Answer:** (c). About 40 percent of Americans attend an annual

reunion, with another 25 percent attending one every few years. To increase bonding during reunions, hold a family trivia contest or play intergenerational games like capture the flag. Having fun together is a key part of building a strong family identity.

**19** Most people say their family is:

(a) Happy (b) Unhappy

**Answer:** (a). Three-quarters of American adults say their family is the most important element of their lives, and 85 percent say that the family they have today is as close as or closer than the family they grew up with.

So, then, what do happy families do right? Happy families adapt. They talk—a lot. They go out and play. And they make the decision to keep working on their family. In the end, this may be the most enduring lesson of all. What's the biggest secret to a happy family? Trying.

Adapted from *The Secrets of Happy Families: Improve Your Mornings, Rethink Family Dinner, Fight Smarter, Go Out and Play, and Much More*, by Bruce Feiler (Feb. 19, William Morrow)