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FAMILY LIFE, RELATIONSHIPS AND MODALS



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FAMILY LIFE

With the introduction of technology, family life has changed a lot during the last decades. Many children and parents spend the time browsing their cell phones and no real conversations are held.

Many children spend their time playing games in the computer or playing Play Station games as well, which makes family time together something that has not happened in a long time.

There is a new technological culture that has removed most of the good traditions away and it is very difficult for parents, who usually have different working schedules to maintain these traditions.

However, parents must try harder. It is good for children and for people in general to have a family life together, to spend time together and to do family activities.

Below you will find an article taken from the Healthy Children.org website (2015), in which you will be able to read a little bit about this topic and to understand more about the benefits of developing certain activities as a family.





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THE BENEFITS & TRICKS TO HAVING A FAMILY DINNER

Eating at least three family meals together each week is associated with healthier kids, according to a study published in *Pediatrics*. This was a large meta-analysis of more than 180,000 children, a well-designed study for those of us that like science and data. But trying to put together a healthy meal between all your kids' extracurricular activities and the business of family evenings can be very challenging.

- 1. Family meals prevent excessive weight gain:** Eating 3 or more family meals (meaning at least one parent is present and the meal is prepared at home) results in a 12% lower likelihood of children being overweight.
- 2. Family meals teach healthy food choices:** The eating habits of childhood often last a lifetime. Families that ate at least three meals together each had a 20% decrease in unhealthy food choices. Teaching your children to enjoy healthy foods rather than junk foods is a gift that will stay with them through adulthood.
- 3. Family meals prevent eating disorders:** Children and adolescents who ate family meals at least three times per week had a 35% reduction in disordered eating habits such as anorexia and bulimia.





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4. Family dinner improves social-emotional health, too: The ability to understand emotions, express empathy, demonstrate self-regulation, and form positive relationships with peers and adults is called social-emotional health. Young children with high social-emotional health adapt well to the school environment and perform well academically, even in long term studies. Guess which kids had the best social-emotional health? The ones who ate family dinner together regularly and talked about their day, told stories, etc.

5. Family dinner can help kids deal with cyberbullying: About one-fifth of adolescents are victims of cyberbullying, putting them at risk for depression, substance abuse, and a host of other concerns. But adolescents who eat regular family dinners handle cyberbullying better and are less likely to engage in substance abuse or develop psychiatric health concerns, even after their involvement in face-to-face bullying is taken into account.

Trying to get the dinner on the table between sports practices and evening meetings is hard to balance. It's so easy to just pick up fast food and have a picnic dinner at the soccer field. But, fast-food bad habits are easy to start and hard to break.

FAMILY DINNER IMPROVES SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND CAN HELP KIDS DEAL WITH CYBERBULLYING



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HERE'S SOME TRIED-AND-TRUE TRICKS TO KEEP FAMILY DINNER A REALITY ON BUSY EVENINGS:

- **Freezer cooking:** On nights when you are making an all-out dinner, double it and freeze the other half. If you know that Thursday nights are always crazy, but Tuesdays are easier, plan to shop for and cook a double meal on Tuesday that you can eat again on Thursday.
- **Love your crock pot:** Get all your cooking done earlier in the day, plug it in, and have it all ready to go at dinner time.
- **Use paper plates:** Don't be afraid to use disposable plates and cups at home. One of the appeals of fast food is easy clean-up and no dishes. It's better to eat healthy food on paper plates than buy fast food.

Another aspect that makes a difference in Family life is whether we live in the city or in the town.

Let's read an article from Breaking News English (2013), which will give us an idea about this.



CITY LIVING MAKES IT HARDER TO CONCENTRATE

A new report says living in a city makes it harder for people to concentrate. The research found that people who live in rural areas can focus better than people in urban areas. The study is from Goldsmiths College, which is part of the University of London. Head researcher Dr Karina Linnell and her team studied how two groups of people did the same "thinking tasks". The team went to a remote part of Namibia, southwest Africa, to study the Himba tribe. Himba people live a very basic life in the desert, doing traditional farming. The team also studied members of the same tribe who had moved to the nearest town. Dr Linnell said the tribe who lived in the desert did much better on the tests than those in the town.

Dr Linnell's research may change the way companies operate. In the future, workers may relocate from cities to live and work in the countryside. Linnell said there are too many things around us in the city that stop us from thinking about one thing for a long time. This means we do not work at our best. She asked: "What if, for example, companies realised certain tasks would be better carried out by employees based outside of the urban environment where their concentration ability is better?"

The past century has seen billions of people move from the countryside to big cities. If Dr Linnell's research is true, this century might see many of those people return to the great outdoors.



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RELATIONSHIPS

When it comes to relationships, there are many kinds as well. MacMillan dictionary defines relationship as follows:

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The way in which two or more people or things are connected with or involve each other.

”

The following are some of the most common relationships:

- **FRIENDSHIP**

This happens between friends. People who get along together and like to do things together.

- **LOVE RELATIONSHIP**

This happens between two people who love each other. They usually start by becoming boyfriend and girlfriend and sometimes they get married after some time. There are also relationships between people of the same gender.



• WORKING RELATIONSHIP

It happens between people who work together. They share the same employer and working activities. These people do not necessarily have much in common.

• FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

This happens between you and all the members of your family. This does not mean you are close to them all the time, but there is a family tie between you.

In any relationship, there might be problems. Sometimes one person gives more than the other one, other times, one person does something that the other one does not like, etc. And of course, there are more complicated situations that make people think in different solutions if they want to save the relationship.

Look at the following examples in which a relationship is causing trouble:

Dear Sue,

I'm worried about my boss. He knows I'm married but he's always asking me to go out for dinner and drinks with him. Usually none of my colleagues are present and when we talk; he asks very personal questions.

I try to make excuses to refuse these invitations but when I do he seems bad-tempered afterwards.

I'm hoping for promotion this year - in fact, I really need it as I need extra money for our children's school fees. But I'm worried that if I don't accept my boss's constant invitations, he might block my promotion. What should I do?

Dear Mark,

I've fallen in love with one of my colleagues. We have known each other for a long time, but recently we have become more than 'just friends'. We haven't done anything - if you know what I mean, except once when we held hands under the table in a restaurant.

The problem is, believe it or not, I still love my wife and do not really want to break up that relationship as we have children. My colleague is single and says she would marry me immediately if I left my wife. The trouble is, I just can't stop thinking about her. We often phone each other secretly and if I don't hear from her for more than a day, I go crazy.

Dear Sally,

I think my husband might be having an affair. He was always very loving and affectionate until a few months ago. But now he seems cold. It's difficult to say exactly how this is, but he is definitely different. He has started staying very late at work saying they have an important project they have to finish. Sometimes I know he goes out for dinner afterwards with his colleagues when they work late. I'm sure he fancies one of his colleagues.

Now he has told me that he will have to go away for the weekend next week with his colleagues. This has never happened before and I'm worried that really he is going away for a romantic weekend with one of his colleagues. If I complain about all the overtime, he just gets angry and says I'm selfish.





MODALS AND SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS

Modals are words that help people communicate in different situations. These are divided in different groups:

Ability

Permission

Requests

Advice

Suggestions

Characteristics of modals:

All modals are followed by the base form of a verb.

They have the same form for all subjects.

They form the negative with not.

They go before the subject in questions.

1. ABILITY

To express ability use:

Can

Can't

Could

Couldn't

Be able to

Examples:

- She **can** cook, but she **can't** sing.
- We **could** go shopping last weekend, but we **couldn't** buy a dog.
- Next year, I'll **be able to** drive to your house.

- **Can** or **can't** are used for **present** ability.
 - *Example:* She **can** speak English, but she **can't** speak Italian.





- Use **can** for **future ability** when talking about **plans** or **arrangements**.

Example:

- I **can** pick you up on my way home tomorrow.
- When I finish this course, I will **be able to** do better calculations.

- Use **could** or **couldn't** for past ability.

Examples:

- **Could** he drive when he was younger?
- No, he **couldn't** drive then.
- In 2012, I **was able to** get my Master's degree.

- **Be able to** can be used for present, past or future ability.

Examples:

- **Are you able to** buy this car?
- We'll **be able to** buy it next year.
- **Silvia wasn't able to** finish the test.

- **Be able to** can be a **gerund** or **infinitive**.

Examples:

- **Being able to** drive is important to him.
- She wants **to be able to** sing by August.

“

Don't use can for future ability when talking about things you learn - use be able to.

”



“

May is more formal than can and could.

”

2. PERMISSION

To ask for permission, we use:

Can

Could

May

When you use could for permission, it is not the past.

Examples:

- **Can** I borrow your sweater?
- **Could** you come tomorrow?
- **May** I leave now, Dr. Lee?

- We often say please when we ask for permission.
 - **Can I** borrow your sweater, **please**?
 - **Can I please** ask you a question?



- Use **can** or **may** in answers. DO NOT use could.

Examples:

Could you close the door?

Yes, **I can**.

- In conversations, we usually use informal expressions instead of modals in the answers.

Example:

Could I close the window?

Sure / Certainly / Go ahead / No, please don't. It's hot in here.

- When people **refuse** permission they usually apologize and give an explanation.

Example:

Can I please use your car tonight?
I'm sorry, but I need it today.

- Use **Do you mind** if to ask for permission when your action may annoy or inconvenience someone.

Example:

Do you mind if I wear your new blouse tonight?

Yes, actually, I do. I am going to wear it tonight.

Not at all. It's OK for you to wear the blouse.

No, I don't. It's OK for you to wear the blouse.

Yes, I do. It's not OK for you to wear the blouse.





3. REQUESTS

To make a request, use the following modals:

Can

Could

Will

Would

- **Could** and **would** soften the request and make it more polite.
- You can also use **please** to make the request more polite.

Examples:

- **Would** you pass me that umbrella, **please**?
- **Would** you **please** pass me that umbrella?
- In affirmative answers to requests, we usually use expressions such as sure, certainly, of course, and no problem.
- In negative answers, we usually apologize and give an explanation.

We also use **would you mind** + gerund to make polite requests.

Example:

Would you mind waiting a minute? The doctor is in a meeting.

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Something is advisable when it's a good idea

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4. ADVICE

To give an advice, we use the following modals:

Should

Ought to

Had better (strong advice) We use the contraction ('d better)

- Do not use the negative of ought to in American English, use shouldn't instead.
- Advice is often softened with maybe, perhaps or I think.
- Strong advice is given when you believe that something bad will happen if the person does not follow the advice.
- Had better always refers to the present or the future, never to the past.

Examples:

- Mary should go to the doctor.
- You ought to finish that assignment.
- Louis, maybe you shouldn't spend so much time on the Internet.
- Bob, you'd better stop playing video games now or you won't have time for your homework.
- You'd better not use your real name.

“

Use should for questions. Do not use ought to or had better for questions.

”



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Let's always include the speaker. It means:
“here's a suggestion for you and me”.

”

5. SUGGESTIONS

To make suggestions use:

Let's

Could

Why don't

Why not

How about

- Use **maybe** in suggestions with could.

Examples:

A: **Let's** go to the beach next weekend.

B: We **could** go to Guanacaste.

A: **Why don't** we ask Luis to go?

B: Ok. **Why doesn't** Layla call him tomorrow?

A: **Why not** call him right now?

B: **How about** visiting your parents?

A: **Maybe** we **could** visit them on our way to the beach.

“

To agree with a suggestion, we reply with an informal expression: Good idea!, Great!, I like that, OK, Sure!

”

DIFFERENT FORMS OF SUGGESTIONS:

- Base form of the verb:

Let's go to the party.

We **could** go to the party.

Why don't we go to the party?

Why not go to the party?

- Gerund or noun

How about going to the party?

How about the party?

Examples:

A- Let's go to the museum.

B- Great!

A- Why don't we go shopping?

B- Mmmm, we need to save money. How about the park? We don't need to spend money there.





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To disagree, give an explanation and make another suggestion.

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