

Family Code of Values

Contributed by Modified from Stephen Covey

Largely based on Stephen Covey's, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families*, (in our bookstore) here is the Family Code of Values we created for our family when my two youngest stepchildren moved in with us. We hung them on the refrigerator in those early years and used it as a springboard every time there was a violation of them. It reminded not only the children but us of what we professed to believe. I hope it gives you ideas to create your own based on what your family values.

FAMILY CODE OF VALUES

In Our Family We Value:

Academic Achievement. We expect you to work to your potential. We expect you to be well behaved and to pay attention in school. We expect you to do all of your assignments to the best of your abilities and on time. We expect you to study adequately for tests and prepare yourselves well for college.

Compassion for others. In our family we try and put ourselves in other people's shoes. We expect you to care about our feelings and other people's feelings, and to act accordingly. We try not to gossip or say bad things about other people.

Honesty. When you tell us something, we can believe it. We can also count on you NOT to omit important information that you know we'd like to receive.

Perseverance. We don't give up easily. If something is difficult, we expect you to keep trying. If you hit a roadblock, come to us and we will try to help. If we can go no further, so be it, but we give 100 percent effort.

Politeness & Manners. We will be polite to you even when irritated or annoyed, and we expect the same in return. We expect you to mind your manners. They show the world that you have discipline and can live within society's rules, even when you think the rules are silly or useless. It will also help you to feel good about yourself wherever you go to know these things and not to feel less-than

Responsibility. In our household, we keep our promises and fulfill our responsibilities. If you or we say we will do something by a certain date or time, it will be done. If we run into a problem or time crunch, we will alert the person and work out a solution. We do not take responsibility lightly.

Spirituality. We believe in God. We believe that there are as many paths to God as there are people and that this single God is known by many names. We believe that God loves us and wants what best for us. We also believe God has a plan and a purpose for each of us. So, when we pray, we pray for God's will to be done rather than our own. We don't know the plan and something we ask for might interfere with it. We still ask for things – if they are what God wants for us too. We will pray together at least once a day.

Volunteerism. When we can help others, we will. Whether this means quick trip to drop off clothing at a shelter or helping to serve meals to the homeless. We try to give back some of the blessings we have been given in this world and we contribute part of our money to charity.

Zero tolerance for illegal substance use. No one in our home will use illegal substances. That includes underage alcohol usage or street drugs of any kind. None. Nada. Zip. Zilch.

Work before play. We expect you to get your homework done before going out for the evening or engaging in hours of relaxation. Sure you can take a break between school & homework, but we don't want to be dealing with homework hassles at bedtime. We also expect household chores to be done on time.

Respect for adults. Although we and other adults may seem a bit 'dotty' or out of it on occasion, we expect your respect. Find tolerance in your hearts for our forgetfulness, corny-ness and old-fashioned discipline methods. Value our many years of wisdom and experience. In return, we will show great respect for your thoughts and feelings.

Communication – even when upset. We understand that there may be days you are upset and do not want to talk with us. That's understandable. But please understand that your silence leaves us guessing. We don't know whether it's something one of us has done or not done – or whether it's your friends or school. You don't have to tell us secrets or intimacies – just let us know where it's coming from and if there is anything we can do to help. In return, we will respect your feelings and give you privacy.

Our home as our refuge. We believe everyone has a right to safe, private space of his or her own. Therefore, we expect

you to ask before you borrow, to keep your hands to yourself and to each have your own room.. You each will ask permission to enter the other's room. You may sleep weekend evenings in one another's room with permission.

Friends. We expect you to reach out to make new friends at school. We encourage you to invite your friends home. Know that you will not be allowed to go to other's houses or do things with them until we have met their parents. We expect you to pick friends who take school seriously, respect authority, who do not get in trouble for breaking rules at school or the law. We expect you to pick friends who have similar rules and values to ours. We will be checking this out with their parents. Be nice to all the kids at school but pick the ones you spend time with wisely.

Health. We want you to have strong minds and bodies. We expect you to participate in sports or an exercise program at least 3 times a week. We will do it with you if need be. We expect you to eat some healthy foods and not just junk.

Reliability and Promptness - We will be on time and so will you. We will be on time to pick you up at agreed times. and places. For your part, you will be there ready and waiting at the agreed time and place. When you say you will be home at a certain time, you will be. You won't be 5-15 min late and call it close enough. If there is a problem you can call us at any time.

Sexual Responsibility – We do not believe in sexual activity without a mature commitment between the partners. That means knowing each other for a long time and being in a comfortable trusted relationship. This usually occurs after high school and in your college years. We want you to know you can come to us if you feel that it might happen to you before then. We want you to be prepared, protected and fully realize the consequences of those decisions. This is imperative to your health and safety.

The world God gave us. It's why we travel.. We believe we have an obligation to see, explore and educate ourselves about the world. It's only by understanding other cultures and ways of thinking that we will ever have a chance for world peace. It also helps us to know that although we are the most powerful country in the world, we are only a small part of the world.

Childhood. Your Childhood is Precious. We do not want you to leave it prematurely. Therefore, we will do what we can to control your exposure to adult matters. We will limit what you see, read, listen to and participate in. How controlled will be directly tied to your behavior and your adherence to our values. You will gradually be exposed to more and more until you are ready to enter the adult world. That is our job as parents. We will consider your opinions, but in this especially – we make the decisions. This means we decide what is ok for you to watch, listen to, read and participate in, when you wear make up, what clothes you wear and whether or wear your body is pierced or otherwise decorated.