

# BUILD TOGETHERNESS IN YOUR FAMILY WITH THESE SIMPLE APPROACHES

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Does it seem to you that growing up means growing apart? Now that your family members are busy with their own lives, it's hard to keep in touch. The togetherness you once shared seems to be a thing of the past.

However, family life is still important, and you can rebuild your family bond and maintain that closeness, even when you're far apart.

**Start the rebuilding process with these simple strategies:**

**1. Have a weekly conference call.** Treat your weekly conference call like any other essential meeting. Once it's scheduled, only unforeseen emergencies can postpone them.

- Right now, you might think that weekly calls may be too much. You might have very little to share with your family members. ***But you'd be surprised how the mind adjusts when you know there's an expectation from others!***
- Commit to taking an active part in the meeting. Ask questions. Show genuine interest. You'll feel the warmth and love of family when you eventually hang up the phone.

**2. Make a big deal out of birthdays.** Sure, birthdays happen every year. After a while, they seem less important. And that's when you start to lose that togetherness. Make a special effort each year to treasure birthdays of your family members.

- If you normally send an email, plan to send a card via snail mail. Make the purchase a few weeks before the birthday to ensure it gets delivered in time.
- Write down a few good wishes. Allow them to see how much they mean to you.

**3. Resolve issues in a family setting.** If there's an issue with one of your siblings, bring everyone on board. *Use a family setting to help resolve issues among smaller groups of family members.* It helps to make discussions impartial.

- If face-to-face isn't an option, jump on the phone with your parents and the rest of the gang. Lay the issue out there and get honest feedback from the others.
- Be willing to accept harsh feedback from family members. If your actions were inappropriate, they'll be the first ones to tell you.
- Being in a family setting allows you to come to terms with the need to apologize. Having loved ones supporting you can help to steer the direction of the resolution.

**4. Make family decisions together.** Regardless of how far apart you are, there are some decisions that need everyone's input. Sure, they may be less important to one of you. But if it's important to one, it's important to all.

- *Everybody's input is important.* Perhaps you're the youngest and feel like your opinion isn't worthy. But give it anyway. It's part of being a member of the family.

- If something affects the family, it's only fair to allow everyone to have a say. And while you may be miles apart, a one-sided decision may have a negative impact down the road.

***Your family is your own little army.*** The members are here to protect and defend you. They epitomize unconditional love. Regardless of everyone's circumstances, it's important to embrace the family you were born into. Knowing they're around makes life so much easier!