



FAMILY

Core Values

A Guide to Discovering, Defining & Living Your Family's Guiding Principles

WHAT ARE FAMILY CORE VALUES?

Core values are the guiding principles that shape how your family lives, makes decisions, and treats one another. They're not rules — rules tell people what to do; values tell people who to be. When life gets busy, stressful, or complicated, your core values act as a compass that keeps everyone oriented to what matters most.

Research in child development consistently shows that children who grow up in families with clearly articulated values tend to develop stronger moral reasoning, better decision-making skills, and a more secure sense of identity. They have a framework for navigating peer pressure, resolving conflict, and bouncing back from adversity. Equally important: the process of naming your values together — as a family — is itself a bonding experience.

WHY WRITE THEM DOWN?

Stanford psychologist Kelly McGonigal's research found that writing about personal values is one of the most effective psychological interventions ever studied. In the short term, it makes people feel more powerful, connected, and empathetic. Less than 5% of families ever write theirs down and keep them alive. The ones that do have a meaningful head start.

HOW TO CREATE YOUR FAMILY CORE VALUES

Set aside 45–60 minutes of uninterrupted family time — a Sunday evening, a family meeting, or even a long car ride. There is no perfect moment; the goal is to start the conversation. Here's a simple process that works:

- 1. Gather Together** – Use a scheduled family meeting or a relaxed meal where everyone is present and unhurried.
- 2. Brainstorm Openly** – Ask each person: "What do you love most about our family?" and "How do you want us to treat each other and the world?" Let every answer land without judgment.
- 3. Look for Themes** – Read the list back aloud and circle words or ideas that appear more than once. Patterns reveal what your family already believes in — often without knowing it.
- 4. Narrow It Down** – Aim for 3–5 values that every family member genuinely feels proud to stand behind. More than five can become noise; fewer than three can feel incomplete.
- 5. Define Them in Your Own Words** – Write a short phrase or sentence for each value that sounds like your family — not a corporate mission statement. The language should feel like yours.
- 6. Add Them to the Family Meeting Spot App** – Once defined, enter your values in the app. During each weekly family meeting, spotlight one value and ask: "Where did someone live this value this week?"



A NOTE ON PROCESS

Don't rush to consensus. If a value feels right to parents but hollow to the kids, it won't stick. Values that every family member helps shape are values every family member will actually live. Revisit them once a year — families grow, and values can grow with them.

KEEPING YOUR VALUES ALIVE

Identifying values is only the first step. The National Council on Family Relations notes that values must be actively reinforced through rituals, teaching moments, and consistent role-modeling — otherwise they fade into decoration. Here are proven ways to keep yours living and breathing:

- ◆ Post them visibly — on the fridge, a family bulletin board, or framed on the wall. What we see daily, we remember.
- ◆ Use them in conflict — when disagreements arise, ask: "Which of our values applies here, and are we living it?"
- ◆ Celebrate them in action — when someone demonstrates a family value, name it out loud. Acknowledgment reinforces the behavior.
- ◆ Tie them to traditions — value generosity? Build a "giving back" day into your calendar. Value adventure? Plan one new experience each season.
- ◆ Revisit annually — schedule a brief values check-in once a year. Some values will deepen; new ones may emerge as your family grows.
- ◆ Let kids own them — research shows children are more likely to internalize values they helped create. Give them a real voice in the process.

Your family already has values. This process simply gives them a name — and a name gives them power. • familymeetingspot.com



45 EXAMPLES OF FAMILY CORE VALUES

Use this list as a starting point. Circle what resonates. Let the conversation begin.

<p>1. Love First <i>We choose love and kindness, especially when it's hard.</i></p>	<p>16. Stand Alone <i>We do what's right even when no one is watching.</i></p>	<p>31. Optimism <i>We assume good intent and choose hope over cynicism.</i></p>
<p>2. Respect <i>We treat each other's ideas, time, and feelings with care.</i></p>	<p>17. Hospitality <i>We welcome others into our home with warmth.</i></p>	<p>32. Patience <i>We practice grace with each other always.</i></p>
<p>3. Honesty <i>We speak the truth with compassion — even when it's uncomfortable.</i></p>	<p>18. Creativity <i>We encourage imagination and creative problem-solving.</i></p>	<p>33. Unity <i>We work through differences inside the family first.</i></p>
<p>4. Gratitude <i>We notice and appreciate the blessings in our everyday lives.</i></p>	<p>19. Tradition <i>We honor where we come from and build rituals for the future.</i></p>	<p>34. Cultural Pride <i>We celebrate our heritage and learn our family story.</i></p>
<p>5. Faith & Spirituality <i>We seek meaning and purpose beyond ourselves.</i></p>	<p>20. Integrity <i>We do what we say. Our word is our bond.</i></p>	<p>35. Self-Discipline <i>We do hard things and follow through.</i></p>
<p>6. Teamwork <i>We share responsibilities and help each other succeed.</i></p>	<p>21. Empathy <i>We seek to understand how others feel before reacting.</i></p>	<p>36. Kindness <i>We choose kind words and actions, especially with strangers.</i></p>
<p>7. Perseverance <i>We keep going when things get hard.</i></p>	<p>22. Humility <i>We acknowledge mistakes and never stop learning.</i></p>	<p>37. Trust <i>We build trust through honesty and repair it when broken.</i></p>
<p>8. Generosity <i>We give our time, talents, and resources freely to others.</i></p>	<p>23. Communication <i>We share openly and listen with real attention.</i></p>	<p>38. Simplicity <i>We choose meaningful over busy, and enough over more.</i></p>
<p>9. Adventure <i>We explore new places and ideas together with open hearts.</i></p>	<p>24. Loyalty <i>We show up for each other, especially when it's hard.</i></p>	<p>39. Legacy <i>We live in a way our grandchildren would be proud of.</i></p>
<p>10. Learning <i>We stay curious and pursue growth at every age.</i></p>	<p>25. Financial Wisdom <i>We spend, save, and give with intention.</i></p>	<p>40. Accountability <i>We own our outcomes — no excuses, no blame, just ownership.</i></p>
<p>11. Joy <i>We celebrate big and small moments with laughter.</i></p>	<p>26. Nature & Stewardship <i>We care for the earth and get outside often.</i></p>	<p>41. Belonging <i>Every person in this family is fully known and fully loved.</i></p>
<p>12. Service <i>We make a difference in our community and world.</i></p>	<p>27. Independence <i>We raise capable people by letting each other try and fail.</i></p>	<p>42. Compassion <i>We notice when others are hurting and do something about it.</i></p>
<p>13. Health <i>We care for our bodies and minds every day.</i></p>	<p>28. Equity & Fairness <i>We treat every person with dignity, regardless of background.</i></p>	<p>43. Resilience <i>We bounce back. Hard times make us stronger, not bitter.</i></p>
<p>14. Forgiveness <i>We let go of grudges and repair relationships.</i></p>	<p>29. Presence <i>We put down our phones and give full attention.</i></p>	<p>44. Laughter <i>We don't take ourselves too seriously. Fun is non-negotiable.</i></p>
<p>15. Courage <i>We stand up for what's right, even when afraid.</i></p>	<p>30. Hard Work <i>We give our best, not just what's required.</i></p>	<p>45. Purpose <i>We believe our lives mean something and we live accordingly.</i></p>