

7 Secrets of Highly Happy Families

By Chrystle Fiedler

幸福家庭的七个秘密

Sharing treats, a game, a joke, or just a quiet moment together can bring you closer to your kids than ever before.

与孩子们一起用餐，一起玩游戏，一起说笑话或者仅仅和他们呆上一会儿，都会让你和孩子的关系比以往任何时候都更亲密。

Laughter, Sweet Laughter

笑，甜蜜的笑

Once a month, Julie Kessel and her husband, Don, have a family Do Nothing Day at their home in Houston with their two boys, Chandler, 7, and Carter, 5. "We lounge around, have breakfast, play Yahtzee, read, watch movies and sitcoms," says Julie.

每个月，朱丽凯塞尔和丈夫唐都会过一个叫“不做任何事”的节日，即陪两个儿子——七岁的钱德勒和五岁的卡特呆在家里。朱丽说：“我们哪也不去，呆在家里，吃吃早餐，玩玩快艇骰子，或读读书，看看电影或情境喜剧。”

To do this, the family picks a day, usually a Sunday, so everyone can schedule around it. The day before, Julie stocks up on snacks and a few favorite family videos. She also likes to get errands and household chores done beforehand so work is off her mind. Visitors, play dates, fix-it projects, and housework are all on hold. The result? "We have one whole day to reconnect," says Julie. "The kids really like it because they have our full attention without any distractions. It's a great feeling."

这个家庭会选一天来过这个节日，通常是星期日，这样每个人都可以做好安排。前一天，朱莉会准备好零食和一些最喜爱的家庭影片。她还喜欢事先把一些杂事和家务做完，这样玩得时候就不会受干扰。招待访客、约会、安排好的计划，以及家务都会被搁在一边。结果如何呢？“我们一整天可以全家人聚在一起，”朱莉说“孩子们的确很喜欢这样，因为这时我们没有受其他事情的干扰，他们感受到了我们全身心的关爱。这是一个非常美好的感觉。”

Cultivating habits and activities like the Kessels do on a regular basis can boost your own family's happiness quotient. It's well worth the effort. Scientific studies show that a happy family has positive effects on health, improving blood pressure and increasing life expectancy. And the activities you share, no matter how frivolous they may seem, can actually be extremely meaningful in the long run. According to a recent Gallup Poll, 96 percent of Americans rank family as the most important thing in their lives. Building the bonds that make families strong starts with the simplest, and sometimes the silliest, of habits and rituals.

像凯塞尔一家那样定期培养孩子的习惯、开展一些家庭活动，可以提高家庭的幸福指数。这样做很值得的。有科学研究表明，幸福的家庭对健康有益，可以改善血压和延长寿命。你们一起参与的活动，不论如何看起来有多么琐屑，从长远来看却非常有意义。根据最近的一项盖洛普民意调查显示，百分之九十六的美国人将家庭排在生活中最重要的事情。和家人建立紧密的联系应从培养最简单，有时是最愚蠢的习惯和礼仪开始。

"Ultimately, the highest salary and the best car aren't fulfilling," says David Niven, author of *100 Simple Secrets of Happy Families: What Scientists Have Learned and How You Can Use It* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2004). "Loving relationships are. They are the foundation of who we are. Happiness isn't what happens to us, it's the love, connections, and support structure we have and giving of yourself unconditionally." Tap these secrets to make a happy home your top priority.

“最高的工资和最好的车最终都不能令人满意，”《幸福家庭的 100 个简单的秘密：科学家们学到了什么？你们该如何运用它？》的作者大卫·尼温说“而爱的关系却能让人感到满足。这种关系是人之所以为人的基础。幸福不是发生在我们身上的事情，而是我们拥有的和无条件付出的爱、联系及支持的组合。”请运用这些秘密让你的家庭成为你生活中最重要的事。

1. Put laughter on your to-do list.

1. 把欢笑列入必做事情清单中

Find ways to inject humor into daily life, even if it seems like an effort at first.

寻找一些能把幽默融入日常生活中的方法，哪怕一开始似乎需要费些功夫。

"The average family spends too little time engaged in humor and too much time complaining," says Mimi Doe, founder of www.spiritualparenting.com and author of *Busy but Balanced* (St. Martin, 2001). Instead, she says, "Tell jokes at dinner, leave a book of jokes on the kitchen counter, or tuck a funny cartoon in your child's lunchbox."

“一般的家庭几乎不怎么把时间花在幽默方面，而更多的时间花在抱怨上，”咪咪·豆伊说道。她是网站 www.spiritualparenting.com 的创始人以及《忙碌但依然保持平衡》这本书的作者（St. Martin, 2001）。相反，她说：“吃饭的时候说说笑话，在厨房的柜台上放一本笑话书，或者在小孩的便当盒里塞一本有趣的卡通片，都是创造幽默的方式。”

You can also initiate a family movie night and make a point to watch classic comedies on a regular basis. Look at the lighter side of household tasks, too.

你也可以举办一个家庭电影夜，定期看一些经典喜剧。也可以让家庭任务变得轻松愉快。

"Make it fun," says Doe. "Loosen up with your kids about chores. If your teenage son always forgets to clean up the bathroom sink, write a reminder in shaving cream on the mirror. Tape a dollar bill on the bottom of a waste paper basket to give kids an incentive to empty them."

“让这一切都变得有趣起来”豆伊说道，“孩子们很轻松地去做家务。如果你十多岁的儿子总是忘了清洗浴室的水槽，你可以用剃须膏写在镜子上以示提醒。在废纸篓上贴上钞票以鼓励小孩子要记得倒掉里面的垃圾。”

Giving

给予

2. Make giving a family affair.

2. 将给予当作一项家庭事务

"The key is to find something fulfilling that the whole family can do," says Natalie Gahrman, author of *Succeeding as a Super Busy Parent* (Infinity, 2002). Sue Bowen and her son, Jimmy, 12, of Flemington, New Jersey, raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. "We walk in the annual Light the Night Walk in honor of my late husband and Jimmy's dad, who died of Hodgkin's disease. Jimmy and I designed a banner with pictures of his dad on it. We share the role of team captain and recruit friends to walk with us, too. It's something meaningful that we do together."

“关键是找到让所有家庭成员都满意的事情”纳塔利·加曼这样说道，她是文章《成功做一个超忙的家长》的作者。住在新泽西弗莱明顿的苏·博文和他 12 岁的儿子吉米一直为白血病和淋巴瘤患者募捐。“我们每年都要上街进行一次‘光明与黑夜游行’，这是为了纪念我的前夫也是吉米的

爸爸，他死于霍奇金淋巴瘤。我和吉米设计了一个横幅，上面贴上了他爸爸的照片。我们一起担任着队长的角色，也招募了一些朋友加入我们的队伍。这是我们一起做的有意义的事情。

Doing for others helps kids realize the world is bigger than they are and that people need their help, says Gahrman. To get started, make a list of good deeds you could do as a family. You might include making dinner for a family with a new baby and no time to cook, inviting the new kid in school for a play date, or taking old rugs and blankets to the animal shelter.

为别人做点事会有助于让孩子们认识到这个世界比他们生活的圈子要更大，其他人也需要他们的帮助，加曼这样说道。开始行动之前先把你们作为一个家庭所能提供的帮助列一张清单。你们或许可以给为刚添了宝宝所以没时间做饭的家庭做上一顿饭，也可以邀请刚上学的小孩来玩，还可以把家里的旧毯子送到动物收养所去。

"As hard as it might be to believe, kids long for connection with others more than another new toy or trip," says Doe. "It does feel as good to give as to get."

“人们可能很难相信，孩子们非常想与他人交流，其渴望的程度远远胜过对新玩具或旅行的向往”豆伊说，“给予和获得一样让人开心。”

Hide and Treat

捉迷藏

3. Play hide and treat.

3. 玩捉迷藏游戏

What do lunchboxes, napkins, and sock drawers have in common? They're all places where you can hide small treats, a note, or even extra pocket money for the times when you catch your kids doing something good.

午餐盒、餐巾和袜柜有什么相似之处？当你发现小孩子做了好事的时候，它们都是藏小礼物、纸条或零用钱的好地方。

"Usually, we don't notice kids when they're being good, we just kind of expect it," says Bill Maier, psychologist in residence for Focus on the Family, a nonprofit organization devoted to traditional and family values. But he says, it's important to "affirm and reward them when they are kind, helpful, and cooperative. It'll steer them into more positive behavior. They're also more apt to repeat it if it's been reinforced."

“通常孩子们表现好的时候我们没有注意到，我们只是有点儿期待这样，”比尔·迈尔这样说道，他是“聚焦家庭”的常驻心理医生，这是一家致力于研究传统和家庭价值的非盈利性组织。但是他也说，当他们表现得很善良，乐于助人，愿意与别人合作时，对他们进行肯定和奖励是很重要的。这样会引导他们表现更积极，若对他们的这些行为进行强化他们也会更愿意重复这些好的行为。

Over time, noticing the good your kids do will reduce conflicts about misbehavior and make for a happier family. Remember, though, to be specific with your praise. If your son shares his toys with a friend, for example, you could give him a Matchbox car with a note that says "I'm so proud when you share your toys!" Or write a nice note pointing out something positive your child did, such as studying without being asked. If you promise your child a reward such as taking him to the mall if he cleans up his room all week, keep your word. Otherwise, says Maier, "Your child realizes it doesn't matter what he does, because you don't follow through."

久而久之，留意孩子好的行为会减少不良行为引发的冲突，也会营造一个更幸福的家庭。但是要记住，给予奖励是要有针对性。例如，如果你儿子拿出自己的玩具和朋友一起玩，你可以给他奖他一个“火柴盒”汽车，上面贴张纸条写上“你愿意和别人分享你的玩具，我感到很骄傲！”或者当孩子表现好，你就可以在纸条上指出来，比如当孩子学习很自觉的时候。如果你答应了孩子要是他整个星期都打扫了自己的房间，你就会奖励他，你一定要遵守诺言。否则，迈尔说，“你的孩子会认为无论他做什么都无关紧要，因为你不会一直监督他。”

Little notes are a great way to give teens positive reinforcement, says Sheila Ellison, author of *How Does She Do It? 101 Life Lessons from One Mother to Another* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2004). "Leave a note on the steering wheel of the car, that says, 'Have a great day!' Or if they're facing a challenge such as a big test or important game, 'I believe in you!'" Post affirmations around the house, too. "I have one on the fridge that says, 'Be the change you want to see in the world.' Parents have an effect on the kinds of things they put into their children's minds," says Ellison.

《她该怎么办？从众多母亲中总结出来的 101 个生活经验》这本书的作者希拉·埃里森说，小纸条是给青少年正面强化的好方法。她还说：“把写着‘祝你有美好的一天！’纸条放在小车的驾驶盘上，或当他面临考试或重要的比赛等挑战时，写上‘我相信你！’”把你对他的肯定的话贴满整个屋子。埃里森说：“我在冰箱上写着‘愿你成为你想看见的这个世界的变化’父母对于他们给孩子所灌输的东西有很大影响。”

Chutes and Ladders

滑坡与梯子游戏

4. Ask your kids to play Chutes and Ladders.

叫孩子们玩滑坡与梯子游戏

"When you spend time with your kids, bonds are formed and communication is increased," says Terra Wellington, author of *The Seven Elements to Balanced Living: A Wellness Guide* (Wellington Media, 2002). "You both reap the rewards." Board games, she says are a great way to connect. "It's relationship building. Kids learn how to win and how to lose. It's analogous to life." Pick games that are less competitive, such as Chutes and Ladders and Candyland, for kids who may have a problem losing. Older kids like Trouble, Kerplunk, and Uno. Sue Bowen plays the Yu-Gi-Oh card game with son Jimmy. "He's taught me how to play and the strategy behind the game," she says.

“当你和孩子们在一起的时候，你们的关系变得亲密了，也加强了沟通，”《平衡生活的七个因素：健康指南》（惠灵顿媒体，2002）的作者特拉·惠灵顿这样说“你们双方都会获利”。她还说，棋类游戏是加强联系的好方式。“你们的关系建立起来。孩子们学习如何赢棋，如何面对输棋。这与生活是相似的。”为那些害怕失败的孩子挑选一些竞争性不强的游戏，比如滑坡与梯子游戏，弹子棋。大点的孩子喜欢玩 Trouble、Kerplunk 和 Uno 等游戏。苏·博文和她儿子吉米玩一种叫“游戏王”的牌类游戏。“他教我如何玩，并告诉我游戏中的策略，”她说道。

Research suggests that if you can develop a common interest, it's a wonderful way to spend time together, says Niven. "The expectations are open and free. You're talking about serious or silly things, and you're just being together. Any activity like a game that offers you open time is a very positive thing."

研究表明，如果你们能培养共同的爱好，这会大家共度美好时光的极好方式。尼文还说：“你们所希望的共同爱好可以自由选择。你们可以说些严肃的事，也可以开玩笑，关键是你们能在一起。任何活动，比如游戏，都是很好的事，因为这给了你们一些放松的时间。”

New Bedtime Rituals

新的就寝仪式

5. Create new bedtime rituals for teens.

给孩子创设一些新的就寝仪式

"As kids get older, it's important to create new rituals that are age-appropriate so there is a nice end to the day," says Doe. When Jimmy was young, Sue used to read to him before he went to sleep. Now that he likes the Harry Potter series, she's reading the books, too, and talking about them with her son at bedtime.

“随着孩子们慢慢长大，给他们创设一些新的适合他们年龄的就寝仪式很重要，会让他们在一天快要结束的时候享受快乐”豆伊说。当吉米小的时候，苏在睡前经常读书给他听。现在他喜欢哈利波特的故事，她就读哈利波特的书给他听，并且他们还会谈论里面的故事。

"It's a way of bonding us together," says Sue. "We discuss the plot and the characters." Jane Turner Michael and her husband, Nick, have a special routine with teens Elyssa, Adam, and Christopher. "We have dinner together and then everyone goes off in a different direction for meetings and homework," says Jane. "At 9:30, we gather again in the kitchen, reconnect, and eat a snack. Once they're in bed, I'll go in, give them a kiss, tell them I love them and that I hope they sleep well."

“这是我们联系感情的一种方式，”苏说，“我们讨论里面的情节和人物。”简·特纳·米歇尔和丈夫尼克为与他们的三个孩子：爱丽莎，亚当和克里斯多夫形成了一种特殊的惯例。“我们一起吃饭，吃完完饭就各自去开会或做作业，”简说，“到了9:30，我们又来到厨房一起吃点心。孩子们上床后，我就会走进房间，亲吻每个小孩并告诉他们我很爱他们，祝他们晚安。”

Many teens love hand, foot, and back rubs. "They'll be yours for 20 minutes," says Ellison. It's also a way to stay connected. "We think teenagers don't want to be touched," says Doe. "But they can feel abandoned by us as their bodies change."

许多孩子喜欢你抚摸他们的手，脚或背。“他们会和你呆上20分钟，”埃里森说。这也是一种保持亲密的方式。“我们认为十多岁的孩子不喜欢别人碰他们，”豆伊说。“但是随着他们身体发育发生变化，他们会感觉被我们忽视了。”

Memorabilia, Talking Stick

家庭大事记，发言棒

6. Get out the memorabilia.

分享家庭大事

"Research shows that when we share family history, we strengthen the bond between family members," says Niven. "Kids long to belong," says Doe. "When they feel part of the tribe, it makes them feel secure and happy. They also don't need to go outside and seek connections that might be unhealthy." It doesn't have to be complicated to connect. "If you don't have time to make scrapbooks," says Gahrman, "just put the photos in an album in order or catalogue them in a shoe box." This way you can go back and review a family vacation and relive happy memories, together.

“研究显示，当我们分享家族历史时，家庭成员的关系会更亲密，”尼文说道。“小孩渴望有种归属感，”豆伊说，“当我们感觉是这个家族的一分子，我们会觉得安全和幸福。他们也不想到外边

去寻求其他可能不正当的联系。”这种联络并不一定很复杂。“如果你有时间编剪贴簿，”加曼说，“那就把照片都整理放入相册里，然后分类放进鞋盒里。

7. Inaugurate a talking stick for your own tribe.

给你的家庭设发言棒

In Native American tribes, a talking stick was used to lend order to council meetings. Using one can bring structure and order to family meetings and empower parents who feel their kids don't listen and kids who don't feel heard.

在印第安部落，发言棒是在开会的时候用来传递顺序的。开家庭会议时使用这种发言棒能使会议有组织有顺序，家长可以了解哪些孩子没用心听，哪些孩子发言没人听。

"The underlying principle is to treat each other with kindness and respect by establishing an environment that supports it," says Gahrmann. Instead of a stick, the object in question could be a rock or even a hat, or any visual reminder that whoever has the object has a chance to talk without any danger of interruption. It helps children understand that they need to respect the speaker and wait their turn. As kids get used to the concept, you'll find that eventually you won't need a talking stick at all.

“潜在的原则是通过创造一种鼓励的气氛来善待和尊重在场的每个人，”加曼说。除了发言棒，还可以用石块或帽子，或任何物体来提醒大家，谁拿到了它，就有机会发言而不会有中途被打断的危险。这可以帮助孩子们明白，他们应该尊重说话者，耐心等待轮到自己发言时才能发言。孩子们渐渐习惯了这样的规则，你会发现最后你根本不用发言棒他们也会遵守规则。

Niven agrees, saying, "Instead of assuming what a family member is thinking, you're giving them a chance to tell you." That's more important than you might think. "Happy families are open to individual differences. It provides for a comfort and a constancy of support that lasts a lifetime," he says.

尼文也赞同这一观点，他说：“不要猜测家人是怎么想的，你给机会让他们告诉你。”这比你思考的更重要。“幸福的家庭容许个人差异。这会给我们带来终生的舒适与永久的支持。”他这样说道。

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克里斯蒂·费德勒是纽约的一名自由作家

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