

APPRECIATION & AFFIRMATION

EVERY DAY SHOW YOUR FAMILY HOW MUCH YOU LOVE THEM WITH YOUR *WORDS*, WITH YOUR *TOUCH*, AND WITH YOUR *THOUGHTFULNESS*.

WORDS

- Remember that *how* you say something is as important as *what* you say.
- Never waste an opportunity to tell someone that you love them.
- Find opportunities and ways to compliment your family members at least twice a week.
- When talking about your family (members), be positive and enthusiastic.
- Tell your children often how terrific they are and that you trust them.
- Tell your spouse that they're your best friend...and mean it...and treat them that way.
- When you arrive home from work, let the first thing you say brighten a family member's day (or night)!
- Leave a series of (post-it) notes expressing your appreciation or love in a place where they'll find it...on a pillow, steering wheel, door, bathroom mirror, CD player, pizza box, refrigerator, briefcase, book bag, purse, etc.
- Let your children/spouse/family members hear you saying complimentary things about them to others.
- Compliment even small improvements.
- Create a little signal only your spouse knows that you can show them you love them across a crowded room.
- Whenever you say *I love you*, look the other person in the eye and mean it.
- Leave a message on your answering machine telling a family member you just called to say how much you were looking forward to being home with them.
- When you know someone has gone to a lot of trouble to get dressed up, tell them they look terrific!
- Encourage anyone who is trying to improve mentally, spiritually, or physically.
- Write a letter of appreciation/affirmation every birthday...or keep a journal for your children as they grow up.
- Get yourself interviewed on video telling folks how great your family is. Bring it home one night as a rented video that the family just "has" to see!
- Place an ad in the newspaper acknowledging your family member. Many papers have special sections for this kind of love note, even if only on Valentine's Day.
- Mail your loved one a note of appreciation...but cut up the note like a jigsaw puzzle.

TOUCH

- Hold your child's hand every chance you get. The time will come all too soon when he or she won't let you.
- No matter how old you get, hug and kiss your mother whenever you see her.
- Give back rubs and massages.
- Give "straight jacket" affirmation to children. Tuck them in where their arms can't move and tell them **specific** things you like about them.
- Give homemade coupons for hugs (Hug-a-grams)
- Take your loved one's hand and plant a kiss in their palm and tell them that it's for use at time when they feel alone.

THOUGHTFULNESS

- Save an evening a week for your spouse/children/family.
- Send your loved ones flowers; think of a reason later.
- Send your mother-in-law flowers on your spouse's birthday.
- Attend your children's athletic events, plays and recitals...and find the good in them.
- Use a favorite picture of a loved one as a bookmark. Tell them about it. Let them help you pick out which picture.
- Remember that no time spent with your family is ever wasted.
- Every year celebrate the day you and your spouse had your first date.
- Let your children *see* things you do for your spouse that lets them know how much you love and treasure him/her.
- Buy a lottery ticket. Attach a note that says: "Having you in my life is like hitting the jackpot!"
- Buy a favorite snack/beverage/CD to share. Rent a favorite movie.
- Give your family member an award ("Best Dish Washer of the Week") on occasion. Make a small ceremony out of it.
- Do a family member's chore for them as a gesture of appreciation.
- Get up extra-early one morning and take your family member out to breakfast for a one-on-one encounter -- "just because you want time alone" with him or her.
- Put a note in your teenager's glove compartment with the insurance papers: "Hopefully you'll never need these papers but if you do, remember *you're* what's important, not the car. I love you."
- Set up a scavenger hunt in your house where your family member tracks down clues to find a note of appreciation and a special little gift.

PRAYER FOR PARENTS

God, we ask you to move our hearts to help us to...

...listen to our children

...communicate with our children

...teach our children right from wrong and be a good model for them

...educate our children in mind, body and *soul*

...work to provide a stable family life for our children

...pray for, and see God in, my children and in all children

...speak out for my and other people's children's needs.

Amen.