



## Top 5 Family Stress Relief Strategies

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Stress comes in all forms and from all directions, especially for families in these super busy, technologically advanced, yet tough economic times. ***However, even with the technology we've available to us, one of the biggest causes of stress in a family is lack of communication.***

The unfortunate reality is that kids communicate with seemingly everyone *but* their family through texting, email, Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter. Nowadays it can be tough to get through to your kids, which makes it a challenge to strengthen your family's bond.

### Getting Involved with Your Kids

One way to get more involved with your kids is to start communicating in a way that they'll actually listen.

This may mean that you need to learn how to text, email and get on the social networks your kids are on. The idea is to be a source of support for your child, and that means you need to be an active player in their life, even if they push you away.

Even if you get active in your child's life online, the best way to communicate with your kids is while they're at home. Talk to them face to face and don't be afraid to ask questions. You might be surprised at how they respond. At first it may seem awkward, but the more you do it, the easier communication becomes.

### Communication with Your Spouse

If you're lacking an open line of communication with your spouse, one reason may be that you're not speaking each other's *love language* or understanding their relating style. This

means that you need to ***discover what your spouse responds to the best***. Is it touch, the words you say, gifts, acts of service, or spending quality time together? Once you know how to show love to your spouse, show it abundantly!

Also, listen to your spouse's feelings, as this will often give you ideas about how you can fill their love tank. If your spouse says something along the lines of "You never touch me anymore" or she wants to hold hands all the time, her love language is physical touch. If your spouse often uses the phrase "We never spend any time together," and likes to just sit and talk, their love language is quality time.

### **Spend Quality Time With Your Family**

Another big stress on today's family is not spending enough time together. This is most likely because everyone is so busily involved in other activities that you barely have time to yourself, let alone one another.

***So, how can you make time to spend with your family?***

- 1. Set aside at least one day out of each week and deem it family day or game night.** Spending quality time with your family shows that you're interested in what they're doing and that you care about them. Often teens think that their parents don't care about them because they're never home, or they feel that their parents play a *passive* role in their lives. And because kids and teens often don't spend quality time with their families, they go elsewhere to get the attention they crave. Unfortunately, *elsewhere* may not be a good place for your kids to be!
- 2. Ensure you make time for your spouse.** Alone time is important for all marriages so you can continue to strengthen your relationship and explore one another's dreams and desires for the family unit.
- 3. Make sure your family enjoys at least one meal together each day. *Statistics show families that eat together, stay together.*** Children do better in school and the overall atmosphere in the home is simply happier when you make eating together a priority.

### **The Financial Burden**

***Financial problems are another cause of major stress in families today.*** Often, when the parents aren't in control of their finances, their children suffer the same financial burdens later on in life.

As parents, you must teach your children financial responsibility from an early age. Get your little ones a piggy bank to help them learn about the importance of saving money. ***As they get older, include them in the budget planning and bill paying.*** Help them understand the concept of financial responsibility.

Children need to know that money must be earned and that your debit or credit card isn't magically filled with money all the time.

To recap, **The Top 5 Family Stress Relievers** are:

1. Communicate by speaking directly to your family.
2. Learn what love language your children and spouse speaks.
3. Spend time quality time together as a family with a family day or family game night.
4. Sit down for at least one meal a day with each other.
5. Openly discuss your finances and financial situation with your family.

Incorporating these strategies into your family life will help you have a more open relationship with each family member. Plus, you'll be able to relieve the stress and tension and replace it with joy, health, and happiness!