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Susan E. Murray
Andrews University

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FAMILY TIES

Honoring Those We LOVE

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

While we want to have healthy relationships, some family interactions are based on habits that run contrary to the ways healthy relationships are built and maintained. Even though we may have learned many positive ways to relate in our families as we grew up, sometimes education and awareness can help us experience more of God's intended blessings in our lives.

Gary Smalley, in his video seminar series entitled "Homes of Honor: Love is a Decision," suggests, "The lower the value we attach to people, the easier we can 'justify' dishonoring them with our words or treating them with disrespect." In unhealthy relationships there is a lack of honor. Consciously, or unknowingly, family members are treated with little importance or value. This results in disconnected relationships where people are not allowed to think, talk, or feel.

Encourage Thinking and Negotiation

Healthy relationships encourage thinking and negotiating. It is about getting excited about other's ideas, even embracing them and praising them for it, suggests Smalley.

Encourage Honest Talking and Listening

If we were ignored, interrupted, or blamed whenever we spoke up as children, that unhealthy inherited tendency can easily be passed down to the next generation. When we encourage honest talking and listening, that fosters healthy self-acceptance.

Encourage an Emotional Vocabulary

Men typically respond to a situation with logic by assessing the facts and formulating a plan. Given the right circumstances, they may recognize the emotions attached to the situation.

Women, however, tend to respond with their emotions first. Once

the facts are recognized and dealt with, they tap into their logic, which can be very effective in problem solving.

Husbands and wives demonstrate honor when they learn to listen to each other's emotional responses to life's challenges and accept their inherited differences. Home should be a safe place where children can learn an emotional vocabulary. These are tools that help build true intimacy.

Encourage Connected Relationships

Parents can be neglectful and controlling at the same time. In disconnected relationships, the pain is so great people will seek to connect with something, or someone else. The potential alternatives include drugs and illicit relationships that bring immediate and temporary comfort. Being connected means thinking things through with a person, talking with them, being with them ... in other words, honoring them.

Thinking, talking, sharing feelings, and connecting are what God offers us. These are honoring behaviors, what God has directed us to do in honoring Him (Psalm 66:2).

Paul tells us to "give preference to one another in honor" (Romans 12:10). That would mean honoring, giving great value, to those whom we love, right?



Susan Murray is an associate professor of family studies who teaches behavioral science and social work at Andrews University. She is a certified family life educator and licensed marriage and family therapist.