

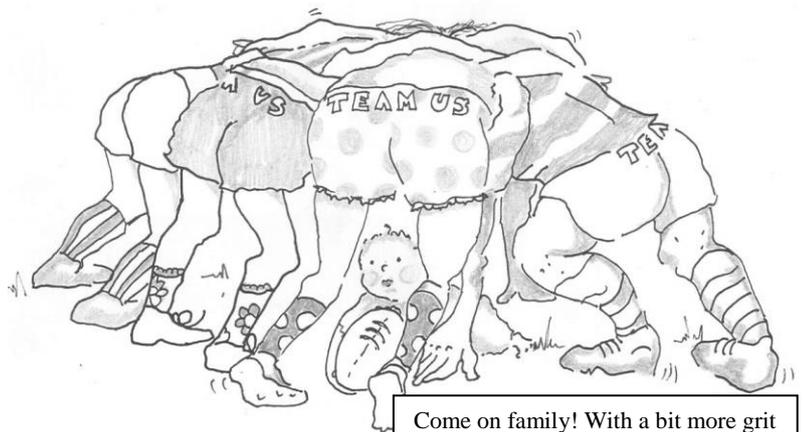
The Power of 'We' Part 2

Here are rules most commonly found in great families. To live by them perfectly every day is, of course, an impossible ideal. For both parents and children, some backsliding and flawed performance is absolutely normal. All the same, these rules are fixed in place as what we try to live by, a "resting place" for our conscience--like the keys on a piano or computer keyboard to which our fingers always return. The people in a great family never attain perfection, but they never stop trying. To keep trying, no matter what, is the essence of greatness.



We respect the rights and sensibilities of others.

- We say to all, when appropriate: *please, thank you, excuse me, I'm sorry, I give my word.*
- We do not insult people with words or affront them with rudeness.
- We do not tattletale or gossip about people or otherwise negatively criticize people behind their backs.
- We keep our family's affairs within the family. No "airing dirty laundry in public."
- We make no disparaging remarks of a racist, sexist, ethnic, or religious nature, not even as a joke. We have no place in our home for humour that hurts.
- We do not use profanity or vulgar language.
- We never ridicule or belittle anyone who tries.
- We do not interrupt; we wait our turn to speak. We do not distract people when they're speaking with someone, either in person or on the phone. If there's an urgent situation and we must interrupt, then we first say, "Excuse me, please...."
- We respect people's right to presumption of innocence. Before forming a negative judgment, we listen first to their side of things.
- We never lie to each other. Unless we have rock-solid evidence to the contrary, we presume other family members tell the truth.
- We do not argue back when we are corrected.
- We do not make promises unless we commit ourselves to carry them out. If we can't keep a promise for reasons beyond our control, then we make a sincere apology.
- We respect each other's property and right to privacy. We knock before entering a closed room; we ask permission before borrowing something.
- We do not bicker or quarrel during meals, or over TV.
- If we must get up from the table at meals, we first say, "Excuse me, please...."
- We greet adult friends of our family with good manners, a warm greeting, a friendly handshake and look in the eye. We give our guests the best of what we have.
- We show special respect to older people. We give them a seat, hold doors, and let them go first.
- We celebrate other's accomplishments. Win or lose, we appreciate each other's earnest best efforts.
- We practise good telephone manners and thus bring honour to our family. We keep use of the telephone and mobiles under agreed family guidelines.



Come on family! With a bit more grit and practice we'll make a great team.



We all contribute to making our home a clean, orderly, civilized place to live.

- We do not enter the house with wet or muddy footwear; if we track in a mess, we clean it up right away.
- We do not bring "outdoor" activities indoors: no ball-playing, running and chasing, missile throwing, rough wrestling, or excessive shouting. Males in the family wear no hats or caps indoors.
- We open and close doors quietly; if we accidentally slam a door, we say, "Excuse me, please...."
- We do not shout messages to people in other rooms. We walk to wherever someone is and then deliver the message in a normal voice.
- We do not consume food outside of designated eating areas: kitchen, dining room, play or TV room.
- We do not overindulge. We avoid snacking between meals, especially right before meals.
- We try to eat all the food set before us.
- We put clothes where they belong when not in use: clean clothes in drawers, dirty clothes in laundry.
- When we're finished with them, we put toys, sports gear, and tools back where they belong.
- If we've used a plate or drinking glass, we rinse or wash it and put it where it belongs.
- If we've borrowed something, we return it. If we've lost a borrowed item, we apologize and try our best to either replace it or pay for it.
- We do our house chores promptly and to the best of our ability; we start our homework at a set time and stick with it until it's done right.
- We can all make suggestions about many affairs in family life, but parents make decisions in serious matters. And they decide what's serious.
- We do not aim for "results" as such, but rather for *personal best effort*.



We give people information they need to carry out their responsibilities.

- When we're going out, we always inform: where we are going, with whom, and when we plan to return.
- We get prior permission, with at least one day's notice, for important and potentially disruptive activities: sleepovers, camping trips, long distance trips, and the like.
- We come straight home from school, work, social events--except with prior consultation.
- We return from social events at a reasonable hour, one previously agreed upon.
- If we're going to be late, we call.



We use electronic media and games only to promote family welfare.

- We have one television in the house, so as to monitor it and keep it from fragmenting the family.
- We use TV and video-gadgets sparingly and discerningly. Most of our recreation will be non-electronic: reading, games, hobbies, sports, or conversation.
- We permit nothing in our home that offends our moral principles and treats other human beings as things: no pornography (treating women as objects), no racist or sexist or ethnic disparagement, no gratuitous violence, no coarse language, no glamorous depictions of disrespect and rudeness.
- We do not watch TV on school nights, unless we watch together or by prior arrangement.



We love and honour our Creator above all things; we thank Him for His blessings and ask His help for our needs and those of others.

- We thank the Lord by worshipping Him together as a family.
- We strive to live by His commandments of right and wrong.
- We respect the conscience and rights of others who worship Him differently.
- We pray before meals and bedtime. We pray for the needs of our family and country and those of anyone suffering in sorrow. We serve the Lord by serving others.
- We live in the confidence that God watches over us with His loving fatherly protection. Parents treat their children the way God treats all of us--with affectionate and protective love, attention to needs, clear standards of right and wrong, compassionate understanding, and a ready willingness to forgive.
- We know that God commands all of us to honour father and mother. The finest way we do this is to adopt our parents' values, live by them all our lives, and pass them on to our own children whole and intact.

Source For unabridged text see: 'The Power of We' www.parentleadership.com the website of James Stenson, author of *Upbringing* and other excellent parenting resources.