

Lifestyle Design: Celebrate Your Family Part II

I have yet to meet anyone that wishes they spent more time in the office or on their career; instead everyone seems to miss time with their families and friends. Family is not limited in this discussion and context to those related only by blood. Many of us have our truest and best family by virtue of lasting friendships and not blood relation at all. I believe that family is whomever you choose it to be whether by birth and blood or by choice and opportunity.

It is vital to make a truly conscious effort to celebrate our family in fun and rewarding ways often. Here are some tried and true and even a few new ideas for celebrating with your chosen family.

Blockbuster Movie Family Pack

While you can blow it out and take everyone to the movies complete with popcorn, orange gooey nachos, and gargantuan sodas, you can also do this at home and still provide the popcorn, more moderately sized refreshments and skip the pseudo food.

My clients have found that even a large TV in a great room is enough to keep family together and entertained for an evening or a rainy afternoon. If you have the option of doing even a small home theatre, there is never a reason to indulge in the high price of movies at the mall. You can even include your own popcorn cart and a mini refrigerator for cold drinks.

Bring Hollywood home and celebrate movies with your family.

Colossal Cultural Family Event

Museums are not always the stuffy places we think they are but often they will have exhibits that are family friendly and sometimes even specific to children. Museums also encompass the scope of venues including natural history (I call these bone museums and are great favorites for kids) and science museums. I even attended a Garbage Museum not long ago in Milford Connecticut devoted to the art of recycling. It was all designed to show our youth the path of goods that get recycled and those that don't. It was fascinating and well done and would make a great family outing.

I remember my Mother dragging us (once in a while kicking and screaming) to museums as children, but the lessons sank in and I now go as often as I can and have enjoyed a much broader range of art knowledge because of those trips. It likely influenced even my career decision. Exposing children to art early on can have a profound impact on them, but best of all enjoying art as a family can be a very enlightening experience and provide an opportunity to share a diversity of viewpoints and interpretations of what is viewed.

Celebrate your family with art and culture.

Six Flags Family Fun Day

Now it doesn't have to be Six Flags but any amusement park including those that offer white water fun and rock climbing experiences. The key is to allow everyone a chance to enjoy what they like and no one is forced to participate but can watch and wait patiently or find their own kind of fun.

It often happens that half the family decides to spend their time in line on the roller coasters and gravity defying attractions, while other family members prefer to indulge in face painting, hair braiding, and winning stuffed toys at the toss it booths scattered throughout. It isn't important that everyone ride the monster coaster but instead that the day starts together, is connected for hair raising tails of terror and sharing of prizes won, and that everyone heads home happy and tired.

Celebrate your family with an amusement park getaway!

Family Aquarium Adventure Day

Many major cities now have significant aquariums and often sea water parks when located on the coast. If there isn't one where you live, take a look at what nearby (driving distance) cities offer this and investigate a day trip. These are like ocean zoos and can be great places to learn about the creatures of the deep as well as share time as a family.

Aquariums often include IMAX movies featuring rescue of sunken treasures, or stories of underwater predators (movies generally need action and derring do.) In addition they'll have daily underwater shows with divers portraying mermaids or just interacting with the sea life. This can also be an effective way to encourage swimming, and the opportunity to snorkel and scuba.

Celebrate your family with an aquarium adventure day.

Family to Family, A Legacy of Giving

While many of us are familiar with the idea of adopting a child in need, there are also organizations that encourage adoption of a family in need. This may be either overseas or in our own backyard. With such disaster displacement as Hurricane Katrina, families were taken in by other families and helped back on their feet.

Now, I am not suggesting you necessarily adopt a family into your home, but adopting a family by way of sponsoring them is a great way to start a legacy of giving. So often it is something as little as \$30 a month to support a child and so a family might be \$100 a month whereas in our lives that may be the price of a new pair of shoes or a dinner out.

This is a chance for everyone in the family to participate in the giving and to get to know a family less fortunate. The added benefit is it tends to keep us more grounded and aware of our blessings, rather than taking for granted what too few have. Organizations to facilitate this can be found online and through organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Ruby Slipper Project, Hannah Home and more.

Celebrate your family by sharing the gift of giving.

About the Author

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