

Balance Is Best!

Imagine going for a walk in the forest, when you come upon a man sawing down a tree.

- “What are you doing?” you ask. “I’m sawing down a tree,” he says.
- “How long have you been at it?”
- “Two or three hours so far,” he says, sweat dripping from his chin.
- “Your saw looks dull,” you say. “Why don’t you take a break and sharpen it?”
- “I can’t,” he replies. “I’m too busy sawing.”

Think about it. Do we ever do this to ourselves in other situations? How?

When we work to build family traditions together, we show we are valuing the needs of individuals and families. Renewing our family in each of these areas is where family bonding, identity, fulfillment, and happiness are found. Many of these renewal times come when we are giving time to the Big Rocks we learned about in Habit 3: regular one on one-time, regular meals together, regular family time, family rituals, and traditions.

Think back to Habit 2 when your family created your coat of arms. What did you put in each of the four quadrants? Think back to why you chose to add what you did. Was there at least one item that was something you could do with your physical body? One that was emotional or to do with love? Anything about learning? What about spiritual? These are the four basic needs families and individuals need.

Physical—Body

- Exercise and do physical activities together.
- Clarify or reclarify expectations and goals around financial and physical assets.
- Do family work together.

Mental—Mind

- Learn new things together.
- Share and discuss ideas.
- Develop talents.
- Write/keep a journal.

Emotional—Heart

- Love and affirm one another.
- Laugh at inside jokes and relax together.
- Build relationships of trust and unconditional love.

Spiritual—Spirit

- Renew commitments.
- Clarify directions and goals.
- Read inspirational literature together.

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw®

“Neglect your body, and it will deteriorate. Neglect your car, and it will deteriorate. Watch TV every available hour, and your mind will deteriorate. Neglect your family, and it will deteriorate. Anything that is not consciously attended to and renewed will break down, become disordered, and deteriorate.”

—Stephen R. Covey

Family Activity:

1. Take time to write down some activities your family can do to balance your lives. Is there something you would really like to do but haven't or haven't done in a long time? Choose one or two activities and make a plan to Sharpen the Saw together. Pick a date you will complete the activity by or the date you will discuss the activity details with your family. Write it down on your family calendar where everyone can see it.
2. Have each member of your family answer the following question by either writing or drawing their answer.
Parents: What would a “personal day” look like to your ten-year-old self? Kids: If you could have a day to do anything at or around your home, what would it look like?