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What I learned on family vacation

By Darrin F. Coe, MA

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My wife, my two preschoolers, and I recently drove from Canon City, Colorado to Readstown, Wisconsin in a 4-door dodge neon. I'm happy to report my children are still alive. Believe it or not this was one of the most enjoyable times I've experienced in the past year. My family grew closer and I learned to experience joy in that most exasperating of questions, "Are we there yet?"

I learned that it is better to be creative than it is to be frustrated and angry. One of my boys would ask, "Are we there yet?"

I would answer, "Yes, but only in our existential and ethereal lives." Which bought about 10 minutes of silence as they tried to figure out what I'd just said. There was one point as we were approaching Onowa, Iowa on our return trip at which I found myself wanting to use every expletive I'd learned in my eight years as a correctional professional as well as wanting to try my hand at creating a few. The boys were tired, loud, talkative, and only barely listening as I and my wife attempted to speak rationally to them about shutting their mouths..

So instead of blowing a diode and risking the safety of everyone in the car, I began to engage the boys in a question and answer session about what they loved about our vacation to date. Questions like, "Duncan, what three things did you like most about spending time with greatgrandpa Gayle?" Within minutes, both boys were chomping at the bit to answer the next question; I was back in control, and in the process learned a great deal about the loves, goals, and thought processes of a three and a five year old. It turned into one of the highlights of the trip.

I learned that creativity and patience provide much more joy and control than loud volume, and intimidation. I learned that our family has a lot of great things to share with each other if we take the time to get over being tired and allow even the youngest to have their say. I learned that I too, am not immune to threatening to "pull this car over, right now!" Finally, I learned it is imperative to pay attention when your son tells you he's got a "yucky tummy" and feels like throwing up.

weekly columnist, published poet and short story author.

Strengthening Familial Ties: Have An Annual Family Vacation

By Jeff Usher

Let's face it. One of our greatest fears as parents is the often expected possibility that our kids would forget about us once they embrace independence. They have to move out and establish their own lot in life, eventually. Will they keep in touch? Will they always remember? Will they carry in their hearts the enjoyable memories you once shared? The answer is as clear as the question, if we ponder on in it more deeply. The way they would remember is by giving them a lot of fun memories to nurture. And what better way to make this a reality than by having an annual family vacation as a tradition.

Most importantly, a family vacation would allow you to savor all these things together. That is what a family is all about, after all being together, sharing a bond that neither time nor tide would be able to erode.

And the fact that such a family vacation would be celebrated every year can most possibly define what your family is all about that is, a family which upholds tradition and puts a premium on the ties that bind.

Since you, your spouse and the kids, as well as members of the extended family on occasions, would have a family vacation to plan for each and every year, there will be a lot of opportunities to visit wonderful and unforgettable places. Not only will these experiences spice up your lives, but they would also foster the strengthening of the bond that each family member shares.

Most counselors, as a matter of fact, promote an annual family vacation to keep the said family together. Each member may have his or her own life to live. He or she may have his or her own obligations to fulfill. But for at least once a year, they would all come together to celebrate what a family really means mutual love and support.

Indeed, an annual family vacation can easily become a tradition that can be cherished by each and every member of the household. Who knows? Perhaps this tradition can even last forever, and there will come a time when you'd be enjoying a family vacation with your grandkids as well.

Now, isn't that an investment worth making?

Jeff Usher is a normal guy trying to make his way in the world. He writes articles on various topics that may be of interest to a wide audience. More vacation saving tips can be found here:–



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