

Write and be a good family member

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By Nicole Murphy

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For every writer, there comes the ultimate dilemma: what comes first, your seven year old son's soccer practice or the demise of your heroine, wrapped in her father's arms?

It's easy to understand how the writer/family clash occurs. Writing is a very solitary profession which demands a great deal of time. Being in a family is a very social profession which demands a great deal of time. But understanding it doesn't solve it.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could combine the two? Well, I think you can. You can do things that will improve your writing and provide you with quality time with your family. Try these ideas on for size:

1). Get your family to read out the book for you. This will really help your editing, because nothing brings out awkward sentences and bad dialogue like the human voice. "Aw, Mum, no one would say that in real life. They'd say, `Sod off!'" "Start with, `You'll never catch me, Mr Slocum. Apart from your absolute inability to find your own big toe, you don't have the skills and you don't have the talent."

2). Get your family to act out that scene that you just can't get right. Send them out into the backyard, armed with plastic swords and cardboard boxes for hours and see just what will happen in your battle scene. What will the addition of rain do to the scenario, for example? And you'll probably get to do a little extra research in healing.

3). Get your family to dress up as the characters. This would be especially helpful if you are having trouble visualising your characters. "Ah, yes, I had no idea James looked so dorky. I'll have to remember that."

4). Get your family to give you a blow by blow description of their day. Have your notebook handy and write down any brilliant that comes out of their mouth. "I'm sorry, darling, where did you say your boyfriend had his hand again? Really. That's very interesting. scribble, scribble. And you weren't in the least bit uncomfortable?"

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5). Get your family involved in marketing your book. "Yes, darling, making as many balloon animals as we can in five days is important because of the scene on page 118."

There you have it. Five fabulous ideas to bring your writing and your family together. Of course, all this quality time could have a disastrous affect: your family may be overcome with humiliation as their balloon giraffes are ridiculed, decide they don't want to be involved and leave you in peace. A tragedy, to be sure.

Nicole R Murphy is a writer and editor who runs her own copyediting and critiquing business at

www.yourbestwork.com Once you've dealt with your family and finished your work, try her free trial.

Take an Education Vacation!

By Anita DeFrank

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Choose one day out of each month and invite your entire family on an "Education Vacation". Invent games that can be not only fun but also educational at the same time. Your children will be having so much fun that they won't even realize that they're learning too! The following are a few examples of activities that you can use or adapt to fit your family.

---->Theater Day

Go to your local library and borrow several copies of a favorite or fun play. Assign each member a part and act it out in the living room! Younger children make an excellent audience.

Alternate idea: Write your own play together.

---->Bring The Whole World Home Day

Make a list of all the countries in the world (or just pick a few) and include a short description of each. Take turns reading each country and description out loud. Next take turns choosing a country from a map or globe. The rest of the family tries to guess which one by asking questions.

---->Time Table Day

The night before have your family discuss everything that must be done the next day. Be sure to include some fun things to do also. Have the children design a time table to schedule the days activities. Make it a game to see how "close" you can stick to the schedule.

---->Make a Family Library Day

Have each family member write and illustrate their own story. After each story is finished compile them into a homemade book and design covers. Have older children help the younger ones write the text.

---->Question Game Day

Each member of your family gets to ask a really hard question. Everyone else has to come up with

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ideas of how to find the answer till all questions are answered.

--->Goal of the Month Day

Have each family member make a goal to improve one thing in their behavior, such as to exercise, read more or eat healthier. Track each members progress throughout the month on a chart. Don't forget to encourage each other during the month and celebrate victories too!

--->Art Detective Day

Have each member of your family choose a piece of art that you have in your home (or is well-known by everyone)and describe it. Everyone else tries to guess which work of art it is.

Anita DeFrank is a busy work at home mom who specializes in helping others become successful

home business owners. Visit her site MommysHelperOnline.com for more information how you can too.



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