

TAKING TIME

by Rebecca Escott
Extension Home Economist



instead of giving advice or saying, "Oh, I'm sure he didn't mean it. You shouldn't feel that way." Today is likely to be hectic. Accept and help others name their feelings. Don't be bashful—name the feelings you're having too.

* Thursday, November 25th: Focus on appreciation. As you share a Thanksgiving Day meal together, have each person mention something about another individual at the table that she appreciates or is thankful for. If you are not gathering with your family, set aside a few quiet moments today to jot these "appreciation notes" on a postcard and sent them to people you love. Even at a distance you can help preserve and nurture families.

* Friday, November 26th: Focus on time together. Between or instead of football games, turn the TV off and play a card game, put a puzzle together or cook up a treat in the kitchen. If you are separated from family, arrange to visit someone else who may be spending the holiday weekend alone and share time together.

◦ In late fall the nights are much longer than the days and the sun is lower in the sky. These conditions mean that house plants are receiving reduced natural light. Position your plants so that they receive maximum light by moving them closer to windows and adjusting curtains and blinds.

◦ Use your microwave to dry flower petals from cut flower bouquets for potpourri. Spread flower petals in a single layer on a paper towel and place in the microwave along with a cup half full of water. Microwave for one minute on full power. Check them to see if they are dry; if not, rotate the towel one

half turn and microwave the petals ten seconds longer. Poinsettia, rose and gerbera flower petals microwave well and will retain their bright colors.

◦ This is the ideal time to lime your vegetable garden or lawn. Take a soil test first to accurately assess how much lime is needed.

◦ Leaves will compost three times faster if they are shredded before being placed in the compost pile.

◦ Hardy mums that were placed in large containers this fall will survive the winter better if they are moved into an area where they will not be subjected to sub zero temperatures and drying winds. If possible relocate the containers to an unheated garage or storage shed. Water the plants well before moving and check them during the winter to be sure they don't get bone dry.

Taking Time to Celebrate Families

Last week I spent three wonderful days in Lebanon County sharing my ideas about keeping families in touch. I wonder as I'm writing this column if I met anyone reading this while I was there. That program is helping me to gear up for National Family Week.

National Family Week is celebrated annually during the week of Thanksgiving. Researchers Dr. Nick Stinnett, Dr. John DeFrain, Dr. Kerry Kerber and Professor Lois Schwab cooperated on a project to answer the question, "How do families succeed?". I thought he answer to that question would be an appropriate one to explore in anticipation of National Family Week.

These researchers identified six common traits that were essential to these families' success. They found that successful families spend time together, practice healthy communication patterns, show appreciation for one another, and develop and use coping skills. They also observed that the family members displayed a strong sense of commitment to each other and shared a common set of spiritual values that focused on giving and receiving love and having mutual trust.

In fact as they studied, they observed that "healthy" families were not necessarily families that had an absence of problems but rather families who used their

trust, love, and other family strengths to effectively address those problems.

I encourage you to focus on these six qualities to strengthen your own family in 1993. Clip the following paragraphs and save them as a "to do" list for Thanksgiving week.

* Sunday, November 12st: Today is the kick-off day for National Family Week. Relax as a family and browse through the ideas listed below to plan your week's activities.

* Monday, November 22nd: Focus on commitment. This is a promise of time and energy to help other family members reach their potentials. Try the activity "Who Can Help Me?". List items or situations in which someone in your family needs help in one column on a sheet of paper.

Examples might be checking homework, opening a door, fixing a clock or reading the directions for a game. Then in a second column ask who can help. Usually someone else in the family can help. Look there first. Then make a plan to share those talents the next time the situation arises.

* Tuesday, November 23rd: Focus on spirituality/family wellness. At some point today say "I love you" to each member of your family. Add a hug for emphasis.

* Wednesday, November 24th: Focus on communication. Pay attention to other people's comments today. Try to empathize with the person who is speaking

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