

The Connection Toolkit

Strong families don't just happen—they are built through small, intentional moments of connection. This toolkit is designed to help you pause, create intentional moments, and celebrate the unique strengths that make your family special.

Print these pages, cut out the conversation cards, and enjoy learning new things about the people you love most.

Part 1: Family Talk Cards

Instructions: Cut out the cards (pages 2-3), place them in a jar on the dinner table, or grab a few during your next car ride. Take turns answering.

Part 2: "Circle of Contentment" Activities

Instructions: Contentment isn't about having everything perfect; it's about appreciating the "right now." Use the illustration on page 4 to help children separate their worries from their choices. Then choose one of the 10-minute activities (page 5) to practice together each week.

Part 3: "Family Tree of Strengths" Sheet

Instructions: Print page 6. In the roots, write the values that hold your family steady. In the branches, write down the specific character strengths of each family member.

How to Use the Tree:

When we praise children, we often focus on achievements (like grades or sports scores). This tree shifts the focus to character.

- Hang this sheet on the refrigerator.
- Whenever you catch your child showing resilience, patience, or a great sense of humor, walk over together and write it on one of the branches. Watch how fast your tree grows!

Part 4: The Dad Effect: Tips for Fathers & Male Caregivers

- Instructions: Head to page 7 for a quick "parenting playbook" specifically designed for dads, stepdads, grandpas, and male mentors.
- The Goal: Learn how to bring proactive, "game-day" leadership to your family team and maximize your impact on your child's confidence and emotional growth.

Family Talk Cards

Just for Laughs *Heart & Soul*



If our family started a YouTube channel, what would it be about? Who would be the star?



What is something someone in this family did recently that made you feel loved or noticed?



If you could trade places with any animal for 24 hours, what would you be and why?



RULES

What is a rule in our house that you think is fair? What is one you'd want to negotiate?



What is the funniest or strangest dream you can remember having?



When you are having a tough day, what is the best way for people in this house to support you?



If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what are we having?



What is a memory from this past year that always makes you smile when you think about it?



Family Talk Cards

Strengths & Growth

What is a skill or hobby someone else in the family has that you secretly admire?



Future Imagining

If we could snap our fingers and go on a family vacation anywhere in the world tomorrow, where are we landing?



Describe a time you made a mistake but learned something really cool from it.



What is something you want to learn how to do before your next birthday?



What do you think is our family's ultimate "superpower" when we work together?



If you could fast-forward 10 years, what do you think our family will be doing?



Circle of Contentment

This is called the Circle of Contentment. A lot of times, we think that being happy means everything has to be absolutely perfect. We think we need the newest toy, the best weather every single day, or for nothing to ever go wrong.

But contentment is a different kind of superpower. Contentment means looking at our life right now and finding the good things, even if the day wasn't perfect.

Think of this circle like a magnifying glass for your heart:

- **The Circle of Concern:** In the outside world, things change all the time. Sometimes it rains on sports day, sometimes a friend moves away, or sometimes we make a mistake. These are the things that may worry or upset us, but are completely out of our hands
- **The Circle of Influence:** These are things where our actions might help, but we still can't guarantee the final outcome (like practicing hard for a game or helping a friend).
- **The Circle of Control:** This is where we keep the things that hold us steady. The Circle of Contentment is when we choose to notice what we do have. We have our family team, the ways we show kindness to each other, a warm place to sleep, and the fun memories we share.

When we practice being content, it doesn't mean we never feel sad or angry when things go wrong. It just means we know that a bad moment doesn't ruin a good life. There is always a circle of safety and love right here in our home.



Circle of Contentment

ACTIVITIES

Contentment isn't about having everything perfect; it's about appreciating the "right now." Choose one of these 10-minute activities to practice together this week.



The "High, Low, Buffalo" Reflection

During dinner or before bedtime, everyone shares three things about their day:

1. **The High:** The best, funniest, or most successful part of your day.
2. **The Low:** Something that was challenging, frustrating, or didn't go as planned.
3. **The Buffalo:** Something random, unexpected, or weird that happened. Why it works: It teaches children that a good day doesn't have to be a perfect day, and it normalizes talking about life's little bumps.



5-Minute Daily Connection Ritual

Spend 5 minutes each day focused on one child or family member. Listen without interruption. Make eye contact and validate feelings. End with encouragement or appreciation.



The Secret Kindness Mission

Write everyone's name on a small slip of paper and draw names out of a hat. Over the next 48 hours, everyone has a "Secret Mission" to do one small, helpful act of kindness for their assigned person (e.g., making their bed, leaving a nice sticky note, clearing their plate) without getting caught. Reveal your secrets at the end of the week!

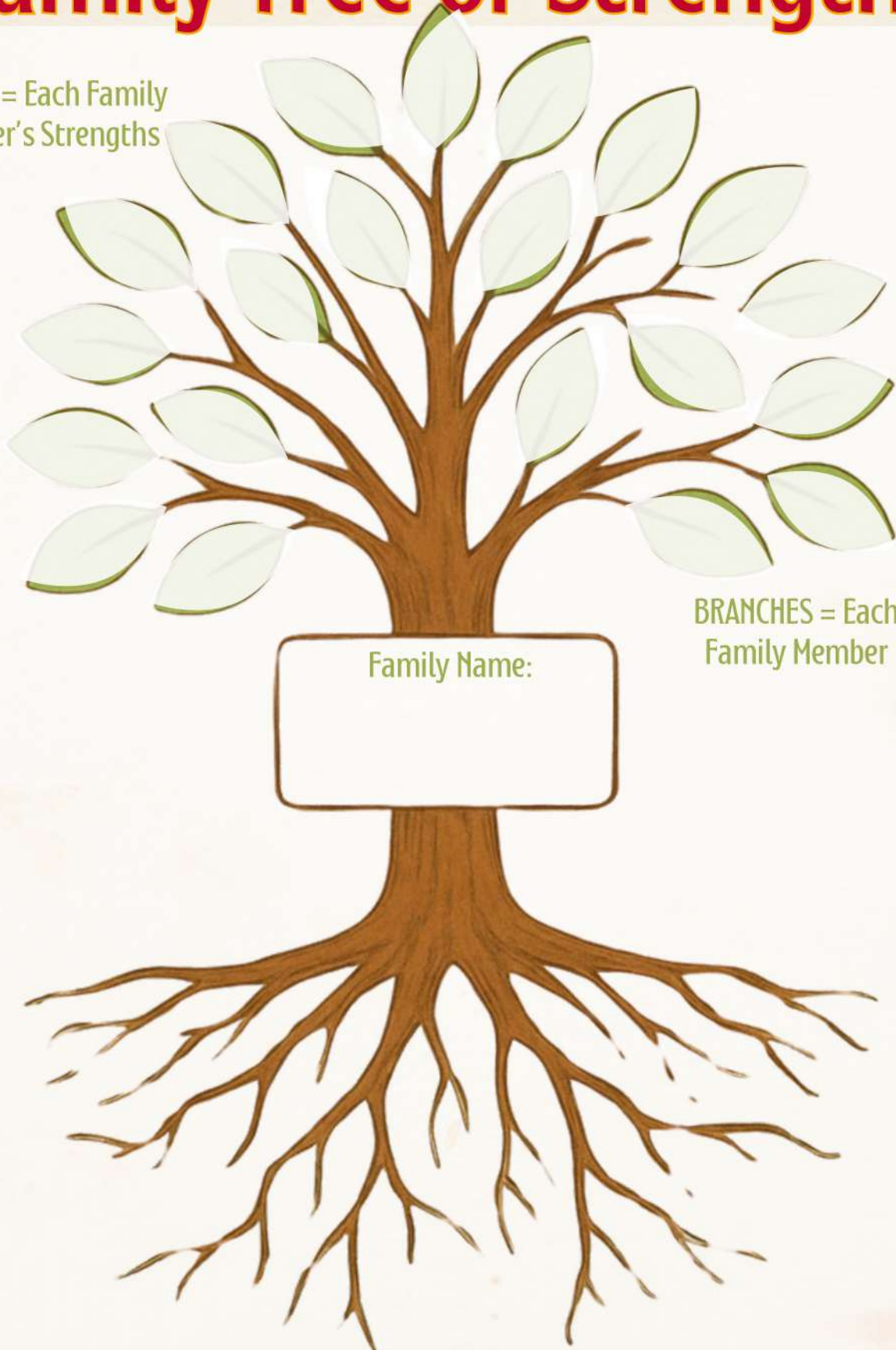


The 5-Minute "Tech Pause"

Pick a time during the weekend where everyone—parents included—drops their devices into a basket. For just five minutes, look out the window, sit on the porch, or lie on the living room rug together. Take turns naming three things you can hear, two things you can see, and one thing you are grateful for.

Family Tree of Strengths

LEAVES = Each Family
Member's Strengths



BRANCHES = Each
Family Member

ROOTS = Family Values that hold your family steady

Dad Effect:

Tips for Fathers & Male Caregivers

In sports, great players read the field, support their teammates, and step up because they keep the goal in sight. Family life is much the same—it's the ultimate team sport. When dads bring that same proactive, read-and-react mindset into the living room or the kitchen, the whole family wins.

Here are 5 ways to bring that "game day" energy to your kids today:



Engage in play that builds confidence: Get down on their level. Whether it's rough-and-tumble play, building a living room fort, or playing a board game, let them take risks, try new skills, and figure things out in a safe environment.



Model emotional expression and regulation: Kids watch how you handle stress, anger, and mistakes. When you pause, take a deep breath, and talk calmly through a frustrating moment, you are passing along an invaluable playbook for life.



Score big with small daily moments: You don't need an entire free weekend to connect. A 5-minute chat in the car, a special handshake before school, or checking in right at bedtime tells your child: "You matter to me every single day." Show up & be consistent.



Encourage problem-solving, not perfection: When your child runs into a problem, resist the urge to jump in and fix it instantly. Instead, ask open-ended questions like, "What do you think our next move should be?" to build their independent thinking.



Huddle up with your co-parent: A championship team requires a unified game plan. Take time out of the daily rush to align on household rules, back each other up in front of the kids, and celebrate each other's parenting wins.

**Looking for more ways to strengthen your family team?
Visit [ActiveParenting.com/for-parents](https://www.ActiveParenting.com/for-parents) to discover upcoming classes,
tools, and resources.**