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## Parenting Tips

### Communication is Key

Communication is at the center of all relationships. Closeness is communicated in many ways, and people give and receive love differently. Five levels of communication provide opportunities for increased closeness in family life.

Each level serves an important role for growing deeper. If tension and stress dominate your relationship with your

child, start working through these communication levels and you'll begin to see significant change take place.

1. Greetings are the oil that keep relationships cordial. Hugging your children as part of a greeting or welcoming them to breakfast in the morning makes an important statement about the value of your relationship.
2. Exchanging information about our lives helps people know what's going on and contributes to a sense of connectedness. As you go through your day, think of a couple of interesting things you could share with your child.
3. Sharing opinions and judgments is the next level. Some people are hesitant to share their opinions because they feel like they'll have to back them up or face an argument. Look for ways to affirm your children. "That makes sense" can be an encouraging statement even if you disagree. "Thank you for sharing your opinion with me," can be a statement that encourages openness.
4. Communicating emotions takes us another level deeper. Facts and opinions often have emotions hidden behind them. "I bet that hurt" or "I can tell you're excited about that," acknowledges feelings your child might be experiencing.
5. Sharing spiritually brings an amazing amount of closeness into a relationship. Praying together, sharing what God is teaching you, enjoying worship together, and having a sense of spiritual fellowship are all ways to enjoy the deepest level of communication. As you strengthen your spiritual lives together, you'll see more and more opportunities to discuss heart issues.

All five levels of communication are important. Look for opportunities to enjoy them with your kids.

*This parenting tip is taken from chapter eight in the book [Parenting is Heart Work](#) by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller RN BSN.*