

## NEWSLETTER

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### HAPPY HOMES

Tolstoy wrote, "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

How true!

For many years I have been thinking about happy families and happy homes. How are they all alike? What are the characteristics of a happy home? Can you make your own home happy? Can you turn an unhappy family into a happy one?

I don't have all the answers but I think I have figured out three of the qualities found in the parents of a happy home.

First of all, the grownups in a happy home manage to remain CALM and COOL in virtually every crisis. They have the ability to keep from screaming or lashing-out when Baby throws a radio in the toilet or Mr. Teen brings home a very dented family car. These parents think first before they act or even talk. If they can't think of a solution or how to handle the problem they say, "I can't decide what to do, we'll talk about it later."

Second the parents in a happy home have what seems to be near infinite PATIENCE. They seem to know instinctively that they have to wait for a child to catch up. They understand that children develop at different speeds. They know that no parenting strategy brings instant results. They can take a deep breath and wait a minute or two.

Third, parents in happy homes have enormous amounts of RESPECT for each other and each child. They respect everybody's right to disagree, make a mistake, speak their mind.

The nicest thing about parenting is that if the parents have such qualities, the kids will model such behaviors--at least most of the kids will do so most of the time--and begin to act the same way.

Can parents decide to adopt these characteristics and turn an unhappy home full of cranky, quarrelsome people into a happy home? I don't know but it's sure worth a try. It's so much more pleasant to live in a happy home than an unhappy one.

So try CPR if you have an unhappy home that needs to be resuscitated . Keep CALM, have PATIENCE, and show RESPECT!