

MAY

# CHALLENGES & BREAKDOWNS

ACTIVATION PDF



homeroom

MARRIAGE & FAMILY MENTORING MEMBERSHIP

There are many different kinds of challenges in a family team so we're going to break down five that are fairly common and give a tool for how to approach dealing with each one. And even if your 'main challenge' isn't explicitly listed below the practices and questions will still help guide you in the right direction no matter the challenge.

As always this was written and formed with every stage of life involved and thought-families with older kids, families with toddlers, and just couples who are married. Always feel free to swap or adapt based on your life situation.

Keep in mind it's best to not focus on more than one improvement at a time.

The best way to embrace this topic and mentality is to only focus on one thing. Don't overwhelm yourself--and then once you begin to really feel like you've hit a breakthrough on one then you can begin to move to the next.

Over the course of this month if you gain the tools to overcome one or two kinds of challenges in the family this will be a huge success.

Pick one of the five common challenges below and the one that is most impacting your family team right now and walk through a process where you:

- 1. Identify:** Take the time here to really be crystal clear what the problem actually is. We often mistake symptoms for the root problem. Don't skip over this process. It usually helps to really objectively talk this through with your spouse and make sure you're not just treating the surface problem, but getting to the heart of the matter.
- 2. Discuss:** Walk around the problem from different angles and make sure you're operating from the benefit of everyone's perspective. Make sure everyone is heard. This is the time to just listen to the 'why' from the other person on why this is difficult for them, what can make it easier, how they are wired, etc.
- 3. Solve:** Engage the creativity of everyone on the team. I've been so blessed by times my kids come up with a solution I'd never thought of.

# 1. Negative Repeated Patterns in a Family Relationship

This is a common one among many where two people (spouses, a parent and kid, two siblings, etc) just seem to constantly grate against one another by measure of pure personality differences.

Can you map out the steps to your next fight with your spouse? (meaning, write down the very common fight you always have in your relationship, and what the usual steps or flow it takes.).

Do two of your kids seem to have the same conflict over and over?

These are negative relationship patterns and they need to be fixed.

If you can draw the map for how these repeat in a poor way, then you can start to draw a new map that leads to life.

Sit down and plan out a new way and better way to get through those challenges. Then, when the relationship is at peace, discuss the new plan. Come to an agreement that next time we begin to walk this familiar path we're going to try this new map.

Maybe when negative feelings begin to rise one person needs to be made to feel safe to share their feelings without any threat of being interrupted.

Maybe someone who experiences spikes of anger needs to take 5 minutes in the midst of a fight to write out what's really at the root of their feelings.

You can be the master of your patterns. They don't need to master you. Family relationships are so valuable we need to address things that repeat before they burn us out.

## 2. Household System Failures

Speaking of burning out what system breakdowns in the home bug you the most. Few things can feel as hopeless as a household system failure followed by the sinking feeling that you're going to have to bear with this failure for the rest of your life. (For example, always a messy kitchen. Laundry just never seems to get done. You don't feel the home is a 'shared' responsibility but only on one person.)

We need to feel hope that things can improve and change and that hope comes from experiencing small victories in our household systems. A lot of times we shoot too big and for too large of a fix which then is too difficult. Household systems happen based on the snowball effect. Start small and gain small wins.

How do we experience these breakthrough. By initiated a process of creative problem solving.

God has blessed your family team with a set of diverse creative minds and you need to activate all of them solve these household system failures.

Call a family meeting and calmly and clearly lay before the team the system failure. Then take the time to generate multiple ideas for how to solve the problem. If you can't generate enough creative ideas as Google or your friends in the Homeroom. Let us be your think tank for household systems.

Once you discover a new system that seems like it could work be sure to get buy in from everyone on the team. Really call the team to rise up and implement the new system. Make it the exclusive focus for improvement for a few weeks. Talk about it often. Track it on a whiteboard. Report back at the next family meeting.

Don't live with household system failures indefinitely. These are a part of every household but through teamwork, creative problem-solving and vision casting we can begin to make lasting changes.

### 3. Missing Nutrients

Does your family have scurvy in some area of your life?

Poor sailors who spent months at sea would lack the vitamins that come from fresh produce and their teeth would loosen and their bones would weaken all because their diet was lacking key nutrients.

One challenge that we often have a hard time diagnosing is when our family is suffering from a missing nutrient. Maybe you don't have enough fun or enough deep conversation or enough meaningful missional activity. Sometimes we only see the symptoms of the problem on the surface when the real problem is simply a missing nutrient.

Maybe the reason our kids are fighting more often is they don't ever have fun together or face a challenge together or really listen to each other.

When we've noticed that our family is missing a nutrient and we feel we've identified what it is we almost always try to cement a solution by putting it into our family rhythm. This will often ensure the problem doesn't return.

We didn't have enough conversation around the Word so we implemented a weekly meal where we discussed our Bible reading.

We wanted to learn to just relax together in the middle of the week so we declared Wednesday evening our family media night.

Missing nutrient challenges tend to get worse the longer they are neglected.

Can you identify the single biggest missing nutrient in the family? Time to take your vitamins and cure that scurvy.

## 4. Personal Crisis

Some challenges impact just one member of the team. These are personal crisis challenges and family teams need to be well equipped and ready to step up and help the family member in need.

The Apostle Paul wrote about the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.” and in Romans 12, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

When you stub your toe your entire body stops and agonizes with that one part of your body.

Does this happen in your family when someone is really hurting?

This is what it means to be interdependent. We are tied to one another and we empathize with the pain of each member of the family so they never feel they have to suffer alone.

It's important to manage these kinds of challenges with leadership and skill. Rally the team together, take time to listen and empathize with the crisis and allow each team member to find ways to assist the team member in crisis.

## 5. Circumstantial Hardships

Sometimes the entire family goes through a challenging season and the team needs to be lead through the hard circumstance.

Maybe the primary breadwinner lost a job.

Maybe we're moving to a new house or a new city.

Circumstances like these can make or break a family team.

The difference often depends on whether the team chooses to come together and face the challenge as one.

Everyone must be called to do his or her part in helping the family weather this unforeseen circumstance.

If you pass through these hardships together and experience the strength of the family team you'll emerge stronger than ever.

## Final Thought

Remember, start with one and start small! The way we attack and beat challenges and breakdowns is by systematically addressing them and rooting them out of our marriage and our family. It's a small daily attack not an all out aerial assault. Make sure to hop in the FB group and keep us updated on how it's going, share the wins, and let us cheer each other on!