

FAMILY SECRETS REVEALED: SIMPLE TRUTHS ABOUT HEALTHY FAMILY DYNAMICS

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Thank you all for joining us today for our presentation Family Secrets Revealed: Simple Truths About Healthy Family Dynamics. I'd like to introduce our presenter, Renee Ratley. Renee Ratley is a licensed professional counselor who has a wealth of experience working with both adults and youth who are dealing with a variety of issues, including grief, family dynamics, and workplace issues. Currently, Renee works with federal agencies and employees providing employee and management consultations and presents on a variety of health and wellness topics. We're glad to have Renee with us today to share her secrets on healthy families. And with that, I'll turn it over to Renee to begin the presentation.

Thank you. Welcome, everyone. I don't know how many people are here. It might be afternoon, might be morning where you're at. I'm glad we're all here together right now. I want to ask you though, have you ever been to a grocery or department store and spent about as much time people-watching as you did shopping? Certainly one of my favorite pastimes. Observing families can certainly take on a life of its own. You might see a child that's constantly testing her mom, who's yelling right back at her. You might see families who only speak when necessary. Business as usual. Others might be thoroughly enjoying not only their own shopping excursion, but each other. Then I love it when I see the screaming, kicking taller being gently carried by his mom or dad all the parents just remain calm and they seem pretty unaffected by the child's drama. How do they do it? Bottom line, no two families are alike, just like no two people are the same. Some children are raised by two dads or two moms, a single parent, their grandparents or they may be adopted. What defines a family as healthy or dysfunctional? Why do some families seem to spend energy protect ring all their hidden family secrets? They just seem to struggle every step of the way. Others seem to make everything look easy though. What is their secret? Today we will be revealing some of those secrets. They can turn almost any family into a well adapted one. For the purpose of discussion, we will, for the most part, reference a family with a mom, dad and children. However, these same tangibles will typically apply to any family unit or relationship. Human needs for connection and significance are universal. Most people will respond positively to a supportive, nurturing environment. So let's start by looking at our objectives for today. We want to look at the dynamics of a dysfunctional, as well as a healthy family. What are the differences going on there between the two scenarios? We want to discuss the effects of dysfunction. Why does it matter? We want to highlight some of the habits of healthy families. What do they do to make it work? And we want to share some secrets to building and maintaining a healthy family. So some definitions that we're going to use today, one for a dysfunctional and one for a healthy family. A dysfunctional family unit is one in which relationships or communication are impaired. Members are unable to obtain closeness and self-expression. Okay? So people are a little bit muted in their ability to be themselves. In a healthy

family unit, we see one in which each member is equally valued, needs are met without judgment or criticism and love is unconditional. So they know they're okay in them self. So let's look at the dynamics of dysfunction and see what that looks like. This first part is kind of my own observation from working with so many people. One thing I really notice is when you see a family with some dysfunction, some chaos going on, you are going to see him balance for some reason. Not everyone is getting their needs met at the same pace. There's maybe going to be one person that stands out that everybody has to watch out for. And, for one reason or in another, it could be someone with an addiction. It's unpredictable. You never know how that day's going to go. You know, where are they going to be? How are they going to be behaving because of their addiction? It could be though that there's someone with a chronic or terminal illness. A mental illness in the home. Someone, it can be an adult child, it can be a child, but someone with development of delays that needs more taking and supervision's than everyone else. Parenting and discipline styles just can impact the balance deep inside the home. Let's just say, maybe a grandparent, an aging grandparent, is living in the home. That can suddenly change. That doesn't mean anyone doing anything wrong. Everyone's doing everything right word but it still throws off the balance. It's about making sure that this person's needs are met and that they're okay. It may mean other people having to give up the things they normally get to do. So that's how we see that in balance. Now the characteristics, some of the things you might see in a dysfunctional home, in an extreme example, you might see some abuse, physical aggression. Some neglect. People just not getting their needs met. Sometimes I'll see no food in the home or a child just takes a hot dog and goes off in their own room to eat it. Just basic neglect of basic needs. You can see that domestic violence going on. It doesn't feel safe. It doesn't feel okay on any level. But with or without that, you're gonna see more people may be teaming up or taking sides. It might be the kids against the parents. In my be the females and kids. It may just be that some kids side with mom and some kids side with dad. There could be a division there. Another method of functioning is with a tag team. Will you tell dad I can go to this party tonight? I know there will be drugs there, but he just doesn't trust me. I'm not gonna do all those things. Okay? Going through someone else to talk to the person you really need to communicate with. That is opposed to each healthy person talking to each person. Criticism, just a lot of criticism, putdowns, you know, hey, I made the football team. While they must have been desperate for players. Or they just felt sorry for you. Or as opposed to just giving them a compliment. Just criticizing them all the time. Inconsistent discipline and unpredictably. You might have a child or teenager that may have a curfew of 10:00. They come home at 11:15 one night. Oh, no big deal. I know you were with. A week later, they may come home at 11:05. Why are you late? 10:05, why are you late? Just that inconsistency. One day, you might have drama. Another time, no big deal. You never know what to expect or what is really going on. Then you can see some codependency and enmeshment. Years ago I worked with the family where I was working with a teenage son. In getting to know the family, the mother told me that she's bipolar and he's bipolar. She said, and one hyper, he's depressed. When I'm depressed, he's hyper. My natural response was to say, it sounds like you need to cut the umbilical cord. There's too much enmeshment there. How one functions is in tandem with how the other one is functioning. So these are just some of the things that you might see. Now in a dysfunctional family, we have learned that there are certain rules that they live by. These rules are not written down. They're not established or discussed or verbalized in any way. But you know it when you break one of these rules. You absolutely know it. And so they

are don't talk you don't trust and don't feel. We don't talk because when we talk about something, a problem, it makes it real. That hurts. It's better to stay in denial. Also, if we talk, if we talk to someone at school about what goes on at home, maybe someone's going to end up going to jail or maybe someone's going to end up getting mad and leave or maybe they're worried about someone committing suicide. We don't know what always. But there some fear about talking and big trouble if we do. Don't trust. You know when dad says, I'll come home and toss the ball if you want to get home from work today. But then he stops for happy hour along the way and when you get some, he's a little too woozy. He says, go play with your friends. That's okay. There are going to be times when promises have to be broken. But that happens pretty often or we learn that, you know, we're at a band concert and everybody's parents are there but you know you get used to the disappointment. So you just learn to not trust after a while, because you don't want to be disappointed. So then you start hearing the young teenagers say, oh, I didn't even tell my parents about it because I don't even want them to come. What they don't want is to be disappointed when they invite and they don't show up. And then the last one is don't feel. A lot of times, in a dysfunctional home, if someone expresses their needs, their wants, or just their emotions, it's just shut down. Is discounted they learn very quickly that they don't matter. Maybe it's all about how the parents feel or how this one person feels that causes the imbalance. But you don't matter, you just kind of have to let that go. And the bottom line is, the overarching rule, don't rock the boat. And if you've ever been on a canoe trip, if you're like me, you probably, somehow, don't know why, end up kind of stuck along the edge of some limbs or something. You have to do something to get out. And so you try pushing with the oars, you just try maneuvering the boat, rocking it just a little bit to try to get it loose. That comes with a risk. Because if you rock that boat, it might free you and make your day happy again. Or it might tip and you lose that structure of that boat and that safety. And that's the fear with a dysfunctional family. We don't talk, we don't trust, we don't feel, because we are afraid that if we rock that boat, it will tip and we will lose all that structure that we do have, that safety net that we have. It may not be great. It may even be horrible in the family, but it's the only family we've got. We don't want it to tip. We don't want to do that. So they just keep going on the way things are and stay stuck. Okay? Now there's also some roles that varies numbers in the family, you know, that you might see. One thing I do want to point out is that the roles, the paradigms I'm about to introduce, come from a family therapist and author. Her name is Sharon Cruz. A lot of her work, including these roles and publications, are rooted in the context of addiction and family. But most of what she describes can be applied to other dysfunctional families too, which is why I'm choosing to include it today. There is a sixth role we did not include. Messy addict. We're not going to cover that because is not entirely relevant to our discussion. Like I said, we're making this broader topic. But as we go through these things, it's important to understand that some people may identify strongly with some of these roles and other people will not. They're not meant to be labels to define a person. What they are is a means of describing certain behaviors that develop and become a pattern with this person's needs not being met properly. You know the people in the home develop survival skills and the behavior may work very well in that unhealthy environment, but it may not serve them well later in life, in situations such as their career or their adult relationships. Those survival skills may fall apart and they may find themselves needing a new skill set. As they get older, they may find that that needs to be addressed. So one that we look at is the hero. Often times, but not always, the

hero will be the first child. They tend to do well in most areas of life and be revered as the American kid. They tend to make top grades, they're involved in extracurricular activities. They're liked by their peers. They make their parents look good. They serve as proof that they come from a happy home. The hero is probably the most likely to go to college, have a successful career and still take care of others along the way. However, they may be self-sacrificing to the point of ignoring their own need. That will catch up with them. The hero is like the perfectionist to a fault. This can be detrimental as well. Extreme attempts at perfection can lead to eating disorders and suicidality. This trait can also show up later in life when they face burnout and disillusionment because they realize that, while they take care of everyone else, they have no one to turn to. Okay? And then we have the scapegoat. The scapegoat is accused of everything that goes down, whether they did or not. They are rendered as bad. This hurt and frustration that the scapegoat endures leads to anger and acting out. The scapegoat is the child most likely to get into problems with alcohol and drugs. It might be more likely to go to juvenile detention or even prison as an adult and have chaotic and unstable relationships in adulthood. Then we have the mascot, the clown. Now the clown may not be extremely productive, but they sure are funny about it. They bring joy and lightheartedness to the family. They do not take things too personally. They unify the family with laughter and teasing. They are proof, again, that home is a happy place. The clown will most likely get through life on his charm versus hard work and work in businesses that attract people, because people are drawn to the clown. That can lead to great up at unities in life. But beware if you want to try to really get to know them. You can be out of luck because intimacy is just not there thing. They prefer to keep things on the surface and use humor to protect cells. That's on the inside. The next person we'll introduce is the lost child. Early on, the lost child learns to feel discipline around people. There was a need of expression that is ignored or not counted. They start to believe that they do not matter and they feel like giving up. They probably, maybe, won't excel in school. But they will do just well enough to not draw the concern and attention from the teachers. Among lost children, you tend to see a higher prevalence of truancy, drug abuse, teen pregnancies. They're just looking for love in all the wrong places. They may cling to people who don't really meet their needs and continue to relive abandonment in their effort to connect their bonds with others. Okay. One more that we're going to describe is the enabler. The enabler tends to be a highly-responsible person who looks out for the needs of others. They are usually liked by other members of the family, because they're seen as mature for their age. They become the go-to person for anyone who's in trouble. This is a great thing, except that they start ignoring their own needs and responsibilities to become the rescuer for someone else. So if there sibling can't go to school or work because of drug or alcohol abuse, the neighbor might cover for them. They might call. They end up allowing people that they care about to continue in addictions or self-destructive behavior because they make it possible for them to do those things without consequences. They get in the way. That can be very disruptive. But the enabler thrives on that feeling of being significant and needed. They realize that if someone needs them, they're never gonna be alone. Okay? So they may tend towards a people-helping career. They may do well. Again, things catch up with them their whole life. It will eventually take on its own challenges. They will have trouble setting boundaries. They may find that they have no one to turn to for support and to feel guilty asking others for help. So you can see that there are a lot of different roles that can't be played here. Again, this is fluid. A person that's a hero as a child may or may not be a hero as an adult. We learn and change over

time. How many people in the household can change? A person might be a hero at school but a scapegoat at home. You know, different environment. It's all fluid. I just want to take a minute to talk about how does that play out? How do they become that hero or that mascot? How do those things happen? This is just a simple example of parents with different children. I'm gonna talk about when they reach the age of 2, mom takes him to the grocery store and they're going down the cereal aisle and how that plays out. This is just a simple example of how they start learning what their role is. Child number one, going on the cereal aisle in the grocery store, picks up a box of cereal, looks at it, it's colorful, might have an animal on the front or something. Mom gets real excited. Like, God, she's already reading. She is so smart. You are my smart child. A couple of years later, she takes child number two and, of course, that one becomes the hero. Child number two comes along. They go down the cereal aisle at the grocery store. He picks up a real attractive box of cereal from the shelf. He reaches for it. Mom slaps his hand, grabs the box and says, give me that, you thief. You can end up in jail one day. Okay, so they're learning from these messages. These messages become consistent. It is not about cereal, it's about how the parent responds to each individual child differently and they take on that role. Child number three comes along, two years old, goes down that cereal aisle, takes the box, shakes it, sees what it sounds like, what looks like a mom says, you are so funny. You're just hilarious. You make me laugh all the time. Okay? That's the clown. Child number four, they come along and 2 years old, takes the cereal box from the shelf. Mom's reaction, doesn't even notice. That's a lost child. So those are just simplistic examples of how that ends up playing out. Now why does this matter? What are the effects of dysfunction? In general, it's pretty common to see intervention. In the homes, you gonna see intervention with the police, medical help, social services, schools will get involved. I think kids really need that extra attention. Those other reasons why kids need extra attention. They might be ADHD or artistic. There's other reasons. So it's not always the home environment. But, in these cases, these will also stand out and draw attention for extra services and things like that. And we also know that adults and children will experience abuse for a mistrust in authority and that connection they have made. They may turn into what we call at-risk youth. You might see these youth losing interest they used to be involved in extra activities, sports or music. They start dropping out in those things and not seeing real cues that are involved. Their grades start dropping. They may become truant and it may even lead to a runaway behavior and experiencing drug and alcohol and engaging in promiscuity and risk-taking, becoming involved in toxic relationships. Showing signs of suicidal thoughts and gestures. You know these parents will know where these things will behave based on their brokenness, reasons why people do what they do. Okay, another area that is just probably some of the newest research out there and something that the medical profession has picked up on is the correlation between family dysfunction, or what they call adverse childhood experiences ACEs, and what they came up with -- Actually, 1883, Dr. Vincent Colletti discovered -- Was the one that discovered this when he found that many people in an obesity clinic were dropping out. These, the people dropping out, were the ones that had a background of an adverse childhood spirits. Following on the tracks, the Center for disease control and prevention conducted a study to see if public health concerns had origins in these family experiences. They used 17,000 adult participants that were given not just a physical exam but also an A.C.E. questionnaire. The A.C.E. questionnaire asked 10 specific questions about sex abuse, alcoholism or addiction in the home, if parents were divorced, if you felt the sized and put down all the time in your home. All things

that happened before your 18th birthday. Strictly puts it on children. You've got one point for each question that applied to you. And so what they found is that anyone who got a score of four or higher, four out of 10, 5 out of 10 and up, that they were 260% more likely to have COPD. They were 240% more likely to get hepatitis, 460% higher rate of depression. 1220% more likely to attempt suicide. That is just stunning to me. Of course there would be more statistics. Let that basis with A.C.E.s, just like that, and you'll see the test and some discussions about that. On the left side of the screen, I didn't go over in detail but the adult children of alcoholics came up with a list of characteristics from growing up in the dysfunctional home. Things like the feel guilty for signing up for themselves as they feel isolated and there are a lot of things that carry over into adult life as well. Okay, let's switch over and look at the dynamics of a healthy family. In a nutshell, it's about communication, trust, respect and boundaries so we're elaborate on each of these in just a little bit. Okay, let's look at open communication. One thing I want to say here is that communication can be all forms of munication that we want to see in a healthy family. It can be joy, excitement, what we're looking forward to, how was our day, as well as disappointment or embarrassment. There's gonna be a large emotional vocabulary for people to talk about openly and safely. Okay. Also anything I wanted to briefly say is with an example, since I'm home and I'm sure you are as well, I have a modem, a Wi-Fi, a smart TV, a PC, a laptop, Alexa and there's all these devices and they're all very good, well-performing devices as long as they're connected to one another. But when they're not, they're just nice individual devices that don't help much. Okay? It's the same way in a functional home. You gonna see those connections between each individual and the other. When those connections are broken, let's say when my son would get in trouble, we would just say, be quiet for a few hours between us. When that feels broken, it feels miserable. And so anytime there is a connection that we wanted to repair, we wanted to break that back, that connection, because the connection is what makes things function well. Okay. So what we're going to focus on right now are two specific kinds of conflicts. One thing that we know, particular the workers that don't work and it's not about the money. It's not about the in-laws. It's not about the kids or their past. It's about how they communicate and work through conflict. That really is the bottom line. If they can do that, they can get through all kinds of struggles. But if every little disagreement or issue escalates and never gets solved, then there's a big problem. But we do know that there are two different kinds. One kind of conflict is perpetual. John Gottman, who has done a lot of research with marriages and couples, in general, said, despite what many therapists will tell you, you don't have to resolve your major marital conflicts for your marriage to thrive. You can agree to disagree. You might disagree and be polar opposites on the political or social issues. You might have at least one child that, when they turn a teenager, their goal in life is to be your opposite. Part of that is to just find their own identity and also it's just a way of getting unconventional love. Can you love me even if I'm the opposite? So whatever you believe, they're going to believe the opposite. Whatever you do, whatever your values are, they're going to choose the opposite. That may be for a period of time. You're still the parent, they're still the child. Then there's ones like favorite sports teams or music that's liked or disliked, different hobbies. One person might like to fish and hunt and camp and another may prefer to stay home and read, play video games. So what's the solution of that? You agree to disagree? You make compromises sometimes? Sometimes you just let it go. Then there's also the solvable problems. Even the hard ones sometimes have to be resolved. We have to look at maybe balancing how much time you and your partners spent together as opposed to with other

people, or just doing your own activities. Working out maybe or other activities, some do and some don't. How do you work out the rules of visiting in-laws? Most people consider your family rules as imbalanced. How do you balance that out and deal with the interesting personalities that can be involved? Same with friends. My recommendation of couples is that, if I have a friend, it's a family friend. If you have a friend, it's a family friend now. We don't have secret friends. That doesn't mean we never see them but they need to be mutual friends with no secrets. Okay? How many nights in versus nights out for people? How are we going to spend our weekends catching up on errands or catching up with each other? How are we going to balance that so that is not work all the time and it's not just fun all the time. We need to get that balance in their. So you got to work those things out and communicate. Sometimes people have different parenting styles. It's common for a child to have one more strict parent and one more laid-back parent. Somewhere in the middle is usually the healthy. And so working those things out together. Who does which chores? How are you gonna balance that out? You want that to be age-appropriate for the children. But you know the expectation there, balancing that out, who's gonna do what. So how do you start developing these conversations to work through these things? The first way is just to soft in the conversation start up. Alan just use a scenario where, maybe, let's say, the husband in the home has been offered a promotion. It could be the wife. It could be anyone. Is using the husband though, he comes home, he's been offered a great promotion for the child. The family would be set for life. But it's three states away. Both of your families, you know, the siblings, the kids, cousins, they all live in the area we're in right now. And so he's gonna come home and the first thing he needs to do is watch the timing. The wife has also just gotten home from work. She's trying to get things organized, get dinner ready, get the children settled down to do homework. She had a bad day at work. She's frustrated about something. That's not the time to bring it up. But if he has a 10-day deadline on giving an answer about this promotion and accepting it or not, then he may not want to wait a week to talk to her about it either. You telling me this now? You've known this how long? That's a bad start up. What he wants to do is do it fairly soon. Maybe even prepare his wife and say, honey, there was an interesting conversation at work today. We need to talk. We need to have a good conversation. It's kind of big though. I want to catch you at a good time when you're ready. Let me know when would be a good time to sit down and talk and I'll extend it all to you. It's like you're kind of preparing her for something big is going to come along and she'll know to calm down on it. Then, from there, expect her to have some emotional reaction to it. Because I can guarantee you, he had an initial emotional reaction. Wow, this is great, a no-brainer. Oh my gosh, but the kids love to play with her cousins and they're established at their schools. My daughter started high school last year. She wants to be a part of the band, whatever. All of these things that are already established. Do we want to give that up? All of this is going through your head, through Mike's had. How do you resolve that? Allow that emotion and allow her that time to think it through. You know, just be clear about the options. Don't come into it with, okay, this is what I want. I'm gonna convince her. I have to convince her of what I want to do. You have to come into it thinking about the relationship and the marriage of the family. What do I want to happen to keep the family together? Hopefully that's the main point. Okay? Other things that are important to just relationship's, like I just said. You can't come into a conversation, saying, I want my way. I got to convince her. How am I going to convince her? Sometimes things do lead to an argument that things start to escalate. That's when it's time to just stop and say, one of you put

up your hands like a stop sign and just say, okay, we need to take a break. We're gonna have to come back for a redo in a little bit. Then let everybody calm down. Everybody has calmed down, come back together. Then you might want to acknowledge each other's perspectives, like sorry, I didn't know this topic would be such a big trigger for you or so upsetting for you. Can you tell me what piece of that was so hard to hear? You know, and also you might admit when you're wrong, what about this went wrong? I came on too strong. I wanted you to understand what I wanted. Sometimes you just have -- An example of my the when, as a child, you might say, I'm just switching scenarios here -- If I understand you correctly, you're trying to say, you feel hurt, trying to take out the trash. Yeah, you just don't trust me. I've been doing the trash all this time. What you have to tell me and nag me every week to take out the trash? You know, so then you might remind them, well, but last week you did forget. That made me nervous. We really need the trash to go out. Okay, so you have this conversation. You let them know what they need. You can also say, I was wrong to yell at you. You know I was wrong about that too. I went about that the wrong way. I'm sorry. You want to do that right as a parent. We know, just based on my observation and things I learned from others, you know most of us don't get it right 100% of the time. We're probably wrong or that a bit off base about 1/3 of the time. One thing you want to also do is soothe yourself, just calm yourself down with breathing. You know that can be a piece of compromise too, you know, I think we all know that, you know, some opinions. We can just agree to disagree on some. But some things have to be decided. We need to really compromise and give in. Again, that relationship is more important than winning every little battle. Okay? And then, also, know that there's always more out there. We'll talk about this more with the EAP and other resources available. We want to talk too about trust. We've been talking about communication. I want to talk about trust. You want to be true to your word and follow through with what you say. If we're going to make a promise, we need to keep it. Broken promises destroy trust completely. It takes a while to build that back up. Slow down and think before you act. You know if your child does something, maybe talks back or something, say, you're grounded for a month, you know, when we're emotional, we really can't think, well, our brain shuts down and do we want to be grounded for a month? We will be with our child. You probably don't want that. Maybe that was a bad choice. So we want to be careful and think what we're doing. If we're gonna make a promise, think it through. It's always better. I've had to learn to say, I'll think about it and then get back. Because sure, I'm willing to help out with this. I'm willing to do this with you or go here with you. But when it comes down to it, maybe I should have said no. Well, it's better to not say yes so quickly. You know, don't make Thomases you can't keep. Just give yourself time to think it through. Consider your family as part of the same team. You're all in this together. Nothing works out perfectly for everybody all the time. Be honest. Be helpful and authentic and kind. You know, in a dysfunctional family, if someone drops something, hey, clumsy, pick that up, you know, just a smoky kind of remark or criticism, you want to help them pick it up. Or if they're having a bad day, maybe somebody comes from grumpy, maybe your spouse comes from happy, say, oh, man, you're not usually like this. Are you having a rough day? Is something wrong today? You know, show a little caring and empathy there. Be transparent with your own people. Always be a role model with that emotional vocabulary. I'm really tired right now. I'm going to try to get dinner cooked and cleaned up. If you guys can help me out with this other stuff, whatever, you know, the supposed of emotions. If you share them, it makes other people feel safe to share theirs as well. You know, do what you believe is right. Sometimes we have to stand up to our kids

and say, no, you can't do that, even if we have to stay firm, but we can stay kind. And then just admit our mistakes. Okay? Admit when we're wrong, which we've talked about. Respect. That is huge. We all want to feel a sense of respect. And, without that, we tend to not value what the other person -- The relationship -- With the other person so much. Ways to have respect, one way, just fostering a safe environment. You want practical needs to be met. With kids, you can tell the kids at school that maybe not had a meal, not had a good night's sleep, maybe there's been fighting in the home or some domestic violence, they can't come to school or concentrate in order to have this kind of a baseline for people to grow and be productive. It's just that basic, having what we need, then showing that patience and concern, like I was just talking about. Hey, did you have a rough day today? Are you okay as opposed to why are you acting like that? Teach through modeling and constructive mentoring. If dad is on a softball league, you know, how he handles those moments of winning or losing. How he handles, you know, and other player's, you know, oh, you struck out. Is that a big deal or is it a supportive environment that the child is watching the because the child goes into sports or some other activity, they're going to learn those, how to be a good sportsman or a bad sportsman by what they see. Then discipline appropriately. Punishment is okay, you're grounded for a month. We're not gonna discuss it or do you just got it for a month. A lot of times, I don't even know why am grounded and I don't know what I did. You know, discipline is more of a word that means teaching. So let's say a child maybe said something hurtful to someone else on Facebook. You may take away the privileges for a while. Say no, that's not okay. That's not an okay way to use this privilege. I'm gonna take it for a while. Here's why. You explain why. If you've ever had someone say something mean like that to you on Facebook, yeah, well that's hurtful, isn't it? We don't want to do that to someone else. It's not okay for people to be doing that to you. They need to learn, and that's what discipline is really about. We want to celebrate their strengths and not just focus on a person's weaknesses. Okay? Boundaries. This is a hard one for people to do sometimes. It's hard for us to say no or to set limits. You can stay until this time. Then I need you out of the house, or you have to be home by a certain time. Again, you can model boundary-setting by doing it with your spouse, your friends and, in other situations, just being kind but firm, knowing when you need to say no and don't try to feel responsible for another person's reaction. People can get angry when you say no. That's okay. You have to do what you have to do sometimes. Model respect for people's time and space and belongings. Like I said in the beginning, in a healthy family, if you want to borrow somebody's shirt, ask them first. You know, her new special pin or basketball or something. Show respect as needed. One area I want to go over just for a couple of minutes is being respectful of in-laws and time with in-laws. We want to respect our spouses, our partners' desire to be with our own family, just like we want to be with ours. Sometimes these relationships can be awkward. You want to -- If it's your family, you want to be the one introducing your partner into that situation. You want to be able to get them involved, talk about things that are of mutual interest to maybe a couple of people. Get them included in the family games or activities that you know everyone would enjoy. Also setting boundaries with your family. You know, you may have a family where it's okay for it to be a community family that all raises each other's kids. But you have to decide, as parents, who, what the rules are for your kids and anyone else involved. The children is to obey your rules and not their own. Can't allow other family members to just interfere when you're parenting with children. Okay? So there's a lot of boundaries. They're so important. Our dysfunctional families -- Doomed? Absolutely not. You

want to start small and concrete. You want to get rid of any physical aggression, hitting, pushing, name-calling, criticism, loudness. That just has to stop. It's that simple. And then start paying attention to each other. Take time to stop. Look at the present while they talk. Reflect back what they're saying. Okay, so you had a hard day. Or you're really excited today. You get to spend some time with your friends. Okay, enjoy those moments or feel those hard moments with them. Educate yourself, read, read, read. Read things together, you and your partner, like the five local love languages, books like that are great for reading together. Use the EAP or other counseling then. Other resources may be from the past or a religious leader of some kind. Just people that you respect. Don't carry things alone though. Do all that together. Okay. I want to go on to the resources. We have some great resources here. Haley, the child within us, a good book for dealing with, if you've grown up in a dysfunctional family, how to resolve those childhood issues that have maybe followed you into adulthood. Another one I'm gonna mention is, so the one you will see as we get these, but another one is -- I'm passing it up on here. But the overall adult child is good, even for healthy families to read, because sometimes we give kids too much sometimes. I want to turn this back over to wrap up. I want to thank you all for attending and turn it back over to Jessica I think.

Yes. Thank you so much, Rene. That was great. We're gonna try to get to some questions in just a moment. First, want to remind you, if you liked the presentation, what was presented today, you can learn about any more of these health and wellness topics by visiting us online at the EAP is confidential and is available, 24/7, to help you and your family work through personal or work lease issues. You will receive the reporting link and transcript, copy of the slides, resource handouts, certificate of attendance via email less than 24 hours after today's webinar. Of course, all available for you on FHA.com for about two weeks. Also a satisfaction survey when you leave to let us know how your expense with us was today and provide any additional feedback you may have. We do read your comments. If we have any room to make adjustments and, please let us know. All right, Rene, we took a couple questions. First one is how you handle sibling rivalry?

That's always a frustrating one. It can be pretty constant when you get in the car or you sit down to eat. It can hit almost any time. I think one rule is strong modeling. Also, with siblings, they argue in front of the parents. And because they both will be once to get the parents' vote, mom or dad's vote on the situation. They want to be the winner, the parent. So what you want to do, oftentimes, it just leave the room, have them go outside to resolve it, let them fix it between each other. We can go here after you all figured out. You will need to figure out how this is going to play out. Put the ball in their court as much as you can. Another thing is to have them do things together which are not a part of. Have a goal like it's their day to plan a meal together and set the table and do everything that they can do by themselves. It's their project or do they have to work on it together. That will make the team serving the parents type of thing. I think those are two things, be absent during the arguments and then help them projects, things that they're going to do together. Okay?

Okay, great. Next question that came in and says, we have huge trust issues. Does that ever get better?

A Kamprad a lot of times people have trust issues if maybe they're coming out of a prior relationship where there's been some one fullness or other things that sometimes even just from childhood we have trust issues. So it does take -- One of the things I mentioned before was just if I have a friend, it's our friend now, not my friend. We have to think in terms of we and us, not I and we. We want to have mutual friends. Some people even share a Facebook account. So there's no secrets then. You want to be respectful, then maybe your partner needs information about who you talk to. If you're trying to build trust, sometimes you just have to share those things. Again, have those mutual friends and see a therapist. You know, work through those things. Those are hard. Keeps us anxious all the time that we think seeing a therapist is really working through some of that, which can be very, very helpful and help you come up with more techniques over time. It takes time.

Okay. Another question that came in is how do you reinforce boundaries?

How do you reinforce boundaries? That can depend on what types of boundaries we're talking about. With kids? There's got to be consequences. One is a positive consequence for falling boundaries. Another is may be a loss of the privilege for not following the boundaries. Also we don't always have control over the other person. We have control over what we do. If someone is disrespectful to us, we might say, I can't control what you say, but you're not gonna sit around me, because I'm gonna choose to not be around you when you call me names or when you criticize me. Sometimes we just have to control our end of it. It changes dynamics for that other person.

Okay. So the next one I'm going to try to interpret is asking about the effects of excessive sarcasm and how some feels like criticism to the recipient. I guess a response to that person's excessive sarcasm, the response is always, that's the way it is, or that was just a joke but how can something like that be dealt with?

Sometimes, you know, some people just have that kind of a sense of humor. They're kind of literal and find things funny in it. But a lot of times, it's also a passive aggressive way of criticizing you or putting you down. That's a little bit of a hard one to deal with, because you are never prepared for it, whatever they're going to say. There's a good book called *Dealing with People You Can't Stand: How to Bring Out the Best in People at Their Worst*. That doesn't mean you can't stand them, it might be someone you love, but the second part of that is bringing out the best in people at their worst. It gives a whole lot of tactics for dealing with different kinds of personalities and behaviors and how to deal with that. You know, and one way is just to call them on it. You know, I see through what you're doing. I don't like it. Just be upfront with them about it. That would be a start I think. It doesn't help to give it back, necessarily. That just creates defensiveness. I think you know, just calling them on it and say, hey, I'm taking that as a put down. One is just talk to me straight? That might open up a conversation.

Okay. I know we're at the top of the hour. I wanted to get one more in real quick. This question is about how to put things out repeatedly about the other person feel like they're being judgmental or critical when you were just absolutely frustrated with them?

One way is just to catch them when they're doing something right. One thing I didn't really bring up during the presentation itself, in order to give a criticism, we know -- John Gottman, an author I've mentioned other times, he's in the resources, he says, it's about a 5-1 ratio. You want to give five compliments for everyone constructive criticism. And so you got to find the positives. Because we get so frustrated, we're focused on the one thing that we want a person to change. That's all they hear. Then it feels like nagging from their end. A lot of times, finding the positives. I know what type of person you are, I respect you. This is not your best. This is not who you are at your best. This thing is just getting to me. Can we talk about that? But it needs to be sandwiched between a lot of positive comments as well.

Great. Thank you. We are a little past the hour. I think we are going to go ahead and conclude today. If we didn't get to your question or something later that you want to ask, please give the EAP a call to speak with one of our consultants who can help you with your specific situation. Thank you so much, again, Renee, for doing this amazing presentation. Thank you all for joining us today. Have a great rest of your day. [Event Concluded]