

Dating

Skill # 1

LIVE YOUR FAMILY'S VALUES

Our values are the ideals we live by because they are so important to us. Values are like road signs that help us get to where we are going. When you enter a dating relationship, look for someone who shares your values.

Before your first date, pinpoint your family's values. Write down a few short statements of your values. They should be ideals that are important to you and that you want your child to model.

Take time to discuss as a family what you value. Allow each person to talk about what he or she sees as important. Write down a summary of your family values, and keep them in mind. This will help you choose dating partners who fit in with your values.

Skill # 2

CLOSELY EXAMINE NEW RELATIONSHIPS

Dating can be fun. It also gives you a chance to learn about people. You can see how well your partner fits with what you are looking for in a relationship.

There are many things to think about when you enter a dating relationship. Ask lots of questions to find out more about the other person. Keep your family's values in mind. Don't settle for less!

When you sense it is the right time, introduce your children to the person you are dating. Give them time to get to know each other. Your children may have strong feelings about this "other person" in your life. It is important to listen to and respect your child's feelings. But it's up to you to decide who you will or won't date.

Skill # 3

HIGHLY VALUE YOUR SEXUALITY

Our sexuality is a beautiful and natural part of us. Working to keep it that way is important. Sharing ourselves sexually is a precious gift. Most people believe this gift is best enjoyed in a healthy marriage.

Having sex too soon can hide differences between two people. A dating partner who pushes for a sexual relationship may have hidden plans. Get to know your friend by spending time together without sexual intimacy. This will let you see if he or she really fits what you want in a partner.

Be cautious, wise, and choosy. Think before you take the plunge, and weigh the odds. Build up trust before jumping into a sexual relationship. This will take time. Dating is intended to give you that time.

ACTION PLAN

Focus on one of the above skills. How could you apply this skill in your life? Choose one small but important change you really want to make in the next few days. Think positive. See yourself carrying out your goal. **Write your action plan in the space below:**



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