

Actions That Keep Individuals and Families Strong

It is often said, and it is usually true, that the whole is greater than the sum of the individual pieces. In the case of a country, it is equally true that the stronger the families and individuals within that country, the stronger the country. That is what the actions in this section are about - actions that help individuals believe in themselves and actions that help families enable individual growth.

Citizen Actions

1. [Be the best you can be.](#)
2. [Continue family and personal traditions.](#)
3. [Promote Excellence](#)
4. [Encourage your children to do a good deed and write the story of it as their Christmas or Holiday gift to you.](#)
5. [Keep a Gratitude Journal](#)
6. [Keep in touch with aunts, uncles, grandparents and other relatives.](#)
7. [Learn about, and relate to your children, how your family came to be in this country.](#)
8. [Replace Your credit cards with a debit/check card](#)
9. [Resist intimidation.](#)
10. [Take a course on parenting.](#)
11. [Talk with your children about ways to be a good citizen.](#)
12. [Tell the truth.](#)



**Reader Submitted
Actions**



Our country is made up of individuals or "The People". The strength of any group, whether it be a family or a team or a country, is only as good as the strength its members.

[David Viscott](#) was a brilliant, non-conventional psychiatrist, a nationally known radio talk show host and author of 14 books on relationships. His description of the meaning of life is the best I've heard and the one that resonates for me.

"The purpose of life is to find one's gift.
The meaning of life is to give it."

Living a satisfying life and meaningful life can be accomplished by pursuing the "something" that is within us, that "something" we enjoy and are good at . Like a snowflake, each of us is unique and each of us has a purpose here on earth. Search for your gift and give into it. I have always liked the following quote.

"When you do something,
You should burn yourself up completely,
Like a good bonfire,
leaving no trace of yourself."

- shunryu suzuki

There is great pressure in this country to be the person others want us to be. It is not easy to be ourselves and to believe in ourselves - but it is immensely satisfying and, it is enough!



The point here, of course, is not simply to make a list of personal and family tradition, but to continue them. However making a list of them is one way to ensure one continues them.



Traditions are the activities that provide continuity throughout our lives and that link families and generations together.

Making a list of family and personal traditions can be a useful and fun way of ensuring you keep them alive. Traditions tend to be very personal. In addition to providing continuity, they often are calming in that they give us a sense that "everything is still okay". Sometimes they become or represent the signature or trademark of a person or family.

Make a list of *your* family and personal traditions!



More Examples



Readers' Stories



Mediocrity means not being as good as you could be, not thinking for yourself, doing something not because you think you should but because someone else says you should. Because someone says it or because you read it, doesn't make it true, good for you or good for the country.

An old Dr. Pepper commercial gave good advice - "Decide For Yourself". Set a high standard for your own personal excellence, and be the best you can be!

Encourage Your Children to do a Good Deed and Write the Story of It as Their Christmas or Holiday Gift to You



This action was suggested by a friend when we were discussing how materialistic Christmas has become. She suggested that I ask my daughters to do a good deed and write a story of it as their Christmas present to me rather than a more traditional present.

Discuss with them the importance of helping others and treating all differences with respect.



Readers' Stories



A woman recently called the [Dennis Prager](#) radio talk show on his topic of happiness. She told Dennis of something she did every day that contributed to her positive attitude. She said that each morning she wrote down a few things she was thankful for. She called it her "gratitude journal". I later was told that [Oprah](#) had introduced this idea also on one of her shows.

This action helps the country in a couple of ways. First keeping a Gratitude Journal helps keep us in a positive and appreciative frame of mind. A positive frame of mind increases the chances we will spend more time "outside of ourselves" and concerned about the community. An appreciative frame of mind increases the chances that we will recognize all that we have in this country that we would not have if we weren't free and that we will take small actions to help keep it free.

In addition to listing a few things that you have gratitude for, try writing down what it is about each of those things that you are thankful for.



Readers' Stories

Keep in touch with Aunts, Uncles, Grandparents and Other Relatives and Friends



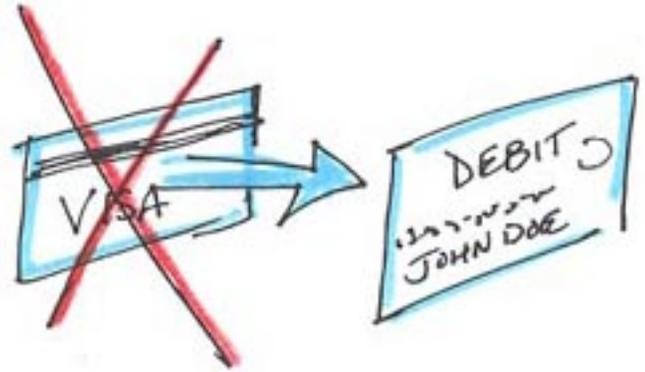
Learn About, and Relate to Your Children, How Your Family Came to be in This Country



Readers' Stories



Being in debt really means living beyond one's means. It's the cause of many of life's struggles and of considerable unhappiness. It often creates a stress that ruins relationships, careers and one's health. Paying off a debt too often results in regrettable decisions - those that try to increase one's means. It consumes a lot of energy and diverts one's attention from one's life. There is something about being in debt that casts a pall over one's life and there is something about having no debt that is freeing, calming and invigorating.



Here are some snippets from a talk that Warren Buffet, one of America's most successful investors and someone who rarely speaks in public, had with some University of Nebraska students:

- "My advice for you is if you can't afford it, don't buy it"
- To begin their careers with modest savings, rather than debts. "Having anything to get ahead of the game instead of behind the game is enormously important."
- The best way to prepare for a financial future "is to get the full use out of your talents. They can't tax what's in your head."
- It's better to enter a low-paying profession they enjoy rather than a lucrative field they might not like.
- "The information revolution argues for a terrific future for the world and especially for this country."

Whereas credit cards charge interest and sometimes have annual fees, debit or check cards have neither and deduct funds directly from one's account. It's easy to always know where one stands.



Sites & Resources



Readers' Stories



If I were to rank the actions, this one would be right at the top.



Readers' Stories





Being a parent and raising another human being to be a good person and to have a positive self-image is a daunting task in the best of circumstances. Many of us are ill-prepared to be parents. None of us had any experience prior to our first child, and few of us have had any training. We often intuitively mimic our parents' parenting characteristics.

The impact on a child of its parents is substantial. The better equipped we are to raise a child, the better the chances that child will grow up with high self esteem and good values. Understanding a few of the basics about infants, early childhood development and what to expect, go a long way toward being a calmer and better parent.



Sites & Resources



Readers' Stories



Tell the Truth - Always!



Telling the truth doesn't mean randomly expressing ones feelings or thoughts. Nor does mean expressing feelings or thoughts in an insensitive way. But it does mean telling people how you feel and what you think, when appropriate. It does mean being true to oneself (telling oneself the truth) and not to someone else's wishes. Psychiatrist David Viscott said that "the truth may hurt, but it's always hurts less than a lie". There is more than a little truth in the old saying - "the truth shall set you free."

Telling the truth is perhaps the most important thing we can do to live a life that is satisfying and that keeps stress to a minimum.

We live in a society and at a time where telling the truth is not always valued. To the contrary, much around us is not reality-based. Here are some examples of things that distort our sense of reality:

- political correctness inhibits a free expression of ideas and feelings,
- putting spin on events and actions to make them appear what they aren't,
- advertising that often exaggerates if not misleads or is dishonest,
- juries that seemingly ignore the facts and arrive at verdicts more on social issues rather than fact and law,
- the 'canned' laughter in most sitcoms, and
- the fine print meant to mask the "downside" of a product or service.

When one doesn't tell the truth in a relationship, whether personal or professional, it is crazy-making. Crazy-making because we end up acting and responding in ways that aren't based on reality. Such relationships consume enormous amounts of our energy, and since we each have a limited amount of energy, consuming it in inappropriate relationships causes us to waste energy that could be used to live better lives - our own lives.

Telling the truth breeds a strong individual, and a strong individual contributes to a strong family and community, thus keeping our county strong and free.

The Internet has enabled information - both fact and fiction - to be spread quickly so it is more important than ever to ferret out fact from fiction and there are some individuals and sites dedicated to the truth no matter what it is. Click on Related Sites to read about them.



Sites & Resources



Readers' Stories

Additional Reader-submitted "Individuals Strong" Actions

[BACK](#)