



MAKING PEACE
AT HOME

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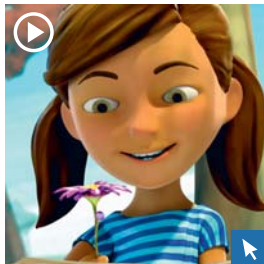
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COVER SUBJECT

FAMILY STRIFE

How Does It Happen?

“WE USUALLY clash over money,” admits Sarah,* in Ghana, who has been married to Jacob for 17 years. She explains: “I feel angry because I do a lot to care for the family and Jacob never talks to me about our finances. For weeks we do not speak to each other.”

“Yes,” responds her husband, Jacob, “there are times when we exchange angry words. They are usually caused by misunderstandings and a lack of meaningful communication. Conflicts also occur because of our overreaction to situations.”

Newly married Nathan, in India, describes what happened one day when his father-in-law shouted at his mother-in-law. “She took offense,” he says, “and left the house. When I asked him why he had shouted like that, he felt that I, his son-in-law, was insulting him. Next thing I knew, he was shouting at all of us.”

* Some names in these articles have been changed.

Perhaps you too have observed how a few badly timed or ill-chosen words can cause much strife in the home. What may begin as a calm exchange of thoughts can quickly spiral into a verbal slugging match. Nobody can say exactly the right thing all the time, so it can be easy to misinterpret what others say or to misconstrue their motives. Nevertheless, it is possible to enjoy a measure of peace and harmony.

What can you do when heated arguments erupt? What steps can you take to restore peace and serenity in the family? How can families maintain peace in the household? Please read on.



How to Stop Strife in the Home

WHAT if your family seems to be locked in a cycle of strife? Maybe clashes have become more frequent and more intense. Perhaps you do not even know how the disagreements started. Yet you love one another, and you do not want to hurt one another.

It is important to remember that differences of opinion do not necessarily mean that your family life is disintegrating. Not the disagreements themselves but how you handle your disagreements can determine how tranquil or hostile your home environment will be. Consider some steps that may help to eliminate the strife.

1. STOP RETALIATING.

It takes at least two to argue, but when one begins listening instead of speaking, a heated exchange may start to cool down. Therefore, resist the urge to retaliate when provoked. Maintain your own self-respect and dignity by controlling yourself. Remember, peace in the family is more important than winning arguments.

"Where there is no wood, the fire goes out, and where there is no slanderer, quarreling ceases."

—Proverbs 26:20.

2. ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FAMILY MEMBER'S FEELINGS.

Active and empathetic listening without interrupting or prejudging can do much to quell anger and restore peace. Instead of imputing bad motives, acknowledge the other person's feelings. Do not attribute to malice what may be caused by imperfection. Hurtful speech may be more the product of thoughtlessness or a wounded heart than a mean or vengeful spirit.

"Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, humility, mildness, and patience."

—Colossians 3:12.

3. GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO COOL DOWN.

If your emotions are volatile, it may be wise to excuse yourself politely and walk away for a short while to cool down. Maybe you can go into another room or go for a walk until you have regained your composure. This is not stonewalling—that is, being uncooperative or evasive—nor is it the silent treatment, where someone refuses to communicate. Rather, this is perhaps a good time to pray to God for patience, insight, and understanding.

"Before the quarrel breaks out, take your leave."

—Proverbs 17:14.

4. CAREFULLY CONSIDER WHAT NEEDS TO BE SAID AND HOW TO SAY IT.

It will not improve matters if you focus your efforts on preparing a finely honed, cutting rebuttal. Instead, try to say something that can help soothe your loved one's hurt feelings. And rather than dictating how you think he or she should be feeling, humbly ask for clarification and express thanks for any help or insight you receive.

"Thoughtless speech is like the stabs of a sword, but the tongue of the wise is a healing."—Proverbs 12:18.

5. KEEP YOUR VOLUME DOWN AND YOUR TONE CONCILIATORY.

One family member's impatience can easily rouse another's anger. Resist the urge to be sarcastic or insulting or to raise your voice, no matter how offended you may feel. Avoid hurtful accusations, such as "You don't care about me" or "You never listen." Rather, tell your spouse in a calm manner how his or her conduct has affected you ("I feel hurt when you . . ."). Shoving, slapping, kicking, or any other form of violence is never excusable. The same is true of name-calling, contemptuous comments, or threats.

"Put away from yourselves every kind of malicious bitterness, anger, wrath, screaming, and abusive speech, as well as everything injurious."—Ephesians 4:31.

6. BE QUICK TO APOLOGIZE, AND EXPLAIN WHAT YOU WILL DO TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION.

Do not let negative emotions cause you to lose sight of your main objective—making peace. Remember, if you fight with someone, both of you lose. If you make peace, both of you win. So take responsibility for your part in the dispute. Even if you are convinced that you have done nothing wrong, you can still apologize for getting irritated, responding the way you did, or unintentionally contributing to the upset. Peaceful relationships are more important than pride and victory. And if someone apologizes to you, be quick to forgive.

"Go and humble yourself and urgently plead with your neighbor."—Proverbs 6:3.

Once the argument is over, what can you do to promote peace in the family?
This will be the subject of the following article.



How to Promote Peace in the Family

DO YOU think that the Bible can help to promote peace in the home? Please compare what the Bible says with what the following interviewees have found helpful. Consider which points might help you to avoid conflict, keep the peace, and reinforce lasting bonds.



BIBLE PRINCIPLES THAT PROMOTE PEACE

DEVELOP A POSITIVE VIEW OF EACH OTHER.

“Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with humility consider others superior to you, as you look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.”—Philippians 2:3, 4.

“We have found that it is good to view your mate as being more important than yourself and others.”—C. P., married 19 years.

LISTEN ATTENTIVELY WITH AN OPEN MIND.

“Continue reminding them . . . not to be quarrelsome, but to be reasonable, displaying all mildness toward all.”—Titus 3:1, 2.

“Much tension can be avoided if we don’t respond to our mate in a contentious tone. It is important to listen without prejudice and to respect his or her viewpoint even if we do not agree.”—P. P., married 20 years.

CULTIVATE PATIENCE AND MILDNESS.

“By patience a commander is won over, and a gentle [“mild,” footnote] tongue can break a bone.”—Proverbs 25:15.

“There will be conflicts, but the outcome depends on the spirit we show. We really need to be patient. When we are, we find that things get sorted out.”—G. A., married 27 years.

NEVER STOOP TO VERBAL OR PHYSICAL ABUSE.

“Put them all away from you: wrath, anger, badness, abusive speech, and obscene talk out of your mouth.”—Colossians 3:8.

“I admire my husband’s self-control. He always keeps calm and never shouts at me or insults me.”—B. D., married 20 years.

BE EAGER TO FORGIVE AND TO SETTLE DIFFERENCES QUICKLY.

“Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely even if anyone has a cause for complaint against another.”—Colossians 3:13.

“Under stress it is not always easy to keep calm, and you can quickly say or do things that hurt your partner. At times like that, it is beautiful to be forgiving. A good marriage is impossible without forgiveness.”—A. B., married 34 years.

MAKE A PRACTICE OF UNSELFISH GIVING AND SHARING.

“Practice giving, and people will give to you. . . . For with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you in return.”—Luke 6:38.

“My husband knows what pleases me, and he is always full of surprises. In turn, I often think, ‘How can I make him happy?’ As a result, we have laughed a lot, and we still do.”—H. K., married 44 years.

DO NOT GIVE UP PROMOTING PEACE IN THE HOME

The family members interviewed by *Awake!* are just a few of the millions around the world who have been helped by the Bible to develop qualities that contribute to a more tranquil home.* Even when some in their family do not seem to be trying to cooperate, they have found that it is still worth the effort to be a peacemaker, because the Bible promises: “Those who promote peace have joy.”—Proverbs 12:20. ■

* For more information on how to make family life happy, see chapter 14 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses and available at www.jw.org. Also look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > HELP FOR THE FAMILY.



Dealing With Differences



THE CHALLENGE

You enjoy sports; your spouse would rather read. You are meticulous and efficient; your spouse is quite disorganized. You love to socialize; your spouse prefers privacy.



‘We just aren’t compatible!’ you tell yourself. ‘Why didn’t we notice that when we were dating?’

Likely you *did* notice it, at least to a degree. But back then you were probably quicker to make concessions—a skill that you would do well to revive, now that you are married. This article will help you do that. First, though, consider some facts about supposed incompatibilities.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Some differences are serious. A big part of dating is determining compatibility. Hence, when serious differences are discovered while dating, many couples break up rather than unwisely entering into a polarized marriage. But what about less serious differences—the kind that are unavoidable in any marriage?

No two people are completely alike. Therefore, it is normal for spouses to have differences in one or more of the following areas:

Interests. “Outdoor activities have never appealed to me,” says a wife named Anna,* “but my husband grew up climbing snowy mountains and trekking for days through the bush.”

Habits. “My wife can stay up late at night and still jump up at 5:00 a.m., but I need seven to eight hours of sleep or else I get grumpy,” says a husband named Brian.

Traits. You might be reserved, while your spouse is expressive. “I grew up not talking about my personal problems,” says a husband named David, “but my wife came from a family where everything was discussed openly.”

Differences can be beneficial. “My way might be good, but that doesn’t mean it’s the *only* way,” says a wife named Helena.

* Some names in this article have been changed.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Be supportive. A husband named Adam says: “My wife Karen has zero interest in sports. But she has come with me to several games and has even cheered along with me. On the other hand, Karen loves art museums, so I go with her, and we spend as much time there as she wants. I do my best to show an interest in art because it’s important to her.”—*Bible principle: 1 Corinthians 10:24.*

Expand your view. Your spouse’s outlook on things is not necessarily wrong just because it is different from yours. That is a lesson that a husband named Alex learned. “I always felt that a straight line is the shortest way from point A to point B and that any other choice would be deficient,” he says. “But being married has helped me to realize that there are *many* ways to get from A to B and that each method is effective in its own way.”—*Bible principle: 1 Peter 5:5.*

Be realistic. Being compatible does not mean being identical. So do not conclude that your marriage was a mistake simply because a few differences have become evident. “Lots of people fall back on ‘I was blinded by love,’” says the book *The Case Against Divorce*. However, “every day you spent together happy,” continues the book, “shows that despite whatever innate differences you have, you *can* love each other.” Try to “continue putting up with one another . . . even if anyone has a cause for complaint.”—Colossians 3:13.

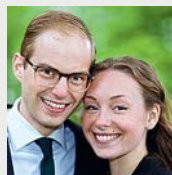
Try this: Write down what you like, love, and find compatible about your spouse. Then write down the things that you find incompatible. You may find that your differences are less serious than you think. The list will also reveal where you can be more tolerant or supportive of your spouse. “I appreciate it when my wife adjusts to me, and I know she appreciates it when I adjust to her,” says a husband named Kenneth. “Even if it means a sacrifice on my part, seeing her happy makes me happy.”—*Bible principle: Philippians 4:5.* ■

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person.”
—1 Corinthians 10:24.

“Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.”
—1 Peter 5:5.

“Let your reasonableness become known.”—Philippians 4:5.



**CHARLIE AND
RAMONA**

“If you think, ‘We just aren’t well-matched,’ you will keep finding evidence to support that view. Instead, try to work as a team and see the differences in your mate as spice, not poison. Obstacles do not have to be a dead end.”



**BENJAMIN
AND CHELSEA**

“Some say, ‘We don’t like the same music’ or, ‘We don’t watch the same movies.’ We could say those things and more. But had we discontinued our relationship because of our ‘incompatibilities,’ we would have missed out on the joys we’ve shared being together and doing the things that we *do* both enjoy.”



The Whales Are Here!

Every year, beginning in July, female southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*) arrive at the southern coast of Santa Catarina, Brazil. They come from as far as the subantarctic, thousands of miles away, to give birth and nurse their calves in shallow waters. For several months residents and tourists at the beaches or on the cliffs are thrilled to watch the whales—mothers and calves resting or frolicking in the water!¹

Giant Acrobatic Marine Creatures

A female can be 52 feet (16 m) long, about the size of an articulated bus, and weigh up to 80 tons! Its massive body is generally black, sometimes with white patches on the belly. The head is enormous, a quarter of the entire body length. The mouth is long and arched. This whale has no dorsal fin as do some other spe-

cies. To swim forward, it flexes its broad and deeply notched tail up and down, instead of side to side as fish do. To change direction, it moves its flippers. This is similar to the way an airplane is steered.

Curiously, despite their immense proportions, right whales have considerable flexibility, performing some amazing acrobatics. You can see them *sailing*, the tail sticking out of the water for long periods; *lobtailing*, raising the tail and slapping the water hard; and *breaching*, thrusting themselves out of the water and then falling back with a great splash that can be seen from far away.

Distinctive Physical Characteristics

On and around the head, the right whale has a series of whitish or yellowish callosities—roughened patches of skin

covered by colonies of small crustaceans (cyamids) known as whale lice. “Each callosity pattern is unique,” explains Karina Groch, coordinator of the Brazilian Right Whale Project, “just as each person’s fingerprints are unique, enabling the identification of individual right whales. We take photos of whales’ callosity patterns when they visit our shores and keep these photos in a directory.”

Biologists say that it is difficult to tell the right whales’ age when they die because this species of whale has no teeth. They estimate the whale’s life expectancy to be at least 65 years on average.²

Curious Eating Habits

Right whales feed on tiny crustaceans. On each side of the whales’ upper jaw are filtering structures made up of hundreds of baleen plates that are fringed with fine hairs. As they swim, their open mouth allows water to filter through the baleen plates, capturing the tiny prey in the baleen hairs. By this means each whale can consume up to two tons of crustaceans a day.

Southern right whales spend the summer (January/February) feeding in the Antarctic Ocean, building up blubber. This thick layer of fat provides excellent insulation when they are in cold waters and serves as food reserves when they migrate.

How Did They Get Their Name?

From the 18th century onward, whalers hunted these whales extensively in the Southern Hemisphere. They were considered the “right” whales to hunt. Why? Being slow swimmers, they were an easy catch, even for whalers in frail wooden

boats that were equipped with only handheld harpoons. Besides, unlike other whales, right whales float when they are killed because of their extraordinary amount of blubber. Thus, whalers could easily drag them to the beach.

In addition, blubber and baleen were important commodities at the time. Blubber was used in street oil lamps and as a lubricant. Baleen was fashioned into things such as corset stays, buggy whips, and umbrella ribs. In fact, baleen plates obtained from one whale alone would cover the expenses of an entire expedition!

In the early 20th century, over-intensive hunting greatly reduced the right whale population, and eventually whaling was no longer commercially viable. In Brazil, the last whaling station was closed down in 1973. While there has been a slow recovery of some species, others remain critically endangered.

The right whale is definitely an outstanding example of the intricacy and great diversity of life on earth. It testifies to the amazing wisdom and power of the one who created it, the Great Designer, Jehovah God.—Psalm 148:7. ■

¹ Other breeding waters are in nearshore areas off the coasts of Argentina, Australia, South Africa, and Uruguay, as well as the Auckland Islands.

² Scientists list three different species of whale under the category of right whales. Besides the *Eubalaena australis* in the Southern Hemisphere, there are the *Eubalaena glacialis* and the *Eubalaena japonica* in the Northern Hemisphere.

Robert Harding/African Wings





THE SOUL

Religions provide various conflicting opinions about the soul and what happens to it when we die. However, the Bible provides a clear explanation.

Is the soul immortal?

WHAT PEOPLE SAY Many people believe that the soul is immortal. Some believe that the soul is continually reborn, reappearing in a new physical body after the previous body has died. Others believe that the soul will eventually pass on to a different realm, such as to heaven or to hell.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS The Bible does not attribute immortality to the soul. In fact, it often speaks of the soul as dying. The prophet Ezekiel, whom God used to write

a portion of the Bible, stated that a soul can be punished with death. On another occasion, the Bible uses the term “dead soul” to describe a corpse. (Leviticus 21:11, footnote) Clearly, the Bible does not teach that the soul is immortal.

“The soul who sins is the one who will die.”—Ezekiel 18:20.

Is the soul separate from the body?

WHAT PEOPLE SAY The soul animates the body while the person is alive but then departs at death.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS The Bible describes a mother as giving birth to “souls”—that is, living, breathing persons. (Genesis 46:18, footnote) In fact, the Hebrew word used in the Bible for “soul” can be translated “a breather.” Sometimes the term is even used to designate animals. Furthermore, the Bible describes the soul as

needing food. (Deuteronomy 12:20, footnote) If a soul were an entity separate from the body, would it need to breathe or to eat? In the Bible the word “soul” most often refers to a complete living person, including the body, the emotions, and the personality.

“She bore . . . 16 persons [or, “souls,” footnote].”—Genesis 46:18.



What happens to the soul at death?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS As surely as our bodies perish at death, “there is no work nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom in the Grave.” (Ecclesiastes 9:10) The Scriptures definitively tell us that when someone dies, “he returns to the ground; on that very day his thoughts perish.” (Psalm 146:4) A dead soul is in a state of inactivity, and thus, the Scriptures often metaphorically refer to the dead as “sleeping.” —Matthew 9:24.

WHY DOES IT MATTER? When you lose those you love in death, you want to know the answers to such questions as these: Where are they? What state are they in?

Are they suffering? Since the Bible assures us that the dead are unconscious, we can be comforted in knowing that our dead loved ones are not suffering anymore. We can be further comforted in knowing that Jehovah promises to awaken unconscious, dead souls back to life at a future time. —Isaiah 26:19. ■

“The dead know nothing at all.”

—Ecclesiastes 9:5.





SPOTLIGHT ON EUROPE

Once strongly religious, Europe is now largely secular. Nevertheless, recent news items from Europe relate to the Bible in ways that might surprise you.



BENEFITS OF A MOTHER'S VOICE

Researchers in Milan, Italy, concluded that infants born prematurely gained several health benefits by being exposed to their mother's voice through a device on the wrist of the infant while in the hospital. This technique attempts to mimic how the baby sensed her voice while still in the womb. "Early exposure to maternal voice," concluded the study, "exerts a beneficial effect on preterm infants."

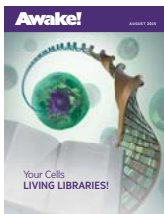
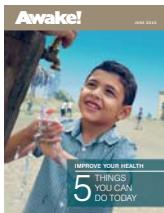
WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS: "I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother."
—Psalm 131:2.

NURTURING NARCISSISM? According to a study of 565 children in the Netherlands, children whose parents described them as "more special than other children" and as children who deserve "special treatment" scored higher than their peers on tests for narcissism and expressed feelings of superiority and entitlement. "Children believe it when their parents tell them that they are more special than others," says an author of the study. "That may not be good for them or for society."

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS: "I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think, but to think so as to have a sound mind."—Romans 12:3.

OPTIMISTIC CENTENARIANS Despite illness and physical limitations, 100-year-olds have a strong desire to live, report researchers at Heidelberg University in Germany. Out of every four centenarians interviewed, three clung to life and tried to make the most of it. They achieved personal goals, were optimistic and hopeful, felt life had meaning, and maintained their religious and ethical values.

TO THINK ABOUT: As indicated at Ecclesiastes 3:11, what might our innate desire to keep on living demonstrate?



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Did you miss one? *Awake!* is available at www.jw.org



The Human Body's Ability to Repair Wounds

AMONG the numerous mechanisms that make human life possible is the body's ability to heal wounds and regenerate damaged tissue. The process begins as soon as an injury occurs.

Consider: The healing process is made possible by a cascade of complex cellular functions:

- Platelets adhere to tissues around a wound, forming a blood clot and sealing damaged blood vessels.
- Inflammation protects against infection and removes any "debris" caused by the injury.
- Within days, the body begins to replace injured tissue, make the wound contract, and repair damaged blood vessels.
- Finally, scar tissue remodels and strengthens the damaged area.

Inspired by blood clotting, researchers are developing plastics that can "heal" damage to themselves. Such regenerating materials are equipped with tiny parallel tubes containing two chemicals that "bleed" when any damage occurs. As the two chemicals mix, they form a gel that spreads across the damaged areas, closing cracks and holes. As the gel solidifies, it forms a tough substance that restores the material's original strength. One researcher admits that this synthetic healing process currently under development is "reminiscent" of what already exists in nature.

What do you think? Did the body's ability to repair wounds come about by evolution? Or was it designed? ■

