

5 ways to make your family happier

HarperCollins recently released "The 100 Simple Secrets of Happy Families: What Scientists Have Learned and How You Can Use It," a compilation of scientific studies on happy families edited by best-selling author Dr. David Niven. A few tips from the book appear below.

- 1 Expectations must fit the person:** You have an image of a perfect son or a perfect daughter. You have an image of what their personality would be like, what their interests would be, what kind of life and career they would pursue. We all have these images in our heads, but we all must be careful not to impose them on our loved ones.
- 2 Don't obsess over birth order:** Is a first-born destined for a different life than a mid-born child? Researchers do find some birth-order differences in personality because of variations in relationships with parents and siblings. The quality of an adult's relationships and family satisfaction is equal regardless of where a person fell in birth order as a child.
- 3 There's no price tag on family life:** When we imagine the "perfect family," we usually also imagine the perfect house in the perfect neighborhood, with the perfect car. In fact, family happiness cannot be predicted from wealth. Never let money get in the way of your family commitment or your enjoyment of family because it will never contribute to either.
- 4 The next generation will define family for itself:** The parents of strong, caring families often expect their adult children to try to duplicate the family life they grew up with. But succeeding generations tend to have fewer children than their parents did, and definitions of family life have expanded greatly over time.
- 5 There are second chances:** Family life is what we make of it, regardless of its form. Whether you are in a traditional family, a stepfamily or some other family situation, you have the capacity to contribute to it and feel loved in it. There are no rules for what makes a family except the rules you make. There is no time limit when and how you find a loving family life.



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1503 UNIVERSITY BLVD. NE
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87102
243-7145 / 1-800-677-2947