FAMILIES THAT PLAY TOGETHER STAY TOGETHER

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All social-science studies on the subject clearly indicate that spending recreation time together fosters a healthy family environment. When our kids are young, they depend on us and look to us as superheroes. As such they want to know everything about us and want us to know everything about them. As they grow older they also seek to become more independent, needing us less and less. They also start to find new interests and new heroes. It’s at this juncture that the family unit can breakdown. Studies reveal that the best method to maintain family unity is through a ‘shared passion’. There are countless activities on offer, but few offer the advantages of karate:

Everyone Gets Exercise: Having each member partake in their own chosen sport ensures everyone receives the physical benefits of exercise. But doing something together teaches kids an early lesson, that exercise should be a lifelong habit.

Common Ground: Some families struggle to maintain a strong bond because they have so little in common. Having a shared passion however always provides plenty to talk about. You can also train at home together which is another opportunity to bond.

Friendly Competition: Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses. Some may be good at high kicks, while others may be good at remembering kata. Friendly competition amongst the family encourages friendly banter at home.

Reinforcing Family Values: Karate promotes life skills that are in sync with your family values: respect, integrity, dedication etc. When a parent is promoting social etiquette to their child, having an understanding of karate, they can always use a karate analogy to help their kids better understand.

Setting Family Goals: Karate’s grading structure allows you to set goals as a family and offers an opportunity to teach your children about reward for effort. It also helps to develop a family ‘team’ environment. Where one family member falls behind on their goal, the rest can help them get up to scratch.

Household Roles Are Cast Aside: At home, parents must always play the role of teacher. As kids get older and seek more independence they may start to rebel against, even despise this role. During karate, as the parents and kids are learning together, it puts them at an equal level, giving kids a new way to relate to their parents. Teenagers are far less likely to despise their ‘teacher’ parents when they are regularly able adopt the teacher role themselves by helping their parents with a difficult move.

Support And Encouragement: Nothing breeds a family team environment like support and encouragement. When a member is down on confidence or motivation, the others can offer much needed morale. Again, where they have to attempt grading or compete, strong bonds can be made through the continuous support they receive from one another.

Karate aside, there are countless ways for families to play and bond together. The following are just a few:

Family Bike Rides: Kitting everyone up with a bike is an excellent investment for the family. It’s healthy and a great social activity. You can ride around your local area, or if you purchase a bike rack for your car, pick new areas to go and explore.

Balloon Tennis: An excellent indoor activity for people with young families, you only need to set up a barrier to act as a net (such as a lounge). The advantage of the balloon is that it travels slowly to the other side of the court, giving the opponent time to get into position. This is a fantastic way to develop hand-eye coordination in children. As your children get older, organise family ball sport games such as soccer, tennis, table tennis, badminton, cricket, paddle tennis etc.

Make-up, Nails, Hair And Dress Ups: The girls get all the make up they own and put it all over mum, dad, a brother or even grandpa. You can also take photos. This may sound silly but it will inspire much laughter and as your children get older, will always give you funny stories to talk about. When it comes to hair, even boys love to create cool Mohawks, or ‘nerdie’ parts down the middle of their heads, and dress up in their toughest or most bizarre clothes. Have your kids put on a fashion show for you.

Cards and Board Games: Cards and board games are a great way for the family to socialise and compete in a friendly environment for an hour or two. They also develop concentration skills for the children. Most department stores have a large collection, but you can often track down board games very cheaply at garage sales, on ebay, or from friends whose kids have grown up.