



## Are you hunting for some easy to remember and even easier to manage family rules?

Good news! There are four family rules that you can install today that will change the way you parent and invite your kids (and yourselves) into even greater sense of connection and commitment to one another.

You can certainly add to these, but these four are relatively easy to install. We recommend gathering your family together for a special “Family Meeting” to initiate some initial discussion about your desire as parents to simplify the family rules.

You might begin the family meeting by saying, “Great news everyone. Starting today, there are now only four family rules.” When the hoots, hollers, high fives and fist bumps subside...you can pass around a printed copy of new family rules to each family member or consider giving everyone some paper and markers to write the new rules down.

We even encourage families to make an art project out of them to hang somewhere visible.

### (1) **We use our strength to help, not to hurt.**

Begin with the presumption that each member of your family has inherent strength and a desire to use their strength to help. When we evaluate our decisions through this new filter of this specific family rule, we will be able to determine rather quickly how we used our strength.

### (2) **We call our own fouls.**

Once we make the determination that we used our strength to hurt (and not to help) someone, we can more easily move on to this second rule. It is far more effective for family members to call their own fouls with one another. If a family adopts this rule and installs it, then tattling diminishes and family members can take radical ownership of the ways they may hurt one another.

### (3) **We seek forgiveness.**

When we call our own fouls, we are now in a prime position to effectively and earnestly seek forgiveness from the family member or friend who we hurt.

There are five steps in the seeking forgiveness process;

- (1) I am sorry for \_\_\_\_\_ and how that must have impacted you.
- (2) I can imagine that when I did that it must have made you feel \_\_\_\_\_.
- (3) I am committed to not repeating this again.
- (4) I will work on \_\_\_\_\_ by doing the following things....(name them)
- (5) You have my permission to bring it to my attention if I ever do this again.

### (4) **We make repairs.**

The algorithm for change is willingness + patience + work + time. When we willingly make repairs (write a handwritten note, serve each other intentionally, pursue one on one time with the injured family member or friend, etc) we must do so in the full awareness that we are not operating on our own timeline but on the timeline of the person who was hurt. They may not be ready for step number four. Hang in there. Aim for being more curious and compassionate.