

News Column

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How Much Do You Know?

It's back to school time, and it's all about gaining knowledge. When it comes to relationships, it's a good time to ask, "How much do I know?" Really knowing someone creates a bond. We form connections with others as we get to know more about them. The problem is, with all of the distractions and busyness of life, we often find ourselves out of touch with those we love the most. As we know less about what is going on with each other, distance in our relationships increases and we feel disconnected.

My mom passed away unexpectedly one year ago. As my sisters and I were going through her personal things, we came across a small notebook with lined paper. She had only written on the first few pages. One page was titled, "How I Want to Be Remembered." As we read through the bullet-point list she had written in pencil with her perfect penmanship, we were delighted to find that we had included nearly everything on her list in her obituary and eulogy. We laughed together and cried together as we felt the comfort of realizing that we knew her so well, well enough that when we remembered her, we thought of almost all of the things that she had specifically written she wanted to be remembered by.

How well do you know those you love most? Really knowing someone requires diligent, persistent effort. It is not something that happens accidentally or on its own. Being intentional about asking questions, creating space for talk time, and noticing specific things about an individual allow us to really know them in important ways. It's important to remember that people change over time. It is unlikely that your child's favorite color or favorite doughnut stays the same throughout the years. Your spouse's preferences also change over time.

One of the best ways to connect in meaningful ways and increase what we know about those we love most is to spend one-on-one time together. When you create time to be alone with a spouse, a child, or even a sister or a parent, you get to know each other in ways that you might not in a group. Since the scarcity of time makes it our most precious commodity, spending one-on-one time with a person is also an indication of our love. If a child seems resistant to sharing information about him or herself, be patient and know that privacy is developmentally appropriate for adolescent children. Conscientiously make an effort to guide the conversation in the form of a loving discovery rather than a painful interview. Show those you love that you know them well by surprising them with their favorite dessert, or by showing interest in the sports team they are cheering for.

Working to know those we love most strengthens our relationship with them and communicates our commitment in important ways. Take time today, and each day, to get to know more about those you love most.

Fatherhood classes are available for your group, business, or organization in Juab County free of charge. Contact Natasha Dansie at [natasha.dansie@usu.edu](mailto:natasha.dansie@usu.edu) for more information.