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Saturday 9 April 2016

12 WAYS TO BE AN EXCEPTIONAL LEADER

AUTISM AWARENESS: ARE WE DOING ENOUGH?

CHARISMA

THINK YOU GOT IT?
Blind people smile even though they may have never seen anyone smile.

What sort of things make you happiest?
Share your thoughts with us at editor@leaderonomics.com and we might publish it!


did you know?

Try this!

By Tamara Jayne
editor@leaderonomics.com

Who is the most interesting person that you have met? What attracts you to that person? What makes you enjoy being with him or her?

According to Abraham Maslow’s theory on the Hierarchy of Needs, we have a deep desire to belong. We desire to be liked as individuals and at times we do whatever we can to be liked. It’s only natural. So what are the traits that make charismatic people stand out?

Does Vulnerability Make You More Likeable?

Vulnerability has a way of winning people over. People in leadership and in the limelight often try to hide their flaws for fear of being seen for who they truly are. But the truth is that a little vulnerability goes a long way. When your audience and the people around you know that you are just as real as them, they will be able to relate to you better. We’re all imperfect at the end of the day and we relate to those who are imperfect as well.

Everyone Has a Story to Tell

It is up to us if we are interested enough to listen. Likeable people tend to show interest in…well, everyone! From the quiet girl sitting by herself in the cafeteria, to the janitor who vacuums every Wednesday, to the noisiest clown who jokes around in your department, everyone has a story to tell if we are willing to ask them.

People remember you when you genuinely show interest and care.

“You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.”—Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People

Genuinely Gush about People

Flattery is just insincere words strung together with hidden intentions. Genuine encouragement and applause, on the other hand, shows that you’re not just consumed in your own world. When people genuinely speak well of those they respect and admire, what they are really saying is, “I am comfortable with the fact that someone else is good at something or looks good. I am comfortable with myself.”

Parting Thoughts

The secret of getting along with people is not just having a nice smile and a warm handshake. Sometimes we think charisma is for those with outgoing personalities, those socially accepted, or those who are just plain cheerful and friendly. I’ve noticed that the people most comfortable with themselves tend to exude the most attractive behaviours. Whether they are a blooming teenager or a beautiful 67-year-old, charismatic people project a vibe that draws people to them. So, can charisma be taught? Yes! Be real. Ask for stories. Speak well of others.

Tamara believes that learning never ends. She believes in constantly improving oneself. She is inspired by C.S. Lewis, Max Lucado, and Calvin & Hobbes. To engage with her, feel free to write to tamara.jayne@leaderonomics.com. Article first published on www.leaderonomics.com.
Dear mums and dads,

With the mid-year school holidays around the corner, Leaderonomics is proud to announce that registration for our DIODE Camps starts today!

WHAT ARE DIODE CAMPS?
DIODE Camps are specially designed programmes for students between the ages of 8–19 who are keen to explore their potential and make a difference in the community.
The camps aim to build a solid foundation in leadership for youths through our specialised games, simulations, activities and heartfelt sessions.

We are super excited to invite you to a SPECIAL PREVIEW of our DIODE Camps happening this April.

Choose from any one of the 2-hour sessions in the following dates:

Date : 16th & 23rd April (Saturday)
Time : Morning session - 10am to 12pm
       Afternoon session - 2pm to 4pm
Venue : Suite 9.08 & 9.09, Block E, Phileo Damansara 1,
       9 Jalan 16/11, 46350 PJ, Selangor, Malaysia.
Price : FREE!

*This free preview has limited spaces. Sign up now and come immerse yourself in the wonderful experience of the DIODE camps!

Looking forward to see you soon,

Leaderonomics Youth

For more information, log on to www.diodecamps.com.
For any other specific inquiries, send us an e-mail at diode@leaderonomics.com or call us at 03-79575809.
COURAGE
"Courage is the first virtue that makes all others possible." — Aristotle

People will want to see if a leader is courageous before they’re willing to follow his or her lead. People need courage in their leaders.

They need someone who can make difficult decisions and watch over the good of the group. They need a leader who will stay the course even when things get tough. People are more likely to show courage themselves when they see their leaders do the same.

For the courageous leader, adversity is a welcome test. Unlike a blacksmith’s moulding of a red hot iron, adversity is a trial by fire that refines leaders and sharpens their game.

Adversity emboldens courageous leaders and it motivates them to commit to their strategic direction.

Leaders who lack courage simply fail the company line. They follow the easiest path—the path of least resistance—not because they don’t want to do it, but because they lack the courage to do what needs to be done.

They want to inspire all of their employees. They want to inspire their groups to follow along. People need a leader who will stay the course even when things get tough. People need a leader who will keep them focused on the end goal.

Great leaders are humble. They don’t offer their personal philosophy. They’re not tooting their own horns. But, because they care about each of their employees as an individual.

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The Dark Side of Charismatic Leadership

Why We Should Still Keep a Dose of Scepticism in the Midst of Such Leadership

BY SANDY CLARKE

W

hat is it about charisma that captivates us to the point that people can rally behind it even when the cause may not be 100% just? How can we balance the positive aspects of charisma with the risks of adulation of leaders? And how can leaders themselves avoid falling into the trap of their followers’ adoration?

In theological terms, charisma is a gift or divine inspiration that can confer a god-like status on an individual. It is not a naturally occurring phenomenon but rather, a divine power or influence that can affect people’s lives profoundly. Charisma is often seen as a double-edged sword, with potential benefits and dangers.

Potential Benefits of Charisma

Charismatic leaders inspire massive change and movement. They often have a vision that is shared by a large number of people, and their presence can mobilize large numbers of people to work towards a common goal. This is evident in the case of Martin Luther King Jr., who inspired the Civil Rights Movement, or Barack Obama, who inspired the passage of the Affordable Care Act.

Potential Dangers of Charisma

Charisma can be addictive, both for leaders and followers. Leaders who are charismatic can become addicted to the love from their followers, and their followers can become addicted to the leader’s charisma. This can lead to significant problems in organizations, as the leader may become overly dependent on the followers’ adoration and lose sight of their goals.

3 KEY TRAITS OF CHARISMATIC LEADERS

1. COMMUNICATION

Charismatic leaders are powerful communicators. They can easily motivate and inspire others to take action, even in the face of challenges, and communicate their vision in a way that resonates with their audience.

2. CONFIDENCE

Charismatic leaders are sure of themselves, and they never try to be anyone else. Even when faced with difficulties, they focus on opportunities for solutions rather than dwell on the problem— their optimism and resilience inspire their followers.

3. STRONG BODY LANGUAGE

Often, we can sense charisma in people even before they speak. The way they walk into a room, hold contact and maintain composure, shows an authenticity that permeates their very being. Communication is said to be 20% of what you say and 80% non-verbal, and charismatic leaders have mastered the art of communication.

Potential Dangers of Charisma

1. IT CAN DISGUISE DAMAGING TRAITS

Being naturally drawn to charming people, as most of us allow charismatic people to hide their less attractive characteristics through their charm, we can sometimes overlook their negative traits. This can be particularly dangerous in politics, where charismatic leaders can use their charm to manipulate and deceive.

2. CHARISMA PRODUCES COLLECTIVE narcissism

Charismatic leaders can create a cult-like following that is highly influenced and easily so, as exemplified by the phenomenon seen in cults. This can lead to mass suicide when followers who wholeheartedly believe in the leader’s message lose their way.

3. CHARISMA IS ADDICTIVE

Addiction to the love from others can be fatal. Leaders who are not aware of their own addiction to the love from their followers can become over-reliant on it, and their followers may become over-reliant on the leader's charisma.

3 KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

1. PASSION

Charismatic leaders have a deep passion for their cause, which they communicate with energy and enthusiasm. They inspire others to share their passion and work towards a common goal.

2. AUTHENTICITY

Charismatic leaders are authentic in their communication. They are true to themselves and their vision, and their followers can sense this authenticity, which further strengthens their connection.

3. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Charismatic leaders are excellent communicators, able to convey their vision clearly and effectively. They use various communication channels, from speeches to social media, to reach a wide audience.

POSITIVE LESSONS FROM 4 CHARISMATIC LEADERS

1. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Traits: Passion, Courage, Vision

At the time of King’s “I have a Dream” speech in Washington, D.C., he was in the middle of a march for civil rights. The march on Washington was the biggest rally for racial equality in American history. The speech and the march had a profound impact on the Civil Rights Movement, leading to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Lesson: The power of passion and vision can inspire massive change.

2. EVA PERÓN

Traits: Compassion, Generosity

Determination

While known as Evita, thanks to the musical of the same name, Eva Perón was a powerful figure in her own right. She worked tirelessly to help the poor and advance women’s rights, and her influence on Argentine politics was profound.

Lesson: Leaders who are passionate about improving the lives of others can make a significant impact.

3. AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Traits: Resilience, Conscience, Gratitude

For 20 years, Suu Kyi endured house arrest as a prisoner of conscience in Myanmar. Having returned from being forced into exile, she became a key figure in the pro-democracy movement, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

Lesson: Leaders who are willing to sacrifice for their cause can inspire others to do the same.

4. BARACK OBAMA

Traits: Resilience, Audacity, Determination

Obama is acutely aware of the fact that, as president, he is a symbol of hope to his followers. He has worked hard to unite people behind a cause and has led to a number of significant achievements, including the Affordable Care Act, which has helped millions gain access to healthcare.

Lesson: Leaders who are willing to take on significant challenges can inspire others to do the same.
A POP OF CHARISMA
ADD COLOUR AND BRIGHTEN YOUR WARDROBE FOR WORK

By JOSHUA DESMOND
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T
he Cambridge Dictionary defines charisma as, “a special power that some people have naturally that makes them able to influence other people and attract their attention and admiration.”

In comics, superheroes were often guided by a superior person or being who enabled them to master their superpowers. Professor X would attest to this, having had numerous students under his tutelage. There are a bunch of ways you can make charisma your superpower. From experience, I’ve found fashion to be a great catalyst.

In my last article, we touched on understanding office dress codes, and how the right styling as well as a decent sense of fashion can elevate your image at work. Now that you’ve got the basics covered, let’s learn how bright colours at work can shine some light on that charisma in you. After all, a little bit more attention won’t hurt your confidence. The ladies might be more gung-ho for this, but guys, don’t be afraid to spice things up at work with a little bit of colour too. Remember, superheroes (except maybe Batman) weren’t afraid of a little colour.

PATTERNS, COLOURS AND PRINTS
If you’re going for colours with patterns, I’d advise some caution. Pick the right combination of colours and patterns. Start with shapes and Aztec prints. They are in trend and work with a variety of colours. Remember, weird patterns plus bright colours are best kept for raves. Guys take note: Weird patterns and bright colours on suits, not cool too.

There are a variety of dresses out there to choose from. Bright-coloured dresses with neutral accompaniments will make your dress pop while patterned dresses add a little more depth and edge. Remember, when dealing with patterns, pay attention to the design. They can get pretty messy and tasteless. Keep it simple and not too complicated. Leave the avant-garde style for the runways and galleries. Once again, Pinterest is your best friend. You can always count on it to point you in the right direction.

Also, here’s a tip: If you’re thinking of going all trendy with bright-coloured hair (that’s if your company is cool enough to allow funky hair colours), tone down on the coloured outfits. It can work in a creative environment but it’s just too much in a corporate setting. Stay with the minimalist, monochrome looks. If you have to, have one more item complimenting the hair colour and let the hair stand out further.

I hear some of you say, “What if I liked my outfits in neutral colours but still want some added colour?” Normally, I’d say you don’t always get what you want, but that’s the thing about fashion; where there’s a will, there’s a way. Change up the shoes. Go for bright, pastel-coloured heels or flats, colourful sneakers for casual Fridays and if all else fails, coloured accessories! Bracelets, necklaces, earrings, the possibilities are endless. A neutral outfit with a touch of colour is enough to add charisma to your look.

SHOPPING BASICS: THE MINIMALIST
OK, so the biggest mistake you can make when it comes to wearing colour at work is trying to wear every possible colour you have in one outfit. That just makes you look like a clown. You don’t want that unless you intend to go from superhero to comic relief. So how do you add colour without sticking out like a sore thumb?

Rule number one, keep the basics in play—the blacks, the whites, the blues, the neutrals and the greys. On some occasions, multiple colours do work, but not all the time. So let’s say you’ve got this bright red flared skirt and you’re thinking of pairing it with a dark green top.

Instead pair a bright skirt with a white top, neutral-hued heels and clutch, and let the skirt stand out. Too many colours will confuse people and the clothes end up wearing you instead of you wearing them.

Guys, let’s talk about you for a moment. If you’re in a suit all day, play around with bright-coloured ties, pocket squares or different coloured shirts. If you want to try bright-coloured blazers, maintain a neutral-coloured pair of pants and vice versa. Imagine a bright green suit... ugh! If you’re just a shirt and slacks kind of guy, again, colourful ties or coloured suspenders work just as well to add a bit of character to your usual look.

For casual Fridays, pair a bright-coloured, fitted polo tee with a pair of jeans and sneakers. Pair a white shirt with light blue khakis and a pair of Chucks. Play around with the colours but always remember to have a neutral colour present to maintain balance.

Still with me? Let’s talk about sneakers. This applies to both guys and girls. I previously mentioned colourful sneakers, and they are great, but you must know how to differentiate between the tasteful and the tacky. Don’t be stingy and drop some dough on a well-designed pair from brands like Adidas, Nike, Converse and more. Pick colours that complement your overall wardrobe.

FOR MEN ONLY: TOPS, BOTTOMS AND SHOES

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BY JOSHUA DESMOND
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Joshua Desmond is a recording artist and an award-winning adman. Between music and work, he moonlights as a freelance image consultant and stylist. He works closely with Paperplane Pursuit and has appeared in publications such as Juice, Masses, August Man and Esquire. He was one of the Top 5 in Esquire Malaysia’s Best Dressed Real Man in 2014. He believes style does not require a huge bank account, just the right amount of inspiration and resourcefulness. To engage with us for more style tips, e-mail training@leaderonomics.com. For more Image Matters articles, log on to www.leaderonomics.com.
“No matter how high you climb a corporate ladder or how many awards you win, you don’t let the pride of life and materialism consume you.”

CEOs of Citi Malaysia Lee Lung Nien
sharing his leadership insights.

By LIN LAY HUJIAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

LEADERONOMICS caught up with Citi Malaysia chief executive officer Lee Lung Nien after his leadership knowledge sharing session with S P Setia leadership and their high potential talents at the S P Setia corporate office in Setia Alam. Lee, who has been with Citi for over 25 years, is a leader whose range of talents go beyond banking. For those who know him, Lee plays the drums and has even performed with Gurmit Singh (more famously known as Phua Chu Kang) in Singapore and Malaysia. He also races go-karts and is the current Asian Rotax Max Challenge Champion as well as the Singapore X30 Challenge Champion.

During his leadership talk, Lee made four key points that will help us live life to the fullest and learn to be the best versions of ourselves at work and at play.

1) KEEP YOUR FEET GROUNDED
Lee comes from a family that had its early roots in Malaysia. His paternal grandfather was a Methodist pastor in Sitianwan, Perak, before the family moved down to Singapore. His father, an engineer, was a respected senior civil servant in Singapore.

“Their beliefs were ingrained in me from a young age. I was taught good values such as honesty, truthfulness and humility, as well as the conscience to always do what is right. These early lessons have proved valuable through the years.”

“No matter how high you climb a corporate ladder or how many awards you win, you don’t let the pride of life and materialism consume you,” Lee says.

According to him, to keep one’s feet grounded and not lose oneself in the journey to success, one needs to keep the right company. When we surround ourselves with good, honest and hardworking people, we will naturally gravitate towards similar values and good work ethics.

2) NEVER COMPROMISE ON INTEGRITY
As a leader, people look up to you for clear direction and purpose and need you to project a strong sense of public duty. Being in the position of authority like Lee’s, means he is highly responsible in setting the right cultural tone for organisational integrity. And compromising on integrity is non-negotiable.

“In all that I do or decide, I’m always guided by what is right and wrong. I firmly believe it’s through integrity that you and the people under your care will enjoy the fruits of their labour meaningfully.”

3) ALWAYS LEARNING
Rick Warren, author of The Purpose Driven Life, once quoted: “The moment you stop learning, you stop leading. I learn as much as I can, from as many as I can, as often as I can.”

The aspect of learning is emphasised by Lee several times throughout the interview. You know he lives and breathes by it, looking at his impressive repertoire of achievements at his professional and personal capacity.

In all his years as a banker, Lee still finds himself learning and growing with the company. He has served across different businesses around the world, taking up new challenges and new roles, equipping himself with knowledge and skills he did not have before, and doing his best to deliver on what is expected of him. Commitment to a job and good execution go hand in hand.

Lee has learnt from the best in their respective disciplines to enable him to produce the best results. In karting, for example, Lee is coached by two leading experts in the technical aspects of karting and race craft, namely Rodney Magnus who worked at the OTK kart factory in Italy and Matusura Masanori who was a mechanic to Formula One greats such as Michael Schumacher, Felipe Massa and Fernando Alonso.

4) GO THE EXTRA MILE
During Lee’s leadership sharing, someone from the audience asked if luck played a part in contributing to his admirable success.

Lee responded by giving the lucky draw analogy, “Your lucky number may have been announced, but if you’re away in the restroom, you missed being in the position to collect your prize.”

Hence, luck is what you make out of it, ensuring you are willing to get your hands dirty to make things happen. “Similarly, when a window of opportunity opens up, you need to be ready to step up to seize the chance.”

CEOs of Citi Malaysia Lee Lung Nien

talks about leadership and best talent.

We invite you to write in to editor@leaderonomics.com to share your experiences and takeaway lessons from any leader you personally know. He/she can be a leader in your family, school, university or company. Here is your chance to reflect and acknowledge your leader, and get your feedback published!

At Leaderonomics, we interview great leaders on a weekly basis. To watch some of our great interviews with game-changing leaders, go to YouTube and subscribe to the “Leaderonomics Media” channel. Scan the QR code above to find out more.
April is Autism Awareness Month. Let’s do our part in creating awareness and improving understanding of autism. If you have any stories or comments you would like to share, drop us an e-mail at editor@leaderonomics.com.

A SPECTRUM OF POSSIBILITIES

IN HONOUR OF AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH, LEADERONOMICS SPEAKS TO CHARLENE MARIE, PROGRAMME CONSULTANT AT AUTISM CONSULTANCY, ABOUT THE INSIGHTS AND LESSONS SHE’S LEARNT FROM OVER EIGHT YEARS OF BEING AN APPLIED BEHAVIOURAL ANALYSIS (ABA) THERAPIST AS WELL AS HER TIME AS A CONSULTANT AT CHILD SPECIALIST CLINICS AND LECTURER. MARIE SHARES WITH LOUIZA DEAVADSON ABOUT THE STATE OF SUPPORT AND INCLUSION IN MALAYSIA FOR THOSE COPING WITH DEVELOPMENT DELAYS.

Tell me about the importance of children with development delays being accepted into mainstream education and workplaces.

In my experience, when we take our kids to a public place like the supermarket to learn community skills, many people express their unhappiness—going as far as calling the children crazy—because of behaviours and ticks inherent to autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

When these children are allowed to be excluded, ignorance prevails and we, as a harmonious society, do not grow. It hinders our empathy towards others.

The more integrated these kids are into society, the more we can learn to readjust and adapt to a whole spectrum of people as well as understand the different ways they learn and communicate.

You may think that due to special education or whatever needs you have, you are separate and not part of society. That’s the problem. When you are not welcomed as part of society, no one will learn what any of this is and they will never learn to manage these diversities as you would manage your talkative friend versus your very quiet friend.

Everything about your life becomes separate from most of society. Inclusion doesn’t really exist. We’re trying to include but without knowledge and understanding it is difficult to achieve.

What are some of the struggles faced by those with development delays transitioning to mainstream schools and workplaces?

Most mainstream classes are too large to target specific behaviours of individual children or their specific needs. I am currently working with an organisation who has been planning something truly amazing to put into place. It runs mainstream education classes but also has created intermediary classes that sit between special education and mainstream education that addresses individual needs.

The skill to support these delays is also a flexible but current challenge. Many educators we have worked with are unaware of what ASD is. They have never even heard of it. Some schools are honest and say straight up, “I’m sorry we don’t have the resources to support your child’s needs.” I respect that but it is frustrating to see so many doors close for these children. It is easier to say “no” because the idea of change and aids and what-not coming into one’s institution sounds intrusive and inconvenient. However, it is a solvable issue with training, education and awareness as well as understanding the role of shadow aides and intervention.

Support is another struggle. Many advanced countries are aozns ahead of us and have streamlined student support for not only children with development delays but even students facing hardship or inflicted by mental illnesses like depression. Schools provide or have access to speech therapists, school psychologists and counsellors so both parents and students can seek help and guidance from the school. Most teachers in these countries are trained to manage diversity and be quite flexible when it comes to their teaching style.

Not only that, the job scope for those who successfully complete any programme or education is limited. We still delegate menial, repetitive and mechanical tasks to people with development delays. We don’t realise these people can be writers and thinkers and do so much more. Furthermore, most intervention ends in the late teens, so most of them reach adulthood and have no support or guidance to go anywhere from here. So really, it’s quite isolating for most of them when they become adults.

They don’t get to have dreams of being teachers and engineers.

I’ve personally met a wonderful teacher with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and a writer with Asperger’s, so I know it’s absolutely possible.

What are some of the current policies and intervention available in Malaysia?

The Ministry of Education in Malaysia has implemented the Program Pendidikan Khaskan Iskandar in our government school system. It’s basically a special needs class within mainstream schools. Children with development delays are sorted of included but not fully as they do not participate in any mainstream classes.

Sad ly, one of the oversights of this programme is that the children are dumped together without assessing their needs and stages of development. Also, children with ASD do not have the same needs as children with dyslexia, and children with ASD and/or dyslexia do not have the same needs as those with cerebral palsy or Down syndrome, but they are all pooled together. This system is a good effort, but education has to be further individualised and diversified because teaching a child with speech delays is very different from one without speech delays. It is a restructuring necessary from top to bottom as some of these policies even affect typically developed students.

I think that’s why private education entities, like ours, and many other centres are becoming increasingly popular because these centres customise each programme to suit each child’s needs. However, our ultimate goal as therapists is to mainstream when we can and support our kids in becoming independent and functional in diverse settings.

In Malaysia, it can feel like a roller-coaster ride because you have to figure out where the psychologist is, find an early intervention centre and beg schools to take your child in. Then they have to decide if their child needs occupational therapy or speech therapy or whatever else. Also, because we are yet to become streamlined, my reports or notes differ from other therapists or the school, and this creates more confusion for the families and institutions we try to work with when creating a programme.

How can we, as ordinary people, make things better?

Be open, be empathetic and allow judgements to take a back seat. Learn to ask more questions. It would be great if these things were taught in physical education or even as a part of moral studies, just to create awareness. Diversity management is at the epicentre of successful institutions and organisations now. Starting young is the most effective way to learn. Parents can impart values like openness and empathy to their kids. Learning from an early age to accept that “some of my friends can talk and some cannot” or “my friend is great at colouring but I am not” will definitely be a good start to making things better.
BE SPONTANEOUS
Tip: Go for a late night car ride and share what’s going on in each other’s life. Grab some ice-cream or supper! Pack some HOT chocolate in spill-proof cups and go for a spin or even just a walk around the neighbourhood!

EXPRESS APPRECIATION TOWARDS EACH OTHER WITH GIFTS AND LITTLE NOTES
Tip: be CREATIVE. It doesn’t have to be a fancy card or a huge gift. A post-it note on their textbook or handbag with a joke or uplifting sentiment will put a smile on their face. Cute trinkets, HOMEMADE treats or good old chocolate never fails to liven up someone’s day.

WHISPER THE THREE IMPORTANT WORDS, “I LOVE YOU”
Tip: Make it fun by using a FOREIGN language like Hokkien “Wa Ai Lu” or Japanese “Aishiteru.”

HUG IT OUT
Tip: Sometimes a gentle squeeze of the arm, pat on the back or firm hug can say so much more than words can ever strive to do. So, SQUEEZE one another real tight!

Family bonding is essential in today’s modern society. In this day and age, parents often work long hours, and children are involved in a plethora of academic, co-curricular and social activities. Home, ideally, ought to be the place where we feel loved, cherished and safe.

Home should be the place we long to return to, where our support system dwells, and not be the place we want to run far away from. Therefore, creating strong bonds is pivotal, if one seeks to safeguard a happy and healthy family.

THICKER THAN WATER
TIPS FOR CREATING A STRONGER FAMILY UNIT

01
HAVE A MEAL TOGETHER EVERY WEEK. NO ELECTRONIC GADGETS ALLOWED
Tip: Eat-out or cook together or even take turns planning a menu. Include everyone in meal planning whether it means picking a dish or choosing a restaurant. Meals are most people’s favourite time of the day, so make the most of it!

02
BE THOUGHTFUL, SHOW THEM YOU CARE ABOUT THE LITTLE THINGS
Tip: Everyone has things he or she loves or is particular about. While you can’t do them all, you can pick a couple for each member of the family. Does Dad like breakfast in bed? Does it make Mum happy when you help with the dishes? Does your sibling enjoy it when you make time to play a video game with them?

03
PLAN AN OUTING FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY
Tip: Play games TOGETHER. Charades anybody? Create a family “bucket list” and try to tick them off together. Everyone had a rough day? Pop in a movie or head to the cinema!

04
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06
HUG IT OUT
Tip: Sometimes a gentle squeeze of the arm, pat on the back or firm hug can say so much more than words can ever strive to do. So, SQUEEZE one another real tight!

07
BE SPONTANEOUS
Tip: Go for a late night car ride and share what’s going on in each other’s life. Grab some ice-cream or supper! Pack some HOT chocolate in spill-proof cups and go for a spin or even just a walk around the neighbourhood!

By FAITH FOO and JEREMY LIM
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A HAPPY FAMILY IS BUT AN EARLIER HEAVEN.”
— George Bernard Shaw

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7 NON-VERBAL CUES THAT Ooze CONFIDENCE

1. HAVE A FIRM HANDSHAKE
   It shows confidence and conveys that you are genuine. A limp handshake implies half-heartedness and disinterest towards the person you are shaking hands with.

2. MAINTAIN BALANCED EYE CONTACT
   If you’re anxious about looking at someone in the eye, focus on their nose or between their eyes. They won’t be able to tell that you are not making eye contact because you’re still looking at them. However, too much eye contact can seem intimidating. Communication experts recommend intervals of eye contact lasting four to five seconds.

3. LEAN
   When you lean your body slightly towards the person, you show that you are actively listening to what he or she has to say. When you angle your body away from the speaker, it can imply that you don’t care about the situation or conversation.

4. SMILE
   A genuine smile speaks a thousand words, but be careful not to fake it because it is easy to spot a fake smile.

5. BE ATTENTIVE TO TONE
   A person’s tone of voice can change the whole meaning of a sentence. “I am happy to do that for you,” can be heard as genuine joy or utter displeasure depending on the tone you use.

6. BE MINDFUL OF PERSONAL SPACE
   How close or how far you stand from the other person can also convey a message. Moving too close to someone can be an invasion of personal space and may make the other person feel uncomfortable. An appropriate distance for conversation would be if you are able to stretch out your arm and shake the other person’s hand.

7. TAKE EXTRA CARE OF YOUR APPEARANCE
   Choice of colour, hairstyle, and clothing can convey different messages. Experts advise you to do your homework and dress appropriately for a job interview because first impressions do play a role. For example, a person’s attire for an interview with a fashion magazine company will differ from that of a law firm. Dressing appropriately for the particular job shows your prospective employers that you are serious about it.

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