

Family

By Brody Daerr

I feel that a close family relationship is so important yet is very undervalued in today's world. When I say a close-knit family, I do not mean the obligated feeling we all have had when it comes to family. This being the family you are forced to be around during events such as weddings, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. What I really mean are those family members that make us laugh, feel good, and loved. Learning to appreciate family and not take them for granted was something I had to learn after moving changed my life.

Growing up in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, I was surrounded by extended family, five of them to be exact. Considering we all lived on the same street, I grew very close to all of them. It would be nothing for me to tell my parents that I was going to Grammy's for lunch, Aunt Vicky's and Uncle Bob's for a sleepover, or Pap Pap's and Grandma's for ice cream. I can vividly remember spending every scorching hot day in my Gram's cool refreshing pool. It's these events that I look back on with heavy nostalgia and fond memories. My neighborhood was filled with love, warmth, and good times, especially coming from a close Italian family where we always gathered for dinners. For us, the door was always open.

Unfortunately, it had to come to an end when I was about 13 years old, as my mom got a major career promotion that she could not pass up. Because of this, our family moved three hours away. At the time, I remember having mixed emotions. On one hand I really wanted to stay "home" and stay close to my family and friends, but on the other hand I wanted to move into a new house and do new things. It was truly hard going through my normal day-to-day after the decision to move was made, knowing that I would not be able to experience this anymore.

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After the long and drawn-out process of having to move, I found myself very unhappy and not adjusting well. My whole new environment was different and something I had never experienced before. I felt homesick, thinking that I was missing out and not included. Looking back, I can not count the number of times I laid in my bed wondering if when I finally saw them again, the connection would be lost somehow. The only thing I was looking forward to at the time was seeing everyone again. As luckily, there was a family wedding quickly approaching.

As it got closer and closer, not only did my excitement grow, but my worries too as to what it would be like. The day finally came, and I was reunited with all of my family again just to find out that my worries were for nothing. They missed me just as much as I missed them. At this get together, we had the greatest time and the most fun we had in a long time even while I was still living in Pittsburgh. It was here where I realized the most important lesson of my life, that I should appreciate the times I spend with my family instead of hating the times I am not. Now every time we are together, it feels special. An experience that felt mundane when I was younger, now feels memorable and full filling.

Looking back, it was stupid to think that moving three hours away would ruin any relationship I had with my family. I now appreciate the saying, "absence makes the heart grow stronger." It really rings true to life. It is a natural part of life to move away or move on, but you must remember that your family is there for you no matter the distance. If you never move on or adapt to the changes in your life, you will always be unsatisfied thinking of the past instead of motivated for the future.