

THE NO.1 BESTSELLER

FLIP IT

How to get the best
out of everything



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FLIP IT

So let's Flip It and re-run the same situation, but this time let's use this newfound knowledge.

MAN: *'Hi sweetheart! How was your day?'*

WOMAN: *'Fine ... except ...'*

MAN: *'Except what?'*

WOMAN: *'My boss is driving me nuts. He completely overlooks me, gives me all the crappy jobs and nit-picks over the smallest things.'*

MAN: *'Tell me more.'*

WOMAN: *'Oh, you know, I probably take it too personally, but in the last week there must have been half a dozen times when he's made me feel like a second-class citizen.'*

MAN: *'Really? Tell me more.'*

WOMAN: *'Oh, there's no more. I'm just venting.'*

MAN: *'I know, but I'm happy to listen. Tell me about it.'*

WOMAN: *'Well, on Tuesday ...'*

Got that fellas? Good.

Now here's a tip for the ladies.

When your bloke gets in from work, let him watch the news or sport in his 'cave' (the lounge) for half an hour or so before you attempt any form of sensible communication.

That's it. Simple. But then men are.

Men and women are different in many ways. *The same differences that make intimate relationships wonderful one day can destroy them the next.* Recognising this and enhancing the good parts while eliminating the bad parts is the key to a successful loving relationship.

Lasting love

I've been in love with my wife for more of my life than I haven't. That's pretty good going when you're only 44.

I've found that invariably it's the little things that can make or break a relationship. Those small things that show you love, care about and

respect someone are so vital. Get them right and you've got a rock-solid foundation for your love.

Here are a few of the things we do for each other – see if they inspire you to come up with your own small ways of showing how important you are to each other.

- ★ **Getting a pasting:** Whenever we go to bed, whoever goes into the bathroom first puts the toothpaste on both toothbrushes. I can't remember when or why we started to do this, but it's both simple and lovely.
- ★ **Vintage texting:** Leaving love notes isn't a new idea, but thanks to the advent of texting it's a lost one. Yes, it is lovely to receive a text from your partner but finding a hand-written note in your sock drawer is magical.
- ★ **Icy start:** One of the most amazing things my wife does for me is that she defrosts my car in the winter. I can't tell you how wonderful it feels to get into a warm car with a clear windscreen, especially when you are in a hurry.
- ★ **Giving compliments:** It's so easy to criticise the person who is closest to you. Flip It and find something to compliment your partner on every day. If it's hard to find – look harder!
- ★ **Mix tape:** It's never been easier to create a special CD for your lover thanks to iTunes and other music players. Just create the playlist, stick in a CD and click 'burn'. But you can make it even more special by writing an accompanying track listing with why you chose each song.
- ★ **Saying 'I love you':** How many times would you have to hear those words before you got sick of them? Exactly. So if you haven't said it today, tell him or her right now.

So there's a start for you. Finding love is the most amazing experience you will have. And who knows, when love goes well and relationships blossom, the next step for many is to grow that love and start a family.

Family

Oh yes, good old family. Let's start with an easy one.

How to get your kids to clear their plates and tidy their rooms without asking them.

I carried out a training day for a further education college prior to their inspection. They were very busy and couldn't close the college for a day, so we had to hold the training on a Saturday.

On the posters and invitations the organisers listed what staff would learn if they were prepared to give up their day off and come to my presentation. Last on the list was one sentence which read: 'Find out how to get your kids to tidy their bedrooms without asking, bribing or nagging.'

Ninety-eight per cent of the college staff turned up! Guess what they all wanted to know? You've got it.

The brilliance of this technique is that it can be used to encourage anyone to do almost anything. I bet that's got your attention.

Here's how it works. Children, especially teenagers, come pre-programmed with an automatic aversion to tidying their rooms. Most parents use nagging and cajoling to try to persuade their kids to tidy up. It doesn't work. So what do they do? The crazy parents push harder.

Faced with this exact predicament with our son, Christine and I halted our conventional thinking and decided to Flip It. Our idea was radical and came with a fair amount of risk.

From that day on, we decided to give only positive feedback to our son about his room. We would search for somewhere he'd made tidy or for something he'd put away or cleaned and compliment him on it. Some days that was a tough call!

After initial confusion, including the revelation from him that he 'knew exactly what we were doing', we stuck with it. It took around



two weeks to see a difference but slowly and surely his room became tidier. In fact, much tidier!

Conventional **persuasion techniques**

don't often persuade, they just appear to
be easier and provide a **quick fix**.

Families deserve more

Building on what's right

Imagine for a moment you focused all your energy on what was right with your family. What might it be like? Most families, for one reason or another, end up being lazy in their relationships. At first it's not a big deal, but then when things are going wrong they try to fix them but it's too late.

I've met fathers who focus more on 'the business deal' than they do on their amazing daughters. I've seen wives who care more about promotion than they do about their partner. And too many husbands who care more about their ego than they do about anyone or anything.

It's easy to be lazy in a family relationship because often the cost isn't clear until it's too late. Families forgive faster than friends. Families will take more crap than colleagues. And families make excuses for their loved ones and put up with more than is necessary.

Face it – we can all do better.

Here are 10 things you can do with relatives, from your closest to your most extended, that are guaranteed to make a family fantastic.

- 1 Start dating (your partner):** When you first met your partner, how much effort did you put in to your relationship? How much time did you spend preparing for a date? You were on time, you looked great, you created excitement and you cared – really cared. You gave compliments and focused on all the things that were right about your partner. How much of that could you revive or refresh?

- 2 Record your parents (or grandparents):** I've recently started to record my parents telling stories about their past. It's amazing what you don't know or have forgotten. The best bit is, with the advent of new technology, it's never been easier to record and store these tales for future nostalgia.
- 3 Eat together:** Most families don't and it's such a shame. The family meal is a fantastic way to catch up with each other at the end of a busy day – to share and care.
- 4 'Date' your children:** If you have children, find opportunities to have time with them one on one. I have fond memories of a time I took my daughter to a fancy restaurant and she could hardly see over the edge of the table.
- 5 Dads' and lads' days:** Mums can have their version of these days too, but there's nothing quite like a bit of male bonding. Grrrrr.
- 6 Spend longer with older relatives:** I've found myself saying 'I haven't got much time' before I've even got through the door when visiting some of my older relatives. If you've done that too, it's time to Flip It and find a way to share a little more of your day.
- 7 Give great presents:** Most people don't really think about what to give family members and often end up giving a voucher or cheque. It really is a limiting belief to use language like, 'I never know what to give them'. Flip It and instead ask yourself, 'What would be a brilliant present for ...?'
- 8 Have a gathering:** Make contact with your extended family and have a reunion. Go on, I dare you. This could be the only time your family come together when it's not a wedding or funeral.
- 9 Gather some souvenirs for your siblings:** You knew your brothers and sisters when they were kids ('cos you were too). These unique relationships give you an exceptional opportunity to put together a memory box, scrap book or album that only you and your siblings will truly understand.
- 10 Tell them how much you love them:** Saying 'I love you' to a family member can be a stretch if you're not used to it but, as I said before, who do you know who doesn't want to hear it? Share the love – verbally.

Working on relationships is challenging but very rewarding, especially when you are faced with one of life's tragic but great certainties.

The loss of a loved one

It is an inevitable part of life that people will die. Can Flip It help during these times? I believe so. In fact I believe that often our own Flip It thinking takes over naturally during these times. We remember what we cherished about the person, we come together, we show compassion and we care.

During the process of grieving many people feel guilt. They may be aware that they haven't seen or spoken to a person for some time. Perhaps some things were left unsaid or they could have given more to the relationship.

Grieving is a natural and expected process. Some people appear to be dealing with the loss of a loved one very well by refusing to grieve, only for their grief to manifest itself in other ways. There are three stages of grief.

- ★ **Stage 1: Shock.** Often people feel shocked and have a sense of disbelief when they experience the loss of a loved one. This can last from a few hours to days or weeks. At this time the distress comes in waves, which are often triggered by emotional stimuli. If you lose someone close it can be very difficult to find time for yourself to actually mourn. There are arrangements to make, visitors to care for and all this without a person who would usually be there to support you. Here's a time when you can Flip It and ask to be left alone to grieve.
- ★ **Stage 2: Confrontation.** The feeling of loss at this stage is high and the ability to cope seems distant. People deal with this in many ways. They have difficulty sleeping and eating, search for reasons for the loss, feel distant, withdraw socially, feel guilty and can express anger for what other people have in their lives. At this time of wanting to be shut off from the world it's actually a very important time to Flip It again and this time welcome support.
- ★ **Stage 3: Acceptance.** Being able to begin accepting a loss shows that a person is starting to cope with their situation. As with each stage it doesn't happen instantly, but there are things you can do to get to this stage more quickly.