



5 steps to return to the table

Connect, reconnect and heal
your family by sharing good food
together.



Even though you're working hard to provide for your children, do you feel like something is missing in your family life?

Too often, long hours and hectic schedules come with a price. That price is a disconnect in family relationships.

Children crave feeling connected to their parents and siblings. Yet the time to talk to them and really know what they're thinking and feeling is so hard to come by.

In our society, even the weekends have become a rush from one activity to another. As parents, we're often torn between providing and nurturing. But we can do **both**.

In 30 minutes a day, we can deepen our family bonds and create a legacy so rich it will last for generations.

I'm excited to share what has worked for my family. It's fun and easier than you might think to nourish your children's bodies as well as their emotions when you return to the table.

This 5-step guide will help you create an experience so satisfying, your children will be on time and eager to share good food together. Step Five is the goal—when the magic happens.

Let's get your family seated at the table!





Step One: *State Your Why to Your Family*

Invite your family to a special dinner at home. Be clear it will be at least an hour for family only.

Prepare one of their favorite homemade dinners and add a surprise with a new food. It could be as simple as an exotic fruit plate and dark chocolate for dessert.

Save a few last minutes of preparation to enlist their help—like tossing a salad and toasting bruschetta.

Be creative setting the table. Add an unusual element like your grandmother's teapot filled with fresh flowers. Be prepared to tell a family history story to start the conversation.



Give them about 20 minutes to share their news and relax. Then talk with your family about how you value time together and why you plan to gather them every night at the table.

Explain you are creating a new family experience to nourish them well and make lasting memories. Be sure to let them know you are creating this together and value their input on the details.

You might want to take a photo to mark the day and keep as a family memory.





Step Two: *Involve Everyone in Creating the Experience*

Ask for ideas on setting the family dinner table. For example, who might want to shop with you and help create a seasonal arrangement? Collect other family heirlooms to add to the tradition of your table. Encourage fun ideas such as theme nights.

Create a list of foods and meals that everyone loves. An exciting variety ensures dinner together is eagerly anticipated. This can also become your family menu.

Assign everyone a task for meal preparation. Families working side by side create unity and teach the value of teamwork. The process of returning to the table becomes effortless when everyone has a role in preparing a delicious meal.





Step Three: *Be Ready with Some Conversation Starters*

Remember, the goal is to share good food and so much more. You're creating an experience than lends itself to talking and deepening priceless family bonds.

Be prepared with topics or questions you can ask to ignite the conversation. Make it memorable, interesting and even educational.

Returning to the table is the pathway to the best teaching opportunity you have as a parent. Simply expressing gratitude for the bounty at your table can open the door to a conversation about compassion and giving to those less fortunate.





Step Four: *Think about How You Eat and Slow It Down*

Returning to the table is about the healing power of food—both physically and emotionally.

In a relaxed state, the body digests properly. Let your family know their health is important to you and something money can't buy.

Start them off with an aperitif. A fun drink such as lavender lemonade signals it's time to slow down and connect to each other. Encourage laughter and even a song.



Teach your children to chew slowly and breathe in between bites. Show them how to savor their food. And what a great metaphor for life! Add intrigue to encourage this new habit. Who can guess your secret ingredient in the pasta sauce?

Slowing down your fast eaters is aided by serving dinner in courses. Start with soup, salad or a small plate like melon and thin slices of fine ham.

Clear the first course before placing the main course on the table. Instead of plating food in the kitchen, give your family a sensory delight with the aroma and sight of a large platter of tangy chicken surrounded by a rainbow of fresh vegetables.

Serving in courses not only aids digestion and benefits health, it naturally creates the time for your family to talk on a deeper level.





Step Five: *Sit Together 30 to 45 Minutes for Lasting Connections*

For the first 20 minutes at the family dinner table, the conversation centers around sharing the news of the day and planning tomorrow's logistics.

The goal is to keep your family at the table for 30 to 45 minutes. It might help to increase by 5 minutes each day until you reach your goal.

This is the best part—this is when the magic happens.

After 20 minutes, everyone is feeling satiated and happy. The family small talk is out of the way, and you're all relaxed.



This is when your children start to open up to you. This is the magic because every day you'll know what your children are thinking and feeling. In real time!

Before they tell their troubles to a friend, they'll have the time to tell you. And you'll have the time to listen and guide them based on ***your*** family values.



Crystal Harabedian Your suggestions are so priceless! Thank you for such valuable content. My family is closer than ever, thanks to you!

Love · Reply · Message · 4w



“I don't know what it is about food your mother makes for you, especially when it's something that anyone can make - pancakes, meat loaf, tuna salad - but it carries a certain taste of memory.”

— Mitch Albom

I hope you eat well tonight and you eat together!

Ciao!

Caterina

Join Our
Return To The Table
Community

