



The Intentional Family: Simple Rituals to Strengthen Family Ties

William J. Doherty

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Today's family is in crisis. Many diverse factors have combined to weaken its structure in American society: the conflicting needs and schedules of dual working parents; the ongoing fragmentation of our civic, cultural, and religious communities; the prevalence of divorce and remarriage; the advent of technological distractions like video games and computers. What was once a strong, cohesive unit has become, in many cases, no more than a loose grouping of individuals with individual timetables and agendas. However, now more than ever before, we have the freedom to shape the kind of family we want, rather than an obligation to conform to inflexible concepts of what a family should be.

Nationally respected family therapist William J. Doherty believes that we can strengthen the ties that bind us together-and create new, more permanent ones in the process-through the use of family-specific everyday rituals. *The Intentional Family* -- a practical guide to avoiding conflicts and promoting understanding -- offers a myriad of simple yet effective methods for opening regular channels of communication between parents and their children, husbands and wives: from shared family meals and vacations, to regular "storytime," weekly drives, religious services, and monthly "spouse only" romantic dinners. Clearly presented and engagingly written, here are proven and indispensable strategies for reviving a lost sense of family -- useful guidelines that will help us make the most of our most important relationships.

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