
A PRINTABLE WORKBOOK FOR FAMILIES

The Whole Human Family Summer

Eleven weeks of living differently — together.

*“The most powerful curriculum you will ever build
is the one your children watch you live.”*

For families with children ages 5 to 15
Print at home · Use over eleven weeks · Begin anytime

WELCOME

What This Is

You're holding eleven weeks of intentional family life. Not a curriculum to deliver to your kids — a way of being together that adults and children build alongside each other.

Schools were designed for a world that no longer exists. They optimize for test scores, grade point averages, and college acceptance rates. Those things are real. They are not the same as a life well-lived.

The skills that most directly determine whether a person ends up genuinely happy, capable, and connected — how to understand your own emotions, how to repair after conflict, how to take care of the body you live in, how to build a craft you love, how to know what you actually value — are almost entirely absent from what schools teach. This workbook is a small attempt to fill that gap.

“You cannot teach what you have not lived. That is why this is built for the whole family.”

THE STRUCTURE

Eleven weeks. Five themes.

The summer is organized around five themes — what we call *pillars* — that thread through almost every aspect of a thoughtful adult life. Each pillar gets roughly two weeks. The pace is deliberately slow. The point is not to cover material; the point is to live it.

WEEK	PILLAR	CORE QUESTION
1–2	Emotional Intelligence	<i>What am I feeling — and how can I tell?</i>
3–4	Relationships & Communication	<i>How do I show up with the people I love?</i>
5–6	Physical Health as a Lifestyle	<i>How do I take care of the body I live in?</i>
7–8	A Craft Pursued for Its Own Sake	<i>What do I love getting better at?</i>
9–10	Meaning & Values	<i>What kind of person am I becoming?</i>
11	Integration	<i>What did this summer reveal?</i>

HOW TO USE THIS

The Weekly Rhythm

Each week follows the same simple rhythm. You do not need to do everything. You do not need to do it perfectly. The single most important thing is that you do *something* — and that you do it together.

SUNDAY

Family Anchor. A 30–45 minute gathering. Read the week's theme together. Look at the conversation starter. Decide together what one activity or practice you'll try this week.

WEEKDAYS

Live It. Small moments. A feelings check at dinner. A walk without phones. A real conversation at bedtime. The work happens in the texture of ordinary days.

FRIDAY

Family Huddle. Fifteen minutes around the table. One question: what did you notice this week? Each person answers in their own words.

SOMETIME

Journal. Adults: the reflection page. Kids: their page. Whenever the moment is right. Some weeks more, some weeks less.

THE PARTS OF EACH MODULE

What You'll Find in Each Pillar

Opening Frame. A short essay introducing the theme — for the adults to read first.

Adult Reflection. A question for the parent(s) to sit with for the two weeks.

Conversation Starter. A scripted opening for the family kickoff session.

Family Practices. Three to five simple activities — pick what fits your family.

Journal Pages. Adult reflection page, family conversation page, kid page.

“The pace is deliberately slow. You are not behind. The point is to live it, not finish it.”

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The Family Kickoff

Pick a Sunday — ideally the Sunday before the first week begins. Set aside an hour. Make it feel a little different from a normal evening. The point is to mark a beginning.

A SUGGESTED FLOW

1	Gather · 10 min	Snacks, no phones, everyone at the table or on the floor together.
2	Frame the summer · 10 min	A parent reads the opening paragraph below out loud.
3	Each person shares · 20 min	One thing each person is hoping for from the summer.
4	Pick the first theme · 10 min	Read about Emotional Intelligence. Talk about what it means.
5	Close · 5 min	Each person says one word for how they feel about beginning.

THE OPENING (TO READ OUT LOUD)

“This summer, we're going to try something a little different. We're going to spend a few weeks each on five things that matter a lot in life — but that aren't always talked about at school. How to understand what we're feeling. How to be good to each other when it's hard. How to take care of our bodies. How to get good at something we love. And what we actually believe in.

“We're going to do it together. The grown-ups too — maybe especially the grown-ups. There won't be tests. There won't be grades. The whole point is that we get to spend the summer paying attention to the things that actually matter.”

PILLAR ONE · WEEKS 1–2

Emotional Intelligence

Weeks 1–2

The most overlooked truth in parenting is that a child's ability to manage their inner world determines almost everything about their outer world. How they perform under pressure. How they treat the people they love when they themselves are hurting. Whether they can be honest without being cruel, or vulnerable without collapsing.

And the most overlooked truth in adulthood is that almost none of us were taught this. Most adults are only beginning the work of understanding their own emotional patterns in their thirties or forties — long after the patterns have already shaped relationships, careers, and the texture of daily life.

These two weeks are about a single, simple skill: the ability to name what you feel. To build a vocabulary rich enough to actually do that. To notice the difference between *frustrated* and *overlooked*, between *angry* and *hurt*, between *fine* and *numb*.

Children who learn this early have an enormous advantage. Adults who learn it at any age find that almost everything else starts working better — their relationships, their decisions, their ability to be honest with themselves. The work is the same at every age. Which is why this is the place we begin.

FOR THE ADULT

The Question Underneath

This pillar asks something of the adult that no other pillar asks in quite the same way. You are about to invite your children to name what they feel — out loud, in front of you. Children read us with extraordinary accuracy. If you are not also doing this work, they will know. The invitation is not to do it perfectly. It is to do it visibly.

The question for these two weeks:

What is my relationship with my own emotional life — and what patterns am I unconsciously passing down?

Don't rush to an answer. Let it surface over the course of the two weeks. Notice when something rises in response to it — at the kitchen sink, in a conversation with your child, in a moment that catches you off guard. Write what you notice on the reflection page that follows.

SOME PROMPTS, IF THEY HELP

- *When I felt something strong this week, did I name it — even silently?*
- *What did my own parents do with their feelings? What did I absorb from that?*
- *Which emotion do I find hardest to feel? Which do I hide most often?*
- *What does my child see in me on a normal Tuesday at 6 p.m.?*

THE FAMILY CONVERSATION**How to Open the Theme**

Pick a Sunday or whatever evening works. Twenty minutes is plenty. The goal is not to teach a concept — it's to open a conversation that will run quietly through the next two weeks.

A SUGGESTED OPENING

“Tonight we're starting something. For the next two weeks, we're going to pay attention to feelings — what we're feeling, and what the people around us are feeling. Not because feelings are a problem to solve, but because they're real, and learning to notice them is one of the most useful things a person can ever learn. The grown-ups in this family are going to do it too. Maybe especially the grown-ups.”

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What are some of the feelings you've felt this week?
- Are there any feelings that are hard to talk about?
- What helps you when a big feeling shows up?
- What's one feeling you wish you knew more about?

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN (5–8)

For younger kids, keep it simple and physical. Feelings live in the body. Ask them to point to where a feeling lives — in their tummy, in their chest, in their hands. Use a feelings chart with pictures if you can find one. The goal is curiosity, not concepts.

FOR OLDER CHILDREN (12–15)

For older kids and teens, the risk is that the conversation feels patronizing. Acknowledge that. Tell them you know they already feel things deeply. Frame this as *vocabulary* — the difference between knowing five emotion words and knowing fifty. That's a real upgrade, not a lesson in feelings.

PRACTICES FOR THE TWO WEEKS**Pick What Fits Your Family**

You do not need to do all of these. Two or three across the two weeks is plenty. Choose what feels right for your kids' ages and your family's rhythm.

1. The Feelings Wheel

Good for: All ages, especially 5–12

Find a feelings wheel online (search "feelings wheel for kids" or "Plutchik wheel of emotions") and print one for each family member. Keep it accessible — on the fridge, in a journal, in a backpack. When a feeling comes up, point to it on the wheel. The wheel gives kids — and adults — vocabulary they didn't have.

2. Dinner Check-In

Good for: All ages

At dinner, each person names one feeling they had today and the situation that brought it up. No fixing. No advice. Just listening. The adults go first. This is the practice that probably matters most and takes about three minutes.

3. Body Mapping

Good for: Ages 5–10

On a blank sheet of paper, draw the outline of a body. When a feeling shows up, mark where in the body it lives — color in the chest for sad, the head for worried, the hands for excited. Over time, kids start to recognize feelings physically before they can name them.

4. The Pause

Good for: Ages 8+

When a strong feeling hits — a fight, a meltdown, a moment of frustration — practice naming it before reacting. "I am feeling _____ right now." Even when the naming is wrong, the pause itself is the practice. This works for adults more than anyone.

5. A Walk Without Phones

Good for: Older kids and teens

Twenty minutes outside, just walking. No agenda. Phones stay home. The walk creates the kind of side-by-side space where harder feelings sometimes come up — easier than face-to-face. Don't force it. Just walk.

ADULT REFLECTION

Emotional Intelligence • Journal

The question:

What is my relationship with my own emotional life — and what patterns am I unconsciously passing down?

What I noticed this week:

What surprised me:

What I want to carry into next week:

FAMILY CONVERSATION

Emotional Intelligence • Together

Use this page during your Friday Huddle, or anytime the family wants to capture something together. Anyone can write — words, drawings, single phrases.

Words we used this week:

A moment we want to remember:

Something we want to try next:

FOR THE KIDS

Emotional Intelligence • Your Page

This page is yours. Draw, write, scribble. There are no wrong answers.

Draw what your feelings look like today.



Three feelings I felt this week:

A moment I felt really big feelings:

Something a grown-up did that made me feel safe:

PILLAR TWO · WEEKS 3–4

Relationships & Communication

Weeks 3–4

Decades of research on human wellbeing converge on a single, surprisingly consistent finding: the quality of your relationships is the primary determinant of whether your life feels meaningful. Not income. Not career. Not status. The people you are connected to, and the depth of those connections.

Which means that the skills of relationship — genuine listening, navigating conflict with care, repairing after rupture, setting and holding boundaries — are not soft skills. They are the load-bearing structure of a meaningful human life. And they are almost entirely absent from formal education.

The two weeks ahead are about one specific dimension of this: *repair*. Conflict in families is not the problem. The lack of repair after conflict is the problem. A family where things go sideways but get repaired is a safer, healthier family than one where things never seem to go sideways at all.

This is also where the adult work shows up most directly. How you handle rupture and repair with your spouse, with your kids, with yourself — your kids are watching. They are learning what a relationship is supposed to look like when it gets hard. The good news is that imperfect repair, done openly, teaches more than performed harmony ever could.

FOR THE ADULT

The Question Underneath

Most adults can describe what they want their relationships to look like. Far fewer can describe what they actually do when those relationships get hard. The gap between the two is where this pillar lives. The question for these two weeks is not aspirational. It's diagnostic.

The question for these two weeks:

What am I actually modeling when I am in conflict — with my partner, with my children, with myself?

Don't rush to an answer. Let it surface over the course of the two weeks. Notice when something rises in response to it — at the kitchen sink, in a conversation with your child, in a moment that catches you off guard. Write what you notice on the reflection page that follows.

SOME PROMPTS, IF THEY HELP

- *When something goes wrong, what's my first move? Withdraw? Defend? Fix?*
- *When was the last time I apologized to my child? What did it cost me to do that?*
- *What did my parents do when they were in conflict with each other? With me?*
- *What's one thing I keep doing that I know doesn't work?*

THE FAMILY CONVERSATION**How to Open the Theme**

Pick a Sunday or whatever evening works. Twenty minutes is plenty. The goal is not to teach a concept — it's to open a conversation that will run quietly through the next two weeks.

A SUGGESTED OPENING

“For the next two weeks, we're going to talk about the people in our lives — the people we love, the people we sometimes fight with, the people who matter. Especially us, in this family. We're going to practice something hard: noticing when things go sideways between us, and figuring out how to come back together. That's not always easy. Even for grown-ups. Especially for grown-ups.”

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Who in your life feels easiest to be yourself around? Why?
- What does it feel like when you and a friend or sibling get in a fight?
- What helps you feel better after a fight?
- What does it mean to really listen to someone?

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN (5–8)

For younger kids, focus on naming. Most young kids can describe a moment they got upset, but struggle to describe what happened in the *relationship*. Ask them to draw a picture of a friendship moment that mattered — good or hard — and tell you about it.

FOR OLDER CHILDREN (12–15)

For older kids and teens, peer relationships are often the most intense and the most opaque to parents. Don't pry. Instead, share a story from your own teenage years — a friendship that mattered, a conflict you handled badly, what you learned later. Vulnerability from you invites vulnerability from them.

PRACTICES FOR THE TWO WEEKS

Pick What Fits Your Family

You do not need to do all of these. Two or three across the two weeks is plenty. Choose what feels right for your kids' ages and your family's rhythm.

1. The Repair Ritual

Good for: All ages

After any conflict — between you and a child, between siblings, between adults — come back together once things have cooled. Three sentences are enough: *"What I did. How I think it landed. What I want to do differently."* Practice this as a family. The first few times will feel awkward. That's normal.

2. The Real Listen

Good for: Ages 6+

For one conversation a week, practice listening without planning what to say next. When the other person finishes, say back what you heard in your own words. Only after they say *"yes, that's right"* do you respond. This is harder than it sounds. It changes everything.

3. Sibling Repair

Good for: Families with multiple kids

When siblings fight, resist the urge to assign blame. Instead, guide each kid to name: what they felt, what they wanted, and one thing they'd try differently. Then they each say one thing they appreciate about the other. Not as punishment — as practice.

4. The Hard Phone Call

Good for: Older kids and teens

Help your teen think through a relationship that's strained — a friend, a teammate, a relative. Not by giving advice, but by asking: what do you want to be true between you and this person? What's one small move you could make this week?

5. A Note Without Reason

Good for: All ages

Write a short note to someone in the family — a sibling, a parent — just to tell them one thing you appreciate. Leave it on their pillow. The novelty is the point. This is one of the simplest practices and has outsized effects on family culture.

ADULT REFLECTION

Relationships & Communication • Journal

The question:

What am I actually modeling when I am in conflict — with my partner, with my children, with myself?

What I noticed this week:

What surprised me:

What I want to carry into next week:

FAMILY CONVERSATION

Relationships & Communication • Together

Use this page during your Friday Huddle, or anytime the family wants to capture something together. Anyone can write — words, drawings, single phrases.

Words we used this week:

A moment we want to remember:

Something we want to try next:

FOR THE KIDS

Relationships & Communication • Your Page

This page is yours. Draw, write, scribble. There are no wrong answers.

Draw a picture of you and someone you love, on a day things felt good between you.



Three people who really listen to me:

A time someone said sorry to me, and it mattered:

Something I wish I could say to someone:

PILLAR THREE · WEEKS 5–6

Physical Health as a Lifestyle

Weeks 5–6

Your physical health is the substrate on which your entire life runs. Your mood. Your cognitive capacity. Your resilience. Your ability to be present with the people you love. All of it is profoundly shaped by how well you sleep, what you eat, and how you move.

Most kids absorb a particular kind of message about their bodies — either as something to optimize, something to ignore, or something to feel bad about. Almost none of them grow up with the simple, foundational idea that the body is something to *tend*: a system that needs care because it's the only one you get.

These two weeks are not about diet. They're not about fitness goals. They're about helping children — and the adults alongside them — develop an intrinsic relationship with their physical lives. One based on curiosity and care rather than performance or punishment.

Kids who grow up this way carry it with them for life. Adults who relearn it find that something else relaxes alongside it — the constant internal monitoring, the food guilt, the all-or-nothing thinking. What replaces it is simpler. The body is here. It does work. It deserves care.

FOR THE ADULT

The Question Underneath

This pillar is unusually loaded for adults. Most of us are carrying complicated histories with food, exercise, body image, and rest — histories our kids are observing in real time. The question for these two weeks is not about what you do. It's about what you model when you don't know your child is watching.

The question for these two weeks:

Am I modeling physical health as a practice of care — or as an obligation, a punishment, a source of anxiety?

Don't rush to an answer. Let it surface over the course of the two weeks. Notice when something rises in response to it — at the kitchen sink, in a conversation with your child, in a moment that catches you off guard. Write what you notice on the reflection page that follows.

SOME PROMPTS, IF THEY HELP

- *What do my kids hear me say about my own body — in passing, on hard days?*
- *What's my relationship with rest? With food? With exercise?*
- *Where did I absorb the patterns I'm now passing down without meaning to?*
- *If health is care, not performance — what would change about my week?*

THE FAMILY CONVERSATION**How to Open the Theme**

Pick a Sunday or whatever evening works. Twenty minutes is plenty. The goal is not to teach a concept — it's to open a conversation that will run quietly through the next two weeks.

A SUGGESTED OPENING

“For the next two weeks, we're going to pay attention to our bodies. Not to lose weight, not to get faster, not to look a certain way — but because the body is where we live every day, and learning to take care of it is one of the most important skills there is. We'll talk about sleep, food, movement, and rest. And we'll notice what actually makes us feel good — not what we're supposed to feel.”

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- When does your body feel best?
- What kind of food makes you feel strong? What makes you feel sluggish?
- How do you know when you need rest?
- What's something your body does that you think is amazing?

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN (5–8)

Young kids are usually still close to their bodies in healthy ways — they move when they want to move, eat when they're hungry, sleep when they're tired. The work here is to *protect* that closeness as long as possible. Avoid loaded language about food (good/bad, healthy/unhealthy). Talk about how food helps the body do its work.

FOR OLDER CHILDREN (12–15)

For older kids and teens, the stakes get higher. Body image, peer comparison, and screen-driven content about looks and fitness are everywhere. Don't lecture. Ask: what messages are you getting about bodies online? What feels true to you, and what feels like pressure?

PRACTICES FOR THE TWO WEEKS

Pick What Fits Your Family

You do not need to do all of these. Two or three across the two weeks is plenty. Choose what feels right for your kids' ages and your family's rhythm.

1. The Sleep Reset

Good for: All ages

For one week, pay attention to sleep as a family. Lights out 30 minutes earlier. No screens in the last hour. Each morning, check in on how everyone slept and how they feel. Sleep is the foundation of almost everything else; this one practice can shift a whole household.

2. A Meal Cooked Together

Good for: Ages 5+

Once a week, cook a meal together — each person has a real job. Even young kids can wash vegetables, stir, set the table. Food made together tastes different. And kids develop a different relationship with what's on their plate.

3. Move Outside

Good for: All ages

At least three times in the two weeks, do something outside as a family — a walk, a hike, a bike ride, swimming, anything. Not as exercise. As *being outside together*. The bodies move; the conversation flows differently.

4. The Hunger Check

Good for: Ages 6+

Before eating, pause for a moment and check in: am I actually hungry? What kind of hungry? What does my body actually want? This isn't about restriction — it's about reconnecting with internal signals. Many adults have lost this entirely.

5. A Real Rest Day

Good for: All ages, especially adults

Pick one day in the two weeks and protect it. No errands. No productivity. Slow morning. Long meals. Real rest. Kids learn what rest looks like from watching adults actually do it. Most never see it.

ADULT REFLECTION

Physical Health as a Lifestyle • Journal

The question:

Am I modeling physical health as a practice of care — or as an obligation, a punishment, a source of anxiety?

What I noticed this week:

What surprised me:

What I want to carry into next week:

FAMILY CONVERSATION

Physical Health as a Lifestyle • Together

Use this page during your Friday Huddle, or anytime the family wants to capture something together. Anyone can write — words, drawings, single phrases.

Words we used this week:

A moment we want to remember:

Something we want to try next:

FOR THE KIDS

Physical Health as a Lifestyle • Your Page

This page is yours. Draw, write, scribble. There are no wrong answers.

Draw a picture of you doing something that makes your body feel good.



Foods I love to eat with my family:

A way I like to move my body:

How I know when my body is tired:

PILLAR FOUR · WEEKS 7–8

A Craft Pursued for Its Own Sake

Weeks 7–8

Almost everything children are taught is instrumental — it helps them do something else. Math helps you in science. Reading helps you in everything. Even most extracurriculars get framed in terms of what they're *for* — college applications, future careers, social status.

This pillar is different. It is about something that has no justification beyond itself: the particular joy of getting better at something you love because you love it. Music. Woodworking. Cooking. Writing. Drawing. Sport. Code. The specific craft matters less than the depth of the relationship with it.

People who have a craft of their own tend to be more grounded, more patient, and more resistant to the shallow satisfactions the attention economy constantly offers. They have an experience available to them — the experience of effort that pays off slowly, of skill earned through repetition, of a thing made by their own hands — that no amount of content consumption can replace.

The two weeks ahead are about helping each person in the family identify something they want a deeper relationship with — and spending real time with it. Not to perform. Not to monetize. Not to post about. Just to do it, and to get a little better, and to notice what that feels like.

FOR THE ADULT

The Question Underneath

Most adults had a craft, once. Something they loved before life got busy. The question for these two weeks is not about your kids' crafts. It's about yours. The one you let go of. Whether it might be time to pick it back up — or to find a new one entirely.

The question for these two weeks:

Do I still have a craft of my own — something I do because I love it, with no other justification?

Don't rush to an answer. Let it surface over the course of the two weeks. Notice when something rises in response to it — at the kitchen sink, in a conversation with your child, in a moment that catches you off guard. Write what you notice on the reflection page that follows.

SOME PROMPTS, IF THEY HELP

- *What did I love doing as a teenager that I haven't done in years?*
- *What's something I keep saying I want to learn but never start?*
- *When was the last time I made something with my hands?*
- *What would my kids say I love doing, if they had to answer?*

THE FAMILY CONVERSATION

How to Open the Theme

Pick a Sunday or whatever evening works. Twenty minutes is plenty. The goal is not to teach a concept — it's to open a conversation that will run quietly through the next two weeks.

A SUGGESTED OPENING

“For the next two weeks, every person in this family — kids and grown-ups — is going to pick something they want to spend real time on. Not because it's useful. Not because we're supposed to. Just because we love it, or we want to love it. Then we're going to actually do it. A little bit, most days. And see what happens.”

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What's something you've always wanted to be really good at?
- What's a thing you do that makes time disappear?
- What craft would you pick if no one was watching or grading?
- What do you already love doing that you could go deeper with?

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN (5–8)

For younger kids, the craft might be drawing, building with blocks, telling stories, making up songs. Don't filter for what looks impressive. The work of these weeks is for them to *notice their own interest* and feel adults take it seriously. That noticing is the entire foundation.

FOR OLDER CHILDREN (12–15)

For older kids and teens, the trap is performance and comparison. If your teen is already deeply into something — music, sport, art, code — these weeks can be about going deeper without an audience. If they're scattered or screen-pulled, help them pick one thing and stay with it. Real interest takes time to find.

PRACTICES FOR THE TWO WEEKS**Pick What Fits Your Family**

You do not need to do all of these. Two or three across the two weeks is plenty. Choose what feels right for your kids' ages and your family's rhythm.

1. The Pick

Good for: All ages

In week one, each person picks their craft. Make it visible — write it on a piece of paper, post it on the fridge. The act of naming it and being witnessed by the family is part of the practice. No one's pick is too small or too weird.

2. Daily Time

Good for: All ages

Build in 20–30 minutes a day, four or five days a week, for craft time. It does not have to be at the same time. It does not have to be in the same place. The point is consistency over intensity. Twenty minutes a day for two weeks beats a single four-hour session.

3. The Frustration Talk

Good for: Ages 6+

Halfway through the two weeks, when frustration shows up (it will), have a conversation about it. Frustration is not a sign you're bad at something — it's a sign you're actually learning. Adults model this best by being open about their own frustration with their craft.

4. Share What You've Made

Good for: All ages

At the end of week two, each person shares something — a small performance, a finished thing, a single page, a song played badly. The point is not the quality. The point is the practice of putting something out, however imperfect.

5. Watch Someone Real

Good for: Ages 8+

Find someone — in person, in a documentary, on a long-form video — who has spent years on the craft your child is interested in. Watch or read together. Notice what twenty years of patient work looks like. It's a different signal than what social media usually offers.

ADULT REFLECTION

A Craft Pursued for Its Own Sake • Journal

The question:

Do I still have a craft of my own — something I do because I love it, with no other justification?

What I noticed this week:

What surprised me:

What I want to carry into next week:

FAMILY CONVERSATION

A Craft Pursued for Its Own Sake • Together

Use this page during your Friday Huddle, or anytime the family wants to capture something together. Anyone can write — words, drawings, single phrases.

Words we used this week:

A moment we want to remember:

Something we want to try next:

FOR THE KIDS

A Craft Pursued for Its Own Sake • Your Page

This page is yours. Draw, write, scribble. There are no wrong answers.

Draw yourself doing the thing you love most.



A thing I want to get really good at:

Three things I love about doing it:

What I want to learn next:

PILLAR FIVE · WEEKS 9–10

Meaning & Values

Weeks 9–10

Of all the pillars, this is the one most directly about who children are *becoming* — as distinct from what they know, or what they can do. A person with abundant skills but no coherent sense of what they value is rudderless. Talented, perhaps. Even successful, by external measures. But without direction, and without the deep satisfaction that comes from a life aligned with what actually matters.

The risk in the current moment is that children's values are formed not through reflection but through absorption — absorbed from social media, peer pressure, and the relentless optimization for attention that defines most online environments. Without active counterweight, kids end up with values they never examined and don't even realize they hold.

The two weeks ahead are about creating a small counterweight. About making values explicit. About having actual conversations — at the dinner table, in the car, on a walk — about what we believe, why we believe it, and how we know.

This is also where the adult work becomes most personal. You cannot ask your child what they value if you have not asked yourself the same question recently. The conversation only goes as deep as you are willing to go first.

FOR THE ADULT

The Question Underneath

Most adults live by values they have never explicitly chosen. The values come from family of origin, culture, religion, peer group, or simply default — the values of whatever environment they've been in longest. The work of these two weeks is to actually look at yours. Not to change them. Just to see them.

The question for these two weeks:

What do I actually value — and is how I spend my time evidence of that?

Don't rush to an answer. Let it surface over the course of the two weeks. Notice when something rises in response to it — at the kitchen sink, in a conversation with your child, in a moment that catches you off guard. Write what you notice on the reflection page that follows.

SOME PROMPTS, IF THEY HELP

- *If a stranger watched my last week, what would they say I valued most?*
- *What are the three or four things I'd genuinely want my children to absorb from me?*
- *Where is there a gap between what I say I value and how I live?*
- *What would I never compromise on, no matter what?*

THE FAMILY CONVERSATION**How to Open the Theme**

Pick a Sunday or whatever evening works. Twenty minutes is plenty. The goal is not to teach a concept — it's to open a conversation that will run quietly through the next two weeks.

A SUGGESTED OPENING

“For these last two weeks of our summer together, we're going to talk about something big: what we actually believe matters. Not what other people say should matter. Not what's popular. Not what we'd say if we were trying to look good. What we really think is important in life. We'll each try to put a few of those things into words. And we'll talk about how we know — what experiences taught us that those things matter.”

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What's something you think is really important in life?
- Who is someone you really admire? What do they have that you want?
- When have you done something that felt really right, even if it was hard?
- What do you think is the most important thing about being a good person?

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN (5–8)

For younger kids, abstract value language doesn't land. Use stories. Read a children's book together that has a moral or a difficult choice in it. Ask what they thought of what the character did, and why. Children's stories are full of values conversations waiting to happen.

FOR OLDER CHILDREN (12–15)

For older kids and teens, the conversation can get real. They are actively working out who they are. Don't preach. Share your own thinking — including where you've changed your mind. Listen to their values even when you don't share them. The point is the practice of examining, not the conclusion.

PRACTICES FOR THE TWO WEEKS

Pick What Fits Your Family

You do not need to do all of these. Two or three across the two weeks is plenty. Choose what feels right for your kids' ages and your family's rhythm.

1. The Family Values List

Good for: All ages

Together as a family, come up with three to five things that matter most to your family. Write them down. Post them somewhere visible. They don't have to be eloquent. The point is that you wrote them, together, on purpose. Most families never do this.

2. Examined Stories

Good for: Ages 6+

Watch a movie or read a book together and afterward have a real conversation about it. What did the main character value? What choice did they make and why? Was it the right choice? Would you have done the same? Stories carry values; this practice makes them visible.

3. The Hero Question

Good for: All ages

Ask each family member: who is one person — real or fictional — you really admire? What do they have that you want? Write the answers down. Talk about them. The people we admire reveal what we value, often more honestly than direct questions do.

4. A Hard Question at Dinner

Good for: Ages 8+

Pick one big question and bring it to dinner. *"What does it mean to be a good person? Is it ever okay to lie? What's the difference between fair and equal?"* No right answers. Real discussion. Adults answer too, honestly.

5. A Letter to Yourself

Good for: Ages 10+

At the end of the two weeks, each person writes a short letter to themselves: *"This is what I believe matters. This is the kind of person I want to be."* Seal it. Read it again in a year. Especially powerful for teens.

ADULT REFLECTION

Meaning & Values • Journal

The question:

What do I actually value — and is how I spend my time evidence of that?

What I noticed this week:

What surprised me:

What I want to carry into next week:

FAMILY CONVERSATION

Meaning & Values • Together

Use this page during your Friday Huddle, or anytime the family wants to capture something together. Anyone can write — words, drawings, single phrases.

Words we used this week:

A moment we want to remember:

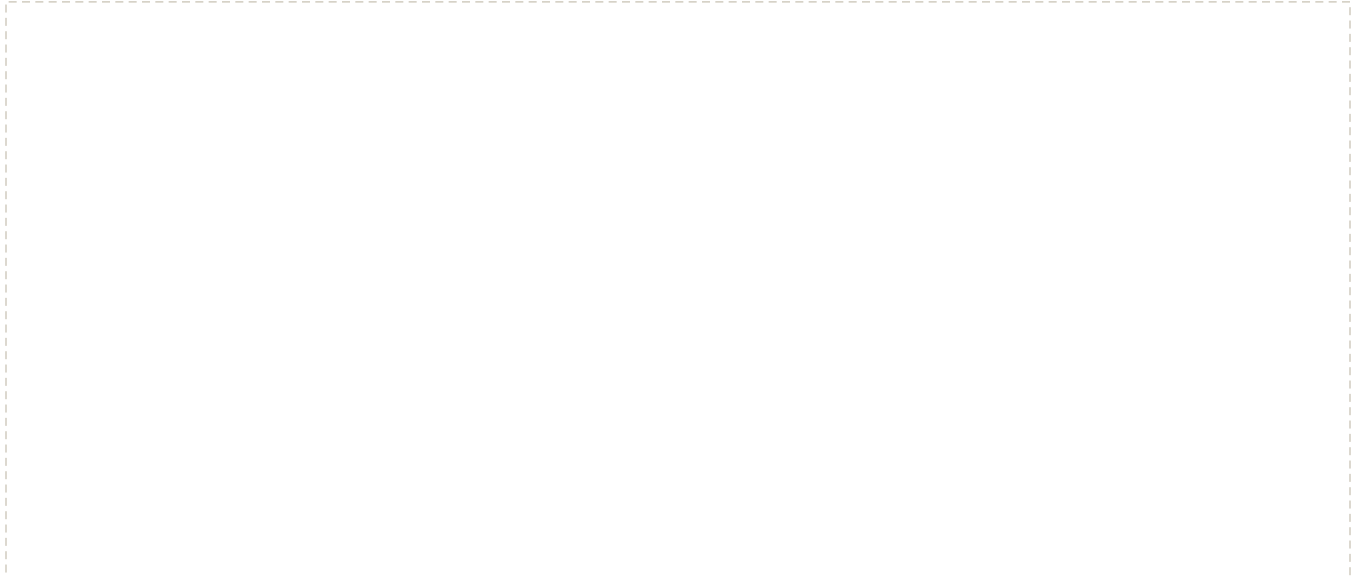
Something we want to try next:

FOR THE KIDS

Meaning & Values • Your Page

This page is yours. Draw, write, scribble. There are no wrong answers.

Draw the three things that matter most to you in the whole world.



Three things that matter a lot to me:

A person I really admire — and why:

What I want to be true about me when I grow up:

WEEK 11

Integration & Harvest

Eleven weeks. Five themes. Roughly seventy-five days of attention to the things that don't usually get attention. You're at the end of the summer, and at the beginning of something else.

This final week is not about adding anything new. It's about looking back. What did the summer reveal? What surprised you? What changed in your family — in big ways or small ones? What do you want to carry into the school year?

“Most of what mattered won't be visible yet. The work of these weeks is the kind of work that shows up months and years later, in moments you didn't see coming.”

A SUGGESTED FINAL GATHERING

1	Open the workbook to a random page	Read one thing out loud — a journal entry, a moment captured, a kid drawing.
2	Each person shares	One thing they'll remember from the summer. One word for how they feel now.
3	A small ritual	Light a candle. Eat something together. Mark the end of one thing and the beginning of another.
4	Set one intention	One thing each person wants to keep doing once school starts again.

HARVEST

Looking Back at the Summer

What one thing from this summer will I remember most?

What changed in our family — in big ways or small ones?

What did I learn about myself as a parent?

What do I want to carry into the school year?

What surprised me about my children?

What surprised me about myself?

A FINAL NOTE

The Real Curriculum

There is one truth worth naming clearly at the end of this. You cannot teach what you have not lived. You can share knowledge your children haven't encountered yet, but the deeper lessons — about how to be emotionally present, how to navigate uncertainty, how to love well — are transmitted not through instruction but through example.

The families who raise genuinely whole, capable, curious humans are not usually the families with the best lesson plans. They are the families where the adults are visibly, imperfectly, honestly doing the work themselves — where children get to see what it actually looks like to keep learning, to fail and recover, to not always know the answer.

“That is the most powerful curriculum of all.”

If something in these pages moved you, the conversation continues. We write a weekly letter for families doing this kind of work — the ongoing version of what's in this workbook, plus what's happening in our own family as we live it.

NOTES

Whatever you want to remember

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