

Lesson 6. How to work through family problems

1. Do you get along with your parents? Is it easy to be a close-knit family?

2a. There are no ideal families. All families have to deal with problems from time to time. Here are some things that cause misunderstanding¹ in a family. Work out the meaning of the words in bold.

People don't **treat** each other with respect. They **offend** each other, for example, they say rude (грубые) words. When someone in a family has a problem, they don't support him or her with advice or just a kind word. Moreover, they often **blame** each other for the problem. People start **quarrelling**: they shout at each other and they don't try to **compromise** and **avoid** the conflict.

treat [tri:t] **someone with** (respect / kindness / politeness) (v) – behave towards someone in a certain way

offend [ə'fend] **someone** (v) – hurt (ранить, причинять боль) someone's feelings

blame [bleɪm] **someone (for something)** (v) – say or think that someone is responsible for a problem or a bad situation

quarrel ['kwɒrəl] **(with somebody, about / over something)** (v) – argue (спорить) with close people about unimportant things

compromise ['kɒmprəmaɪz] (v) – end an argument, understanding that you cannot have everything you want

avoid [ə'vɔɪd] **(somebody / something / doing something)** (v) – keep away from someone or something, stop oneself from doing something

2b. Which misunderstanding is the most serious? Why? Answer the question in pairs.


2c. Work in groups. Choose five things people do or don't do to have a good family life. Compare your ideas with the other groups.

¹ **cause** [kɔ:z] **misunderstanding** [ˌmɪsʌndə'stændɪŋ] – вызывать непонимание

Model: I think people respect each other in a happy family / in a close-knit family.

How to be a close-knit family

- work through / sort out problems;
- respect each other; treat each other with kindness / politeness;
- get on / along with each other; do one's best to behave well;
- think about what to do and what to say;
- offend smb; blame smb for;
- compromise, agree with smb; disagree / quarrel with smb about smth;
- avoid conflicts / being rude;
- talk to smb in a loving and respectful way; talk to smb using a normal tone of voice;
- communicate; show an interest in each other;
- support each other; help each other feel confident, safe and secure.

3a.  Listen and read along what psychologists write about family life. Say who:

- 1) recommends you show an interest in your family members and do things together;
- 2) thinks that you should compromise, as winning an argument, you might lose something more important;
- 3) advises you to make sure you do not offend your family members when you sort out family problems;
- 4) recommends that you do not blame the other person for the conflict, but address their act or the event;
- 5) advises you to avoid being rude when you disagree with your siblings or parents.

A. Tom Edmonds (University of Calgary)

Family life can be difficult at times. You can't choose your family, yet they're with you for life so it's important to find a way to work through your problems. Whether you're having a difficult time sorting out



family problems, or perhaps you're just not getting on well with your brother, sister or parents, there are things you can do to improve the situation. You need to think about what you do or say. In family gatherings, you need to be on your best behaviour¹ so that you do not **offend** family members.

B. Ann Carrol (University of British Columbia)

Respect your parents. Do this not just by giving them respect, but by listening to what they say and doing your best to make them happy. Realize that you may be able to choose your friends, but you're born to your family. When you are talking or discussing a problem with a family member, you need to fully listen and understand what they are saying. Do not interrupt (перебивать) them, **do not blame** the person directly **for** the conflict. Instead, what you need to do is address the act or event that leads to the conflict. When talking, make sure you use a normal tone of voice and talk to them in a loving and respectful way.



respect (v) – respectful (adj)

C. Frank McKenzie (Australian National University)

Try to **compromise** whenever and wherever it's possible. When winning an argument you lose respect and love, your victory is fake. When you see that the people who you love most are happy, you will have a feeling of great happiness. Dealing with family members, you need to remember that you should **treat** them the same way that you want to be treated². Make sure that you do not offend family members. Always be polite! Use words and phrases such as *please*,



¹ to be on your best behaviour – хорошо себя вести

² you should treat them the same way that you want to be treated – следует относиться к ним так, как ты хотел бы, чтобы относились к тебе

thank you, I am sorry, I was wrong, I love you, you're welcome to sound polite, loving and to show you're ready to compromise.

D. Sara Green (University of Canberra)

You are not always going to agree with your family members, many times you and your family members are going to **disagree or even quarrel about** a variety of things. Make sure that you do not offend family members. Be careful when disagreeing with them. The best way to do that is always to be respectful. Always make eye contact when you are talking to them and **avoid** being rude and hard. And remember that no matter how old you are, you are still a child for them!



agree (v) – disagree (v) – disagreement (n) – disagreeable (adj) = unpleasant

E. Alan Rogers (Alabama State University)

Communicate! Show (an) interest in what life was like for them when they were growing up. Try to relate their experiences to your own. Also, show the same interest in what they are doing now. Does your parent work? If so, ask about their work. Take part in family activities, such as birthdays or visiting elderly relatives. Doing things together makes relationships stronger. Eat together. Modern-day life makes this virtually impossible to do, however, it really does change your family life greatly – for the better.



3b. Look through the tips and answer the questions.

1. Which tips did you like most? 2. What information do you consider to be the most useful for an average teenager in Belarus? 3. Will the tips be helpful to you? In what way?

4. Read what a person thinks about family problems. Fill in the missing words and answer his question.

If you want to cope (1)... family problems, follow my advice. It'll lead (2)... understanding and friendship in your relationships with your relatives. First of all, take an active part (3)... family events. Show that you're interested (4)... family matters. Secondly, listen to your relatives carefully. That will help to work (5)... some misunderstandings and to get (6)... well with everybody. And finally, when disagreeing (7)... somebody never blame your nearest and dearest (8)... what they do or say because they always wish you the best. Do you agree with me?

5. Make up a dialogue 'Dealing with misunderstandings'. Use the vocabulary of the lesson (ex. 2a) and the 'Help box'.

Student A: Tell your classmate about the misunderstandings with your parents.

Student B: Give your friend some advice.

Help box

Misunderstandings: your mum thinks you are too rude; your parents are not happy that you come home late; your parents don't like the way you dress; your parents don't like that you wear a lot of make-up; they don't like your hair-do ['heədu:]; etc.

Speech formulas + advice on how to be a close-knit family:

You should / shouldn't ...

Try to / not to ...

You need to ...

Make sure ...

The best way to ... is to ...

6. ✎ Write a list of the most important tips (at least 10) about how to sort out problems and be a close-knit family. Compare it with your classmates' ideas. Are there many differences?

Lesson 7. Stop criticising me!

1. Look through the list of misunderstandings and answer the questions below.