



**READ
THIS FIRST**

Wives know that husbands ordinarily only say "I love you" on Valentine's Day! Husbands say wives should **KNOW** they are loved without the words. Unfortunately, the wives are right! Hearing that you are loved by the person you love is vitally important.

When it comes to children, somehow parents seem to believe that telling them "**too often**" that they are loved will somehow give the children permission to get away with things that "unloved" children would not. That's really sad. The one most vital factor in growing up is knowing that your parents love you. Not **GUESSING** that your parents love you. **KNOWING** that you are loved. People who grow up without knowing may spend a life time trying to find out. Don't let that be the story of your children. For anyone in your family, for that matter!

So, you've all been separated for a long time this time. It could be worse, thank God it's not. But it means that family members didn't hear that love message often enough. It means that it's time to begin again.

Let's get on the love band wagon! That's **real** music!

“Let Me Tell You How Much I Love You” Family Exercise

PURPOSE: Children thrive on the messages that they are loved. If you have been working through these experiences and you're now on number 6, you already know that importance. Missing all those days of love messages during a deployment or other separation can actually make us “love starved.” No, not like in the movies! But children, especially, who do not know they are loved will act out negatively in some way to get the attention they need.

CONCEPT: The idea here is that children will accept negative attention before they accept no attention at all. Children need to confirm in their minds that they are loved. Parents can help to make that happen.

- 1. Again, gather the family into the living room or family room, or around the kitchen table. In fact, it might be a good idea to meet in a different room this time -- oh, just for change's sake! The paper and pencil need to be handy.**
- 2. Each person has a message about loving and being loved that they would like to give to another and receive for themselves. These “love messages” must be reaffirmed after a long separation OR they need to be adjusted due to the separation. Knowing what messages each person needs will tell you how much love needs to be given!**
- 3. Using Worksheet 1, each family member records their statements about love. Then share these messages with the family.**
- 4. Finally, using Worksheet 2, each person makes a valentine to give to another person in the family. Parents must protect the children who might not get a valentine from another. So, parents make a valentine for each child.**

**“Let Me Tell You How Much
I Love You”
Worksheet 1**

THE MESSAGE ABOUT LOVE I'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM OTHERS:

THE MESSAGE ABOUT LOVE I NEED TO GIVE TO OTHERS:

**THE PERSON OR PERSONS I MOST NEED TO TALK WITH ABOUT LOVE
MESSAGES:**

**“Let Me Tell You How Much
I Love You”
Worksheet 2**

My Special Valentine For You!





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There are two kinds of glue that holds families together. The first and finest is **love**. Love goes the extra mile. Love cares when no one else will. Love is stronger than circumstances and behavior.

The second glue that holds families together is **Loyalty**. This means that no matter what each family member can count on the others to be "true blue." Families must be able to know that the rest of the family is on their side. Without this loyalty, families are not "stuck" together strong enough to continue to withstand the challenges of military living. So far, your family has been strong enough.

However, long absences have a tendency to weaken this "Loyalty" glue. Younger children are not certain that the absent parent really, and truly is dedicated to the family. They may, in fact, feel betrayed. The Rebonding mission in this exercise is to ensure that the "glue of loyalty" is reinforced so that there is **no doubt** in any family member's mind that this family is here to stay!

“Let’s Refresh Our Loyalty” Family Experience

PURPOSE: To encourage family members to reinforce the bonds of loyalty that has kept them together throughout the challenges of military living.

CONCEPT: Security is a vital force in the “glue” that holds families together. And not just for children. Everyone thrives in life when they have the knowledge that **THEIR** family is going to be together forever.

⇒ Adults know that families do break up. This is not the ideal, nor is it what adults or children want. So, for this exercise it is not necessary to address the reality that families don’t always stay together forever. It is what everyone in a family hopes for. Let it be the hallmark of your family, too.

1. Gather the family into the living room or family room, or around the kitchen table. The paper and pencil need to be handy, as usual.
2. Each person has both a hope and a fear about their own family’s ability to “stay together through thick or thin!” Children fear it the most. This exercise gives each member the opportunity to reinforce the loyalty that exists in every family.
3. Using the Worksheet, identify where each family member feels weakest when it comes to loyalty. This is an exercise designed to find out how people feel not to argue that they shouldn’t feel that way. It is important to know where family weaknesses are. A separation is stressful to the loyalty feelings in a family. Here’s a chance to strengthen them!

“Let’s Refresh Our Loyalty” Worksheet