

EBOOK SERIES

Your Family Constitution

**HOW TO TELL IF
YOUR FAMILY IS OUT
OF CONTROL**

www.yourfamilyconstitution.com



Scott Gale

HOW TO TELL IF YOUR FAMILY IS OUT OF CONTROL ...

& HOW TO FIX IT IF IT IS.

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

—FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Is my family out-of-control? Are my kids more challenging, my circumstances more difficult, or my mental wiring more loose than my neighbors, friends and colleagues? Greg, a Southern California teacher and father of two, wrestled with these questions every day. He became convinced that his family was uniquely dysfunctional. He felt isolated and fearful, desperate and depressed. He wanted the perfect family, just like the fairy tale images that permeated his thoughts and perpetuated his concerns.

The problem...he couldn't answer those tough questions about his family with any sense of conviction. His confidence and his family emotions changed more often than the clothes they wore. Without intimate knowledge of how other families operated, Greg could only assume the worst; that his family was somehow more dysfunctional than all others.

Anxiety set in, tainting his perception. Greg didn't understand that many of those other "perfect" families asked themselves the same questions and came to the same conclusions as he did. To some, Greg's family may even have been the "shining star" that others looked at as a bastion of health and prosperity. If only he knew the truth.

The truth...every family fits the description of "out of control" at certain moments. Every parent experiences self-doubts and challenges, both with themselves and their kids. So, behind closed doors, where all families fall flat on their face occasionally, how can any parent tell if the people they love most in the world are "out-of-control?"

Although hindsight usually defines the magnitude of such problems, definite signs surface in the midst of chronic family “control” challenges. The **first sign is lack of an identified plan or vision.** To take a quality shot at developing an impressionable child into a responsible adult, parents must have a target and a path. Once Mom and Dad hit the point where they are simply reacting in a frantic attempt to “keep up”, it becomes difficult to put forth the focused effort it takes to regain control.

The reason...life inevitably speeds up. Parents optimistically think the pace will slow down as their kids get older and become more self-sufficient. This common myth almost invariably proves untrue as careers, activities, and societal pressures overwhelm families as they grow and evolve. In the face of diminishing time and growing tension, families don’t often take the time to evaluate their approach, inadvertently choosing to react to circumstances and accept shortcomings instead.

The **second sign** is that **negative emotion** begins to interfere with everyday family interactions. As arguments arise more frequently, human tendency causes parents and kids alike to fall into a defensive stance, paving the way for further tension and confrontation. Greg and his son Jeff argued incessantly, but not because of lack of love or respect. Instead, poor communication patterns and associated frustration on both sides damaged their ability to rectify even the smallest of problems.

The unfortunate truth is that Greg’s expectations, or lack thereof, bred confusion. He took Jeff’s failure to demonstrate responsibility as lack of motivation and consideration, rather than lack of clarity and consistency. Jeff perceived Greg’s blind attempts to teach responsibility as calculated attacks designed to pick on him unfairly, and intentionally. They went round and round in circles until their mutual desire to enjoy a healthy father-son relationship became overshadowed by emotional barriers.

The **third sign** is that a family repeatedly has **communication failures.** Once again, all families will have some communication challenges, but it is a perpetual pattern of misunderstanding that is most concerning. When people struggle to communicate effectively, the natural reaction is to stop sharing feelings and ideas. This leads to poor coordination, unstated expectations, inefficiency and isolation. Greg’s biggest breakthrough came when he recognized his family’s need to meet regularly...even if they had nothing specific to talk about. They used this forum to share ideas and concerns, plan and prioritize efforts, hold each other accountable to the structure they created together, and most importantly, enjoy each other’s company.

The **final sign**, a **significant gap between actions and priorities**, is more clandestine, requiring true introspection to uncover. For years, Greg

worked very long hours to provide for his family, impairing his emotional availability to his family. When he finally took the time to examine his priorities, he realized there was conflict and contradiction between his actions and his core values. Introspection is hard, but it changed Greg's life and the course of his family. Greg began to coach his children's teams, to get home in time to eat with his family, and to plan activities for the weekends. His career didn't suffer because he was more balanced and energetic; however, he and his family came to connect on a positive level which they had not experienced before.

So, what can a family do if it exhibits some or all of the signs of being out of control? The short answer...exercise the 3C's (clarity, consistency, and commitment) to wrap clear boundaries and incentives around a family's most important core values. Clarity and consistency will foster shared expectations and respect for boundaries. Clear understanding of family rules, combined with appropriate rewards and consequences, motivates parents and kids alike to stay within the structure. Arguments cease when boundaries and the outcome of ones actions are mutually understood.

Although it would be nice if clarity and consistency could make all problems go away completely, it is not the case. Whether it be a new issue that arises or a temporary deviation from the rules, the fortitude of the structure will be tested from time to time. As long as a family recognizes that issues will continue to arise and that adjustments will be made, then the commitment to steady improvement will prevail and positive momentum will be preserved. The system won't fail, as long as family members stay committed to continually evolving. When someone slips up...don't declare a failed experiment and throw away vital structure. Instead, evaluate what went wrong, make adjustments to the rules if necessary, and continue to allow core values guide your family's efforts. It works...it just takes time and the 3C's.

Thank you for your interest in *Your Family Constitution* Ebooks. If you enjoyed this Ebook and would like to read more, please visit www.yourfamilyconstitution.com to learn about the book, *Your Family Constitution; A Modern Approach To Family Values and Household Structure*, as well as related tools and services to make parenting easier and more rewarding.

Inside *Your Family Constitution*™ you'll learn...

- The four most overlooked signs that your household is becoming “out of control”...and a step-by-step process for correcting problems and appreciating family time.
- How to determine which important traits you most want to pass on to your children...and how to effectively transfer those qualities in a fun and meaningful way.
- How to assess your emotional availability to your family...and how to make adjustments to ensure you have the time for what matters. An in-depth look at the 3C's (clarity, consistency and commitment) that every family needs to run smoothly.
- Inside tips on how to understand what motivates your kids...and how to use this information to find “win-win” solutions that really work.
- Ten fun and healthy activities that your family members can enjoy together...that don't need to be plugged in.
- The keys to anticipating “big kid” and teenage issues....and a method to solve challenges before they become topics of concern.
- Common symptoms of entitlement in today's youth culture....and how to teach your child the difference between “learn” and “deserve” before it's too late.

Thank you again for taking interest in *Your Family Constitution*.

Sincerely,



Your Family Constitution

“Enjoy Parenting to the Fullest and Raise Great Kids”