

# Understanding Yourself

## Good Outcomes Start With Good Choices

(NAPSA)—If you were offered a 50 percent pay increase but had to give up time with your family in order to get it—would you make that trade? Even though seven out of 10 Americans (71 percent) say they would be happier if they had more money, few are willing to make trade-offs between their families and their finances.

In fact, 89 percent of Americans wouldn't give up time with their children and 80 percent would not give up time with their spouse or partner, even for a 50 percent pay increase, according to a recent Keep Good Going Report issued by New York Life.

But how often do we stay late at the office or work on the weekends and sacrifice time with our family?

“Even though most people say they wouldn't consciously trade time with their families for more money, often, their workplace requires it,” said Christine Carter, Ph.D., sociologist at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center, and independent consultant to New York Life. “And sometimes people do choose the short-term reward—more money or recognition at work—over their long-term values: time with family. In many ways, our brains are hardwired to choose the short-term reward, and so we need to develop strategies to help us keep our long-term values front and center.”



**There are ways you can enjoy more of the aspects of your life that you really value, like family.**

### Make Rules for Yourself

If you value time with your family, then make a rule for yourself that reflects this value, perhaps that you won't work on weekends or check your e-mail between 6 and 8 p.m. Even though this might be hard at first, living according to your core values can bring great meaning and fulfillment to life.

### Express Gratitude

The Keep Good Going Report also revealed that Americans believe gratitude is one of the most important values parents can instill in their children along with kindness, compassion and manners—far outpacing chores, sports and even reading. But the report also states that many believe that society is overly concerned with success and that people are becoming more selfish.

“A powerful way to move away from a self-centered focus on success is to refocus ourselves and

our children on what we are grateful for,” said Dr. Carter. “Gratitude is foundational for our happiness and well-being, and it is easy and rewarding to practice. Many people are surprised to hear that gratitude, or thankfulness, is actually a skill that we can teach and practice with our children.”

Some of Dr. Carter's tips for fostering gratitude in families include:

- Consciously weave gratitude into your daily interactions, using the common question “How are you?” as a prompt to reflect on something for which you are grateful. Then share that thought with the other person, or just keep it to yourself if you're feeling shy.

- Give thanks for people in your life. Before a gathering of family and friends, for example, make construction paper place cards for each guest and ask everyone to set aside time to write on the inside of each place card something that they love or appreciate about that person.

The Keep Good Going Report finds that less than half (43 percent) of Americans believe they will be doing better in their relationships with loved ones in the next five years. What's one great way to counter these concerns? Form some new habits when it comes to being thankful and expressing gratitude. Visit [www.keepgoodgoing.com](http://www.keepgoodgoing.com) for more information.