WHAT CAN A PARENT DO?

1. Develop my picture of the **ideal** (not perfect) parent I want to be. Decide if I want my kids to learn to think for themselves.

2. Tell my kids what I'm striving to do- even if I'm not there - so they see my journey.

3. Be **generous** to myself – say to myself and believe "It's ok when I make a mistake. Next time will be better."

4. Practice **self restitution** in front of my kids. Name it so they get it in their repertoire. They will then not be defensive.

5. Try to find the **need** behind behaviors I don't like in myself and others.

6. Ask myself **"Could I be doing worse?"** and give myself the answers. Recognize if my behavior is aggressive it's better than not caring (withdrawing) and recognize when I have chose to withdraw it's to prevent doing harm or going out of control. Learn to see the gift in the presenting problem.

7. Tell my family I **love** them especially when we have differences. Remind them that generally things are going well – more often than not.

8. **Ask questions** instead of lecturing. Ask about family beliefs:
   a. What kind of family do we want to have?
   b. What does a team look like?
   c. How do we balance privacy and safety?
   d. How can we all get what we need in this situation?
   e. What kind of a brother/sister/grandchild, etc do you want to be?
   f. Do you want to learn to keep going when the going gets rough?
   g. Do you want to be a learning person (not just books)? What does that sound like, look like?

9. **Laugh** often. Use humor to heal. You don't have to hide the tools of Restitution because it's not something we do to our kids. It's something we all learn and use and feel safe with and value. Be open about what you're trying to do. Be prepared to pause and reflect and redo.

10. Remember daily that a family is where people get **emotional learning**. If in doubt act and sound like a real person not like a parent manual. When they grow up your kids can always get a therapist. They can never get another mother or father.