

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-
Lincoln Extension

Extension

2001

NF01-497 Creating a Strong Family: Universal Values, Family Strengths and the Quest for a Peaceful World

John DeFrain

University of Nebraska--Lincoln, jdefrain1@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>



Part of the [Agriculture Commons](#), and the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#)

DeFrain, John, "NF01-497 Creating a Strong Family: Universal Values, Family Strengths and the Quest for a Peaceful World" (2001).
Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension. 1010.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/1010>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.



NebFact



Published by Cooperative Extension, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources,
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Creating a Strong Family Universal Values, Family Strengths and the Quest for a Peaceful World

By John DeFrain, Extension Specialist, Family and Community Development

Kenneth Boulding, an economist, philosopher and general systems theorist, wrote that human betterment is the end toward which we individually and collectively should strive. Betterment is an increase in the "ultimate good," that which is good in itself. Four great virtues make up this ultimate good: (1) economic adequacy - "riches" in contrast to poverty; nourishment rather than starvation; adequate housing, clothing, health care and other essentials of life; (2) justice - in contrast to injustice; equality rather than inequality in access to work, education and health; (3) freedom - in contrast to coercion and confinement; and (4) peacefulness - in contrast to warfare and strife. Boulding proposed that these great virtues may be considered universal values. All the cultures he has examined appear to share these values.

In the same vein, researchers who study the qualities of strong families around the world note how remarkably similar these families are from culture to culture. Strong families tend to share six broad qualities or strengths: (1) appreciation and affection for each other; (2) commitment to the well-being of the family and the growth of each individual family member; (3) positive communication among family members; (4) enjoyable time together - "quality time and in great quantities"; (5) a sense of spiritual well-being within the family and connection to the greater good in the world; and (6) the ability to cope with stress and crisis - preventing difficulty when possible and dealing creatively with it when necessary.

Figure 1 combines Boulding's universal values with the Family Strengths Model. From a global perspective, the ultimate good and the strengths that create human happiness in our most intimate institution, the family, are remarkably similar. If the values we share as a human family are so closely aligned, we must be able to find a way to build a peaceful world together.

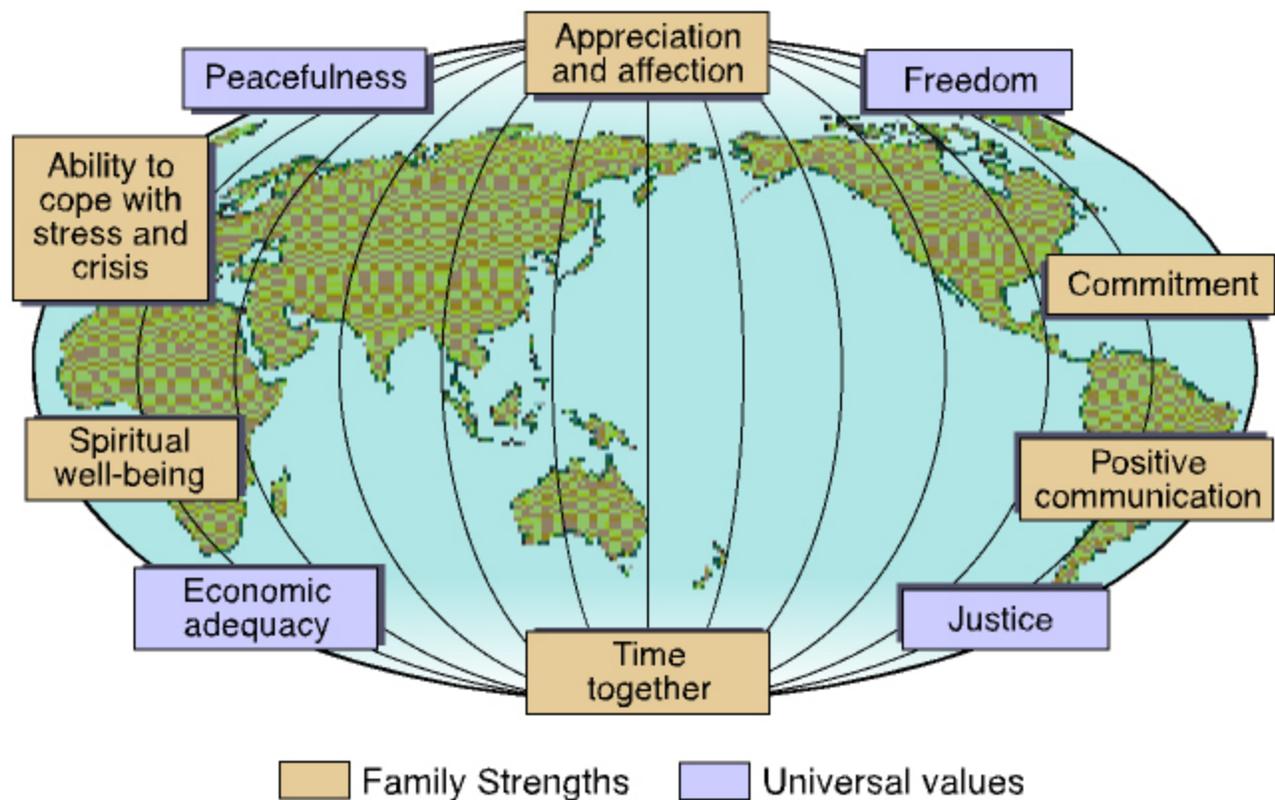


Figure 1. Universal Values and Family Strengths

Illustration adapted with permission from the work of Amie DeFrain.

Sources

Boulding, K. (1985). *Human betterment*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

DeFrain, J. (1999). Strong families around the world. *Family Matters: Institute of Australian Family Studies*, 53 (Winter), (6-13).

Olson, D.H., and DeFrain, J. (2000). *Marriage and the family: Diversity and strengths*, 3rd ed. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co.

Stinnett, N., and DeFrain, J. (1985). *Secrets of strong families*. Boston: Little, Brown.

University of Nebraska "NU for Families" Web site: <http://nuforfamilies.unl.edu/>

Figure 1. Universal Values and Family Strengths Illustration adapted with permission from the work of Amie DeFrain.

File NF01-497 under FAMILY LIFE
F-44, Relationships
Issued January 2003

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Elbert C. Dickey, Dean and Director of Cooperative Extension, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educational programs abide with the non-discrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.