

REUNION TIMES



ISSUE EIGHT

USAREUR MINISTRY TEAM

OEF/OIF

FINAL ISSUE

The Reunion Times is a series of eight newsletters designed to help deployed personnel prepare for redeployment. In these newsletters I have addressed such things as Listening, Demonstrating Care, Rekindling Relationships, Sensitivity, Honesty, Intimacy, and now, in the final issue...PATIENCE. As you reunite with family and friends, successful reunion will demand a great deal of patience. If you incorporate and apply the concepts discussed in these Reunion Times, and keep a sense of humor, you are well on your way to healthy reintegration with your loved ones.

- Chaplain Erkkinen



"First of all Bob, you're a "polar" bear. Second...there are no woods. Do you see any woods? And third...just go in the snow like the rest of us!"

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LOSING PATIENCE

When a doctor loses *patients*, that is not a good thing. It is equally bad when we lose our *patience*.

Redeployment is a time when patience will be tested. After a lengthy absence, the returning soldier may find that many changes have occurred in the household. Routines have been altered. Activities have been added, still others have been eliminated. The problem is that the returning family member has been "out of the loop". The result is that he or she may feel like an intruder until things get back to normal. This may take some weeks or even months.

Some strategies to make the transition smoother:

- Seek input from everyone in the family before implementing any drastic changes
- Communicate frequently though emails/phone calls well in advance of your return
- "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." In other words, if the changes are working well, leave things alone
- Take the time to explain reasons for changes
- Never discuss emotionally hot issues when tired or stressed. Postpone until you are fresh, alert, rested, and in good spirits
- Understand that things will not get back to "normal" for awhile

--Ch (LTC) Eric Erkkinen

Sometimes **PATIENCE** is nothing more than taking the time to explain things to someone...



**"Whaddaya mean?
I am smiling!"**

SOME QUOTES ON PATIENCE...

Only those who have the patience to do simple things perfectly will acquire the skill to do difficult things easily.

- Johann F. Von Schiller

If you are tempted to lose patience with your fellowman; stop and think how patient God has been with you.

- source unknown

The early bird may get the worm, but it's the second mouse that gets the cheese.

- source unknown

Patience is something you admire in the driver behind you, but not in one ahead.

- source unknown

What's the point of wearing your lucky rocketship underpants if no one asks to see 'em?

- Calvin (and Hobbes)

FAMILY FUEL

In this final issue of Reunion Times, I share some thoughts on what fuels the family machine to make it run smoothly and efficiently. I believe there are three critical ingredients:

- FAITH
- FORGIVENESS
- FUN

FAITH – The old saying, “the family that prays together, stays together” may sound hokey or corny but statistically, families that do worship together regularly have fewer divorces and have happier marriages. Check out the statistics yourself. Perhaps the recognition that God blesses and sustains the family gives us a different perspective on roles, responsibilities, and purpose.

FORGIVENESS – In all the marriage and family counseling I have done over the years, this is the one ingredient that I most wish I could infuse into relationships. Ideally, we should “forgive and forget” when we are wronged. Realistically, we do not forget. However, forgiveness means vowing that I will never, ever bring up the issue once it is forgiven...EVER. And sticking to that vow.

FUN – A healthy sense of humor and enjoying one another is a powerful fuel for healthy families. How often do you laugh together, play together, and lift one another's spirits? Take time to plan fun activities with your family as you prepare to redeploy.

A final reminder: If you need help in the reunion process, contact your unit or installation chaplain.

Chaplain Eric Erkkinen

