

USAREUR
POST TIMES
 FREEDOM EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
 AN ARMY FORWARD
 ANY MISSION, ANYWHERE!

ISSUE SIX

UNIT MINISTRY TEAM

OEF/OIF

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



IS YOUR DOG OVERWEIGHT?

I recently saw an ad for doggie diets. According to veterinarians, we have a national health crisis regarding our pets. Studies indicate that about 67 million American dogs are obese. Isn't it amazing that unhealthy habits can even extend to pets? Who is to blame? The dog in the picture really doesn't know any better. It simply eats whatever it is given. It doesn't have the internal discipline to know when to stop.

This issue of POST TIMES addresses *healthy lifestyles*. Not for dogs, but for families. Here are some questions:

- Where do lifestyle habits come from?
- How do I identify healthy vs. unhealthy behaviors?
- With all the moves and separations, how do I reprogram changes into my family that will last?
- What about all the other influences that I can't control?

Remember, you have more control and influence than you know. It's a matter of exercising it.

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NEXT ISSUE: IDEALS

LIFESTYLES Q&A

Q: Where do lifestyle habits come from?

A: Most of our habits are learned in our homes as we grow up. Some I recall from my childhood are:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Wash before eating
- Finish what's on your plate before taking more
- Say "Please" and "Thank you"
- Look at people when they talk to you
- Get plenty of sleep
- Don't play too rough

Most parents give their children good guidance. More important than giving guidance is modeling positive behaviors. Children watch what we DO more than they listen to what we SAY.

Q: How do I identify healthy vs. unhealthy behaviors?

A: The dog in the photo did not balloon like that overnight. The owner overfed the poor dog over time. Unhealthy patterns usually have indicators, but they may not be as obvious as the overfed pooch in the picture. An example of an indicator may be when a child's school grades decline. A parent might examine the child's activities, sleep habits, or diet. Or, what about a tantrum? Young children often "act out" when they cannot express how they feel. Tantrums and outbursts are often indicators of a test of wills, parent vs. child. When the child wins the battle, it creates an insecure environment for the child and an unhealthy pattern for the family. Identifying unhealthy behaviors is important to finding solutions. If a pattern of behavior causes conflict, or is hurtful or destructive it needs to be changed. Healthy behaviors enhance relationships, build cohesiveness and therefore should be affirmed and encouraged.

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POST TIMES is a series of eight newsletters designed to address issues, problems, and concerns facing families several months after redeployment. Unlike REUNION TIMES, this series will focus on issues that may be common in post-redeployment. In other words, once reunion has happened and things seem "back to normal", soldier families still have work to do to keep their families strong.

Post Times will examine the values of LEGACY, DETERMINATION, RESILIENCE, STABILITY, HEALTHY LIFESTYLE, IDEALS, and PASSION.

(LIFESTYLES Q&A continued)

Q: With all the moves and separations, how do I reprogram changes in my family that will last?

A: That is a tough one. A start is to write down your plan. Post it somewhere as a reminder. Old habits die hard and new ones don't take hold easily. Routine is important in families so the more consistent YOU are, the more easily a new routine will be established. BE CONSISTENT and be an example. Even if others don't follow your example right away, learning is occurring. Parents need to discuss strategy and team up to effect change. Determine to work together. Too many times, children will play one parent against the other. That is their strategy.

Q: What about all the other influences I can't control?

A: The family is the primary sphere of influence. Others factors that influence our behavior are the other people in our lives...our friends, our relatives, those in school, and people we work with. We can also be influence by public opinion as we read it or hear it in the media. Too often, perhaps out of laziness or apathy, we relinquish control and influence to others. How you live, what you say, and what you do speaks volumes to your family and those around you. If your family is a priority for you, it will show. You cannot control others. You CAN control the influence YOU have on your family. The theologian and reformer, *Martin Luther* once said,

"You can't stop the birds from flying over your head, but you can stop them from making a nest in your beard."



Wedding Cake

How you act as husband and wife will be reflected one day in your children's marriage.

HEALTHY HUMOR

When stressed or going through a difficult time, it is essential that you take the time to relax in order to replenish your mind, body, and spirit. Nurture your well being by creating an oasis of calm in your life. Getting calm allows you to get a fresh perspective and helps you cope better physically and emotionally with your troubles. Being able to control at least one aspect of your life, in this case time to yourself, helps you to get a grip on the rest of it. For success, take the t out of can't. --Anonymous

Remember as far as anyone knows, we're a nice normal family. - Homer Simpson

Everything is funny as long as it is happening to somebody else. - Will Rogers

Some mornings it just doesn't seem worth it to gnaw through the leather straps. - Emo Phillips

Life is rather like a can of sardines: we're all of us looking for the key. - Alan Bennett

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