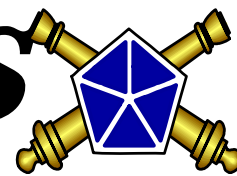




# PREP TIMES

USAREUR  
FREEDOM'S  
EXPEDITIONARY FORCE  
AN ARMY FORWARD  
ANY MISSION, ANYWHERE!



ISSUE TWO

V CORPS ARTILLERY MINISTRY TEAM

OEF/OIF

## LOVING UNCONDITIONALLY

**PREP TIMES** is a series of eight newsletters designed to address issues, problems, and concerns facing Soldier families that are preparing for deployment.



Love can bring a smile to anybody's face

"To love **unconditionally** means that I make no demands of another in order for me to love them." To say, "If you love me, you would..." or "I will love you if..." is NOT love at all. Rather, it is a subtle manipulation. We dare never leave a husband, wife, child, or a friend with the impression that they must perform in order to be loved. If we communicate this, we then are no more than peddlers of emotion, hucksters who prey on others for attention and for our own selfish end. We are also pitiful."

- Anonymous

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NEXT ISSUE: **Decisiveness**

### What Every Child Needs For Good Mental Health

**NEEDS** - It is easy for parents to identify their child's **physical** needs; lots of good and healthy food, warm clothes when it's cold, bedtime at a reasonable hour. Parents also want the very best **educational** needs met. They identify needs and have their child tested and evaluated. They seek out good schools and teachers. However, a child's **mental** and **emotional** needs may not be as obvious. Frequently, parents ignore a child's emotional needs believing that good mental health will come automatically. This is NOT the case. It takes understanding, hard work, commitment, and intentional planning.

**BENEFITS** - Good mental and emotional health allows your youngster to think clearly, to develop socially and to learn new skills. Additionally, suitable playmates, encouraging words from adults, and guidelines for behavior are all important for helping your child develop self-confidence, high self-esteem and a positive, healthy outlook on life.

**SOLUTION** - Love, security, and acceptance should be at the heart of family life. Your child needs to know that your love does **not** depend on his or her accomplishments. Mistakes and/or errors should be expected and accepted. Confidence grows in a home that is full of unconditional love and affection. Give your child **unconditional love**

### Some Basics For A Child's Good Mental Health

- Unconditional love from family
- Self-confidence and high self-esteem
- Opportunity to play with other children
- Encouraging teachers and supportive caretakers
- Safe and secure surroundings
- Appropriate guidance and discipline

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## TRUE LOVE

Someone once said, "Trying to define love is like trying to nail jello to a wall." If I were to ask a dozen people to define "love", I would probably have a dozen different definitions.

Unlike English, the Greek language has four different words for love:

*Eros* -- This is the word used for sensual or physical love. Eros was the Greek god of love.

*Stergo* -- This word means to feel affection, especially the affection between parents and children. It is also used of the affection of a people for their leaders, mentors, or teachers.

*Philo* -- This is the general word for love and affection. It is used for attraction of people to one another without regard for family relationships, such as the love of a friend or brother.

*Agape* -- This is the word for a different kind of love. One that is undeserved and sacrificial.

When you tell someone you love them, try expanding on that statement. What type of love are you expressing? Those we do love need to know that they are loved, appreciated, approved of, and cared for. It is also vital that we TELL them. Don't be like the husband who, when his wife said, "I love you very much, dear!" replied, "Ditto."

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In my recent reading I came across an article on ways to reduce conflicts in marriage. In the article, Dr. Todd Linaman tell of the "three T's" - *timing*, *trust* and *transparency*

They say, "timing is everything," and in conflict resolution, it's true. If you need to talk with your spouse about an important issue, don't say the first thing that comes to your mind when either one of you is angry or upset. If necessary, say, "I need a little time," and specify a time that you'll agree to come together to calmly discuss your conflict with a goal of resolution, not revenge.

Trust - or a lack of it - will profoundly affect your ability to resolve conflict in your marriage. For effective resolution to take place, both people need to trust that the other one genuinely cares about the relationship and is willing to work at finding a resolution. When a relationship lacks trust, one partner may have to take the risk of choosing to trust, and be trustworthy, in order to begin the process of change. It's important to remember that Jesus taught us to love our enemies, and He is able to provide the strength and wisdom to anyone who asks.

When resolving conflicts, it can also be risky to be transparent, but real communication can only take place if genuine feelings and honest thoughts are expressed. We're often reluctant to express feelings of hurt, resentment, fear, or insecurity because we know it makes us vulnerable. And we want to avoid being vulnerable out of pride or fear.



### They've CLONED me!!!

Occasionally, parents see in their children traits, behaviors, and characteristics that they themselves exhibit. One might hear the saying, "Yep, that kid is a 'chip off the old block.'" Or someone might say, "The apple sure doesn't fall far from the tree." Often these statements are connected to negative characteristics or bad habits that our children pick up.

If your children do reflect you, your values, your habits, your attitudes, and your lifestyles is it a good thing?

As deployments or separations loom on the horizon, what are children seeing in your actions? What are they hearing in your words and tones?

Parents who argue in front of children do not always realize they are doing it. Young children are especially traumatized when their parents argue. They will feel guilty, frightened, and insecure especially if they do not see parents make up after a disagreement. It is a basic reality that family members will disagree and occasionally argue. If, however, every issue erupts into an argument there may be deeper problems that need addressing.

The months prior to deployment are precious. Family time must be cultivated and used productively. If issues seem to escalate to shouting matches, get help early. Contact your chaplain.