

# The importance of family harmony



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

, 9 My name is Nicole. I am a senior, living in Bricktown, New Jersey. Thinking back to life as a freshman makes me realize how many things have changed. My social and emotional growth has been affected by many factors.

During my early years I was totally dependent on my parents. I also needed social and moral guidance. I was born into a single parent family 17 years ago. My mother and I had the love and support of my grandparents and four uncles. I realize now, each and every day, how lucky we are to have them in our lives.

Being an only child I felt extremely well cared for. I was spoiled with love and affection. For years I did not have to compete for my mothers time or attention. When my mother married in 1993 when I was nine years old. It was a very difficult time for me. I felt that Bob was invading our lives.

He loved me like his own and adopted me shortly after. It took years for our relationship to grow. Lots of love, patience, and caring, eventually led to my love for him as my new dad.

Heredity and environmental influences determine personalities. I tested many different kinds of behavior on people closest to me. As I became more social I wanted to imitate friends, adults, characters on TV, in movies, or that I read about in books. Friends sometimes seemed more important than schoolwork, hobbies, sports, or other activities.

Friendships are an important aspect of everyone's life. For me, they have been a source of both pleasure and frustration. Friends have allowed me to

experience myself as a leader and follower, a winner and loser, and as an equal.

Mutual respect between friends has been very important. I learned the negative aspects of friendships, as well as the positive ones. Through trial and error I have gradually come to understand the complexities of friendship. Liking others and being liked was vital for my social development.

I have learned to establish and maintain special relationships that have enhanced my self-esteem. I have gained confidence, which is essential for success in the world. My self-esteem has developed in a continual process and is shaped by each new situation. By respecting myself and feeling competent I can successfully influence others.

I can tolerate frustration, take risks, and stick with tasks until they are finished, achieving a sense of pride through these accomplishments. A sense of self is not instinctive; it is gradually learned. Moral development is an ongoing process.

I did not just suddenly acquire a sense of what is right and wrong. It developed over a period of years. When I was young I would usually try to do what my parents expected, to please them or to avoid punishment.

Eventually I developed my own decision-making powers and internal controllers. By learning to recognize morally acceptable standards of behavior, I learned to live comfortably within the boundaries established by these standards. From this recognition, came the challenge of resisting temptation, controlling impulses, and making sound decisions before acting.

Respecting my parents and feeling respected by them has been an important foundation for my positive behavior. My family provided the framework in which I could learn to be gradually more independent and eventually able to manage my own life and live on my own. There is no ? perfect parent? or ? perfect child?. When I was able to recognize my own shortcomings and strengths I became more accepting of others, rather than trying to make them into what I thought they should be.

I think my parents have had the most significant influence on my feelings about myself. I have always felt liked and accepted which has given me a strong foundation for my social and emotional development. They have always had high expectations for me, providing firm guidance, giving love, and setting limits. They have done all they can to encourage me to feel good about myself. Because I feel important I can face each day with self-confidence. While I was continuing to grow both inside and out, so was our family.

I am now one of six children. I am the big sister to three brothers and one sister. I will have another brother in March of this year. What a journey it has been.

Each new child arrived with a unique personality and adds to the complexity of our family's relationship. Family unity has been critically important because, the stability that it has provided helped me to acquire independence. Although some experiences are unique to particular families, there are certain similarities that all families share. The way, in which our parents raise us, generally has a dramatic effect on the type of person we

become. I would have to say that the impact of family, school, and peers has shaped my values and all that I am. Growing up has taught me human relation skills, such as, social adjustment, emotional maturity, adaptability, dependability, leadership ability, and sense of humor.

I look forward to being challenged academically and will take on these new challenges with enthusiasm. Learning can and should be fun. ;,? a