

Defining family

Family



" The concept of 'family' seems simple to many people, but its abounding in subtleties of meaning that involve concepts that are related to but not the same, including the definition of marriage, the meaning of family life, gender roles, relationships, households, sexuality, children, and dependents. That is a lot of human life for one concept to encompass. from Work and Family Encyclopedia. Webster's Dictionary defines " family" as a group of individuals living under one roof usually under one head, also the basic unit in society usually consisting of two parents rearing their children: any of various social units differing from but regarded as equivalent to the traditional family such as single parent or spouses.

Wolfram Alpha shares 8 meanings all nouns 1) a social unit living together 2) Primary social group; parents and children 3) a collection of things sharing a common attribute 4) people descended from a common ancestor 5) a person having kinship with another or others 6) (biology) a taxonomic group containing one or more genera 7) A loose affiliation of gangsters in charge of organized criminal activities 8) An association of people who share common beliefs or activities. How we define family is often determined by what our own families look like. My own family growing up was a blended one. I never knew that term until I was much older.

My parents met and were married later in life. My mother had 5 children from a previous marriage, and after they got married they had me together. It was never odd for me because I never thought of my brothers and sisters as anything but that, we never talked about half brothers and sisters. They never saw their real father, and in fact Dad walked my sisters down the aisle at their weddings. That was our family. We each got married and added in-

laws and children, after my Dad passed away Mom remarried and we added a stepfather and his children, in-laws and grandchildren.

When I say my family I mean Mom, Herschel, Keith, Patti, Steven, Amber, Chole, Jace, Ben, Becky, Rosa, Shawn, Seth, Lauren, Jeff, Liam, Josiah, Jill, David, Kelsey, Julie, John, Joseph, Joshua, Maleah, Jenna, Anne, Jeff, Jeffrey, Nathan, Marti, Tim, Reed, Tyler, Beth, Scott, Valerie, Me, William, Matt and Grace. Holidays at Mom's are crazy. Since I got married the main nucleus of my family shifted to my husband, and eventually our children Grace and Matthew. It is one of several times in life where our own definition of family shifts. My parents and siblings are still very important to me but now my focus is the family that we are creating.

We also have a little dog that we all consider part of our family. Luckily for my children they do not have to choose which parent to live with or when they are scheduled for visitations. Children have to deal with those difficult decisions more often than ever before, many times there are two families with parents, step parents and step siblings. Over the last few years my husband and I have been helping to raise his sister's children, because of her drug addiction. We try to step in to help his mother and most weekends I have 4 children instead of 2.

I know this is happening in other families as well, with drugs affecting so many people, grandparents and other family members are stepping in to keep kids out of foster care. It is difficult but can be the most rewarding of families. The kids know that I love them by choice not only by birth. The traditional definition of family, mom, dad, 2 kids, and a dog, is not as common as it once was. Families don't all look alike. People are adopting <https://assignbuster.com/defining-family/>

more children from across cultures, and from other countries. Parents and children don't share genetic similarities or cultural traditions. The stigma of being adopted is more or less gone.

Families no longer hide the adoption from children but rather celebrate with the entire family. Religion and activists have taken the argument over the definition of family all the way to highest levels of our government. Family and the legal definition of it are under a lot of scrutiny. The religious and political right believe in the biblical definition of family. Man and woman, husband and wife, and their children make families. The gay and lesbian and the political left believe that anyone should be allowed to marry and create a family. Man and man, woman and woman, and their children make families.

While there is no doubt that the obvious differences in the makeup of these families creates issues of discrimination and prejudice, the majority of younger people are more accepting now than ever before. There are other factors changing the current definition of family. One of these factors are the economic problems facing many Americans. There are many families choosing to cohabitate for financial reasons. While the core family may remain the same members, there can also be another family living under the same roof sharing responsibilities and helping to raise children.

Commuter families, where one parent works away from home but the other parent and children live in another town. We as a family have lived through this scenario and it is not something I would want to do on a permanent basis. As I have grown older, I have realized that there are other people in my life that I can choose to be my family. Friends can become closer than family. There are several friends that I care for deeply, that are a part of my

family as I am theirs. While we don't share parents, blood, DNA, or genes we have picked one another to be as close as siblings.

Most often I speak to, or spend time with them more often than my blood family because of miles or just that we have more in common. There are the biological and mathematical definitions of family that never change and then there is the fluid definition of family that changes almost daily. Technically I can tell you how dictionaries define family, I can write about the fight over the definition of a family, but I cannot tell you what family means to you. For most of us it's not something that we consider, but that we should daily be grateful for no matter what ours looks like.