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Family Fun Through a Camera Lens

TURNING ORDINARY DAYS INTO PHOTO ADVENTURES

Is your family stuck in a rut of doing the same activities over and over? If you're looking for something new and fun, try a family photo challenge. Instead of everyone staring at different screens, you pick a theme, grab whatever cameras you have, and go hunting for pictures together.

The idea is simple. For a set amount of time, everyone takes photos that match the theme. When time is up, you sit down, share your shots, and talk about what you saw. Kids get to explore, notice small details, and feel proud when it is their turn to show a favorite picture.

A good theme keeps things fun without being overwhelming. Look for one color around the house, take pictures of circles or stripes, or focus on the family pet for the day. You can try "tiny things," "funny faces," or "things that make you happy." Change the theme each weekend, and

you have a ready-made activity you can keep coming back to.

To keep things on track, pick a time limit. Around 20-30 minutes is usually enough, but you can also go for an hour or even an entire afternoon. Everyone uses whatever camera they have. For many families, that means a phone or tablet. If younger kids are involved, they can pair up with an adult or older sibling to help take the photos when it's their turn.

After the set time limit is up, gather everyone together and share what you captured. You can turn it into a gallery show by plugging the device into the TV, or simply pass the devices around and take turns sharing 2-3 favorite photos. The mood should stay light and fun so everyone feels comfortable sharing and explaining what made them focus on a particular object.

Along with being a great way to spend time together, a family photo challenge can also help you create lasting memories. You can save the photos online in a shared album or even print your favorites and add them to a bulletin board. Over time, you'll end up with a visual record of the fun little adventures and inside jokes your family created together.



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MORE THAN JUST A VISIT

Time Together Builds the Relationships That Matter Most

I'll always remember something my mom said. "Michael, sometimes if you want to talk to somebody, you have to go over to their house, knock on the door, and see them in person." This was the '80s, so long-distance calls were a thing, but unlimited minutes weren't. As a kid, I once overheard her talk to my dad one day when she needed to call her sister, adamantly saying, "If I want to talk to my sister, I'm going to call her, and I don't care whose turn it is on the phone." (This was back when long-distance phone calls were expensive.)

I thought it was funny and true. It embedded deep within me the importance of seeing and talking to your family. National Visit Your Relatives Day is on May 18, and I've always been lucky enough to live close to family members. Getting together has always just been the norm for us, and each time, whether it is to see someone who lives miles away or 30 minutes down the road, it's always meaningful.



Growing up, I lived just a mile from my grandparents and was also close to an aunt and an uncle on my mom's side. So, we spent plenty of holidays together. We'd take turns hosting for special occasions, and I didn't think anything of it. But I saw my dad's side of the family less frequently. Going to see my Dallas cousins and uncle was always really impactful.

Larry, technically my cousin but felt more like an uncle, was very close to my dad. They both got engaged at the same time and as

young married couples, they attended the same law school. He ended up moving to Idaho, and we didn't really get to see that side of the family except every six years or so. Because I didn't have as much time with them, those get-togethers really stick. We were able to create powerful core memories, despite the physical distance.

I still talk to some of those cousins about that trip where we went to catch crabs, played mud football, almost set the barn on fire, and when Mom fell off our old pony. Years later, I would bump into one of them, Danny, in law school. We picked up right where we left off. Because we had those shared memories, he invited me to Sunday dinner, where I met my future wife.

Now, my children have the chance to build those relationships with extended family. We recently went to my dad's house and got to spend time with my cousin Donny, who was also in town. He lived in our house for a couple of years when I was growing up, so we have many memories together, but my kids had only known him through stories.

After spending a few days together, my kids now ask when we'll see Donny and his children again. Since they're around the same age, they are now building memories together, much like Donny and I did.

Spending time with my relatives helps me remember what's most important of all, relationships. Someone way wiser than me said the quality of your life ultimately determines the quality of your relationships. Some families, sadly, don't get along, often for very good reasons. But if you can get along with your relatives, it's worth it to cultivate those connections.

These days, many of us stay connected through social media, but we're not sitting next to each other. We're just aware of each other asynchronously. While that all has its place, we were designed since the beginning of human history to be near each other.

Each time I get to see my relatives, I feel closer to them, learn more about myself, and create new memories to cherish. If a relationship is healthy, it's worth it to invite those family members over (or visit them). You'll leave with new stories and a stronger bond.

-Michael Packard



The Real Purpose Behind Ancient ‘Absurd’ Laws

Long before modern ideas of rights and fairness, societies made laws that seem downright bizarre today, yet each was crafted to solve a real problem or reinforce vital cultural values at the time. When you dig into the reasons behind these ancient rules, the logic reveals practical concerns rather than pure absurdity.

Sparta made marriage a civic duty.

In militaristic Sparta, personal freedom took a back seat to state survival. Spartan men were expected to marry and produce soldiers; refusing to wed was frowned upon, and inveterate bachelors were fined and punished socially. Bachelors past a certain age faced ridicule and exclusion because every man who stayed single did not produce children who could then become warriors. In a society built around war readiness, strong incentives for marriage were strategic.

Olive trees were protected like national treasures.

In ancient Athens, an olive tree was not an ordinary plant. It was sacred, symbolic, and economically essential. Olive oil had many uses: It lit lamps, healed wounds, and was a popular item people would trade. In the 6th century B.C.E., the Athenian lawmaker Solon made it illegal to cut down olive trees without official permission, with sometimes severe penalties for lawbreakers. Back then, preserving olive groves was literally protecting the city’s future.

Russia taxed beards to spur modernization.

Fast-forward to 17th-century Russia, where Tsar Peter the Great was determined to drag his kingdom into the Renaissance era. Part of that meant shaving off traditional beards, which were seen as backward by Western European standards, and adopting clean-shaven faces. When the outright banning of facial hair sparked religious resistance and rebellion, Peter pivoted: Keep your beard, just pay a tax, and carry a metal token. It was a unique combination of cultural reform and fiscal strategy.

These examples remind us that what now sounds absurd often grew out of urgent needs or deeply held values. Punishing men for not marrying, olive tree preservation, and beard control may sound silly at first, but each solved a problem that mattered in its day.

What Is Your Injury Claim Worth?

HOW PAIN, WAGES, AND RECOVERY SHAPE YOUR CASE

After an accident, many people wonder how much their personal injury claim is actually worth. A combination of factors tells the full story of what you’ve been through and also helps determine the compensation you may receive. From the severity of your injuries and your medical bills to your ability to work, every detail plays a role in the decision. Understanding the factors involved can give you a clearer picture of what to expect.

Physical Injuries

Your physical injuries are among the biggest factors in determining compensation. The more severe your medical needs are, like traumatic brain injuries or spinal cord damage, the higher your payout will typically be. They also assess how your injuries will affect you long term and whether they will make it difficult to work or perform your day-to-day activities. Detailed medical records can show your medical expenses, including doctor visits, physical therapy, and any future care you may need.



Pain and Suffering

An accident often doesn’t just cause physical injuries; it can also leave you with emotional wounds. Non-economic damages, like the pain you are experiencing or emotional distress like anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), are not as clear-cut but can increase how much you will receive for your claim. Documentation and personal or witness testimony can help show how your accident has changed the quality of your life.

Lost Wages

If you have missed work because you are healing after an accident, you may recover the pay you would have received during that time. Evidence like pay stubs and statements from your employer can strengthen your case for lost wages. You may also be able to claim future income you won’t receive because your injuries will prevent you from working in the future. If, for example, you suffered a brain injury, you may not be able to operate a work vehicle again or return to the same role you had prior. That’s referred to as diminished earning capacity.

Working with an attorney can increase the amount you receive in compensation. They know how to maximize the value of your claim, are skilled at negotiating, and will advocate for what you deserve.

Contact our team at Packard Law Firm to schedule a case evaluation.

—Michael Packard

HONORING THE WOMEN WHO RAISED US

Time, Love, and a Little Thoughtfulness

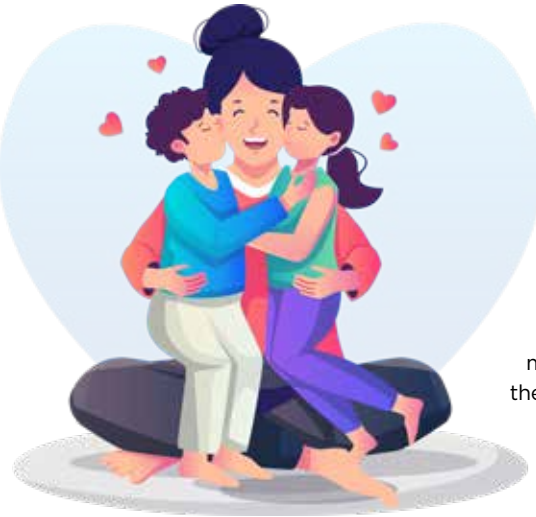
Moms and the important other female figures in our lives teach us, inspire us, and show us what unconditional love really looks like. This Mother’s Day, we have so many ways to honor and show appreciation for everything they give us. Whether it’s your grandmother, an aunt, wife, sister, or mom herself, this can be a great opportunity to celebrate what makes them special.

Give a heartfelt gift.

You don’t have to spend hundreds of dollars on a gift for your mother figures. What matters most is being intentional and choosing something that speaks to her interests and who she is as a person. Think about something she would use for her favorite hobby, like yarn in her favorite color for knitters or a collection of your favorite recipes if she loves to cook. Making something, like a photo album, a personal letter, or a piece of art, is something she will cherish because it came from your heart.

Share time together.

One of the best ways to show her how much she means to you is to create new memories together. Instead of wrapping up something for her to



open, take her out to do something fun. This could be a big family get-together in the park, a nice dinner, or a stroll through a museum or botanical garden. Be present in the moment and focus on the conversations and time together.

Ask her about her life.

Your mom or other mother figure has stories to share, some you may have never heard before. Take time to ask her about her life, the lessons she learned along the way, and her dreams.

You can record the conversation to preserve this history and reflect on it. Share of yourself, too, telling her some of your favorite memories together and how she’s inspired you throughout your life. If your mother is no longer here, you can share stories about her with family to remember her.

Mother’s Day is a heartfelt reminder to pause and honor the women who have shaped us. It’s about love and making them feel seen and cherished, more than it is about presents. No matter how you choose to celebrate them, let them know just how much they mean to you.

—Michael Packard

TAKE A BREAK



Bloom	Emerald	Memorial
Cinco	Gemini	Mother
Comic	Graduation	Renewal
Derby	Lily	Veterans



Creamy Spring Salmon

Ingredients

- 4 skinless salmon fillets
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 tsp ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced shallots
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup unsweetened, full-fat coconut milk
- Zest of 1/2 lemon
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh chives
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh dill
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh tarragon

Directions

1. Pat salmon dry with a paper towel and season both sides with salt and pepper.
2. In large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat.
3. Add salmon and cook 2–3 minutes. Flip and cook another 2–3 minutes. Remove from skillet.
4. To make the sauce, reduce heat to medium and add garlic and shallots.
5. Sauté for 1 minute, then add Dijon mustard and white wine. Whisk and cook for about 2 minutes.
6. Add coconut milk and simmer on medium-low heat.
7. Stir in lemon zest, lemon juice, chives, dill, and tarragon.
8. Add salmon to sauce and cook, uncovered, 3–5 minutes.