

IDEALS

IDEALS are defined as “standards of perfection or excellence”. Your ideal vacation spot, for example, may be an island paradise...or perhaps a ski lodge in the Alps. Whichever it is, your ideal place is the standard by which all your vacations are measured. Anything other than the “ideal” doesn’t quite measure up.

All of us have notions of what the ideal family looks like, what the ideal job might be, what the ideal husband or wife is. All too often we are terribly disappointed when the ideal meets reality. This happens because our expectations are artificially high and perfection is, well, seldom attainable.

Since there are no perfect marriages, families, or relationships, we can either adapt to reality, adjust our expectations, and find contentment in the “imperfect”, or we suffer from disillusionment, despair, and chronic frustration.

The word “ideal” also means a good model, as in “*He is an **ideal** gentleman.*”

Ask yourself...

1. What expectations does my spouse have that I have difficulty meeting?
2. What expectations of my family do I have that are unrealistic?
3. What is my reaction when my ideals meet reality?
4. How do I cope with disappointment?
5. Who have been my positive models as parents? What made them good models for me?
6. How am I modeling for my family?

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1 | IDEALS or REALITY? |
| 2 | NOT the IDEAL SITUATION |

NEXT ISSUE: PASSION

98.6 degrees



The ideal body temperature for humans is 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit, though some individuals are slightly above or below that temperature. Higher than that and we have a fever. Lower, and we suffer hypothermia. Our bodies are remarkable in the sense that when an infection occurs and things are NOT normal, our bodies fight to return it to its ideal temperature again. That process is called HOMEOSTASIS. It is the body striving to become normal again.

Similarly, families find their normal ranges and tolerances. When a crisis occurs, families strive to bring normalcy back. Deployments, separations, redeployments, moves, illnesses, deaths in the family can all cause great distress for families, sort of like an infection. Unlike a fever, you can’t just take a fever-reducer or a cool bath for crisis. It requires careful examination, intentional action, and coordinated effort.

If one of your car dashboard lights came on, let’s say the temperature indicator...what would you do? You have some options.

1. Totally ignore it.
2. Cover the light with tape so you can’t see it.
3. Lift up the hood and cut the wire to the light.
4. Check out the problem, seek expertise, and get it repaired.

(continued on back, **98.6 degrees**)

For information about POST TIMES & REUNION TIMES contact Chaplain Eric Erkkinen at eric.erkkinen@us.army.mil

98.6 degrees (continued)

Of course, who would choose the first three options, especially if the car is new and expensive? The smart choice is to check out the problem, seek expertise, and get it repaired.

Yet how many times do we ignore the signs of crises in our family? We drive on as if all is fine. Meanwhile, the parts start dropping off. Or, we turn to alcohol or medicate ourselves so the light doesn't bother us. Or, we cut off any sources that remind us of the problem. We isolate ourselves from those who may be "indicator lights" in our lives.

If we take care of our cars by paying attention to the signs and signals, aren't our families more important and precious than a vehicle? Thermometers and gauges may be faulty, but usually they work pretty well. Do a check of your family this week. Ask them if there are significant lights flashing.



What are some signals of distress in families? Here are some:

Preoccupation, overwhelming guilt about loss of problem solving skills, generalized hostility, physical distress such as severe stomach upset; personal behavior changes such as neglect of personal hygiene, apathy, that is, nothing matters, aimless activity, more dependent or withdrawn in relationships, and engages in behavior detrimental to self-interest.

If some of these are present in members of your family or those you care about, seek help.

POST TIMES is a series of eight newsletters designed to address issues, problems, and concerns facing soldier families that have returned from deployment. Unlike **REUNION TIMES**, this series focuses on issues that may be common in post-redeployment.



NOT THE IDEAL SITUATION!

Sometimes you find yourself in situations you just can't seem to figure out. How did it happen? Now what do you do?

Maybe you tried what you always try, or you do what your parents did, or you sought advice from a friend, you even checked with an expert. Nothing seemed to work.

Don't get discouraged! Everyone has struggles. Know your limits. Know where your support systems are...and USE them.

SOME GOOD QUOTES...

The only nice thing about being imperfect is the joy it brings to others.

Author: [Doug Larson](#)

Excellence, I can reach for; perfection is God's business.

Author: [Michael J Fox](#)

I don't know any parents that look into the eyes of a newborn baby and say, "How can we screw this kid up?"

Author: [Russell Bishop](#)

The most important thing that parents can teach their children is how to get along without them.

Author: [Frank A. Clark](#)

Adolescence is a period of rapid changes. Between the ages of 12 and 17, for example, a parent ages as much as 20 years.

Author: [Al Bernstein](#)