

Balance and Bounce

As you step out into this year hopefully you've got a spring in your step. Maybe you've enjoyed some good quality family time, caught up on your sleep, had some time out and now your head is full of things you want to accomplish this year. You may also have had time to consider what may have got out of balance and needs addressing.

FOUR WALLS

One way to consider the equilibrium of our lives is to look at Te Whare Tapa Wha – our Maori health model developed by Professor Mason Durie in 1994. This recognises that good health depends on a balance of factors and compares health to the four walls of a house:

- Wairua / Spiritual
- Hinengaro / Mental
- Tinana / Physical



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- Whanau / Extended Family Equally strengthening these areas strengthens your family's resilience, enabling them to bounce back from the snags and pitfalls of life while staying true to themselves, their family and what they believe in and live for.

SPIRITUAL

Thousands of years ago Moses encouraged the Israelites to "Write these commandments that I've given you today on your hearts. Get them inside you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night":

- Do you regularly share your beliefs and values with your children?
- Do they see you actively living them and being involved in a community of faith?
- Do you regularly think of creative ways of sharing and exploring your faith.
- Do you take moments to be still and pray with them?

MENTAL

Your children's thought life is critical to how they will respond in any given situation. It will largely reflect their view of the world and whether they feel loved and trusted or shaky and insecure. We can nourish this area of their lives by:

- Loving them unconditionally.

- Teaching them how to communicate, express their feelings, own their words and actions and be accountable for their behaviour.
- Teaching them to discern right and wrong, good and bad and the real world versus the glamour portrayed in the media.

PHYSICAL

Think healthy and wholesome as you consider your children's exercise and diet. While eating a meal together may seem such an ordinary, everyday activity, it fulfils every aspect of Te Whare Tapa Wha and indeed nourishes the physical, mental, social/emotional and spiritual aspects of our lives.

EXTENDED FAMILY

A healthy, loving extended family environment contributes to our sense of well-being, safety and identity. It's the place we can come back to. Gail Lumet Buckley wrote "Family faces are magic mirrors. Looking at people who belong to us, we see the past, present and future." This is where we can share hope, build tradition and where we can revisit what hasn't worked before and try something new. If you don't have an extended family, work on creating one by drawing in good friends who can be honorary aunts, uncles and grandparents.

So step out into this year knowing that as you get the balance you will definitely get the bounce! 