

## The Whole Family Test

Some people practice family whispering without knowing it. What about you? Your “score” depends on how you see your family, your children, and your role as a parent. If you’re a grandparent, you’re into a second round and perhaps you learned and got better at family whispering as you’ve aged.

Feel free to make copies of this test. Take it yourself, email it to friends, post it on Facebook by copying this link: <http://bit.ly/1c1110Y>. If your children are old enough to understand the questions—that’ll happen long before they learn how to read—take it as a family. It’s a great way to introduce the idea of family check-ins; see pages 164–69 of *Family Whispering*.)

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “not at all” and 5 meaning “almost all the time” (no one does anything *all* the time), rate yourselves *as a family* on the following items.

1. We pull together as a family during hard times. \_\_\_\_\_
2. We respect and support one another as individuals. \_\_\_\_\_
3. We are family-centered, not child-centered. \_\_\_\_\_
4. We listen to, and learn from, one another. \_\_\_\_\_
5. We see problems as opportunities to figure out how to manage better next time—*not* to assign blame. \_\_\_\_\_
6. We don’t argue with reality—we accept who each of us is and tell ourselves the truth about what’s happening around us. \_\_\_\_\_
7. We encourage children, not just adults, to assume roles that help keep the family running. \_\_\_\_\_
8. We have regular, predictable routines and rituals that bring us together as a family. \_\_\_\_\_
9. We keep track of and document our good memories. \_\_\_\_\_
10. We accept that people argue and that bad things happen, but we try not to let negativity overwhelm us. \_\_\_\_\_
11. We take on projects as a family. \_\_\_\_\_
12. We know that each of us is different and believe that makes us stronger as a family. \_\_\_\_\_

- 13. We know what we stand for as a family. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. We are all willing to work hard—and know that it’s everyone’s job—to keep the family ecosystem in balance. \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. We see our family as part of a greater whole, both in our community and as part of a larger global family. \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. We put our heads together to look for solutions, because it’s never just one person’s problem. \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. We try our best but don’t necessarily have to *be* the best. \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. We call on relatives and people outside the family when we need help. \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. Even as we pursue our individual goals, we are grateful for the support that comes to each of us through the family. \_\_\_\_\_
- 20. We try to reach outside ourselves, to other families and to our community, to support those who have fewer resources. \_\_\_\_\_

**Your total score:** \_\_\_\_\_

If you racked up between 80 and 100 points, you already embrace the concept of family whispering. Good for you. You’re on a path that benefits each of you.

If your score is between 0 and 20, you might inadvertently be focusing more on your children than on making your family strong, or perhaps you’ve recently been hit by a string of changes and haven’t quite recovered.

If you fall somewhere in between – most of us do – there’s always room for improvement.