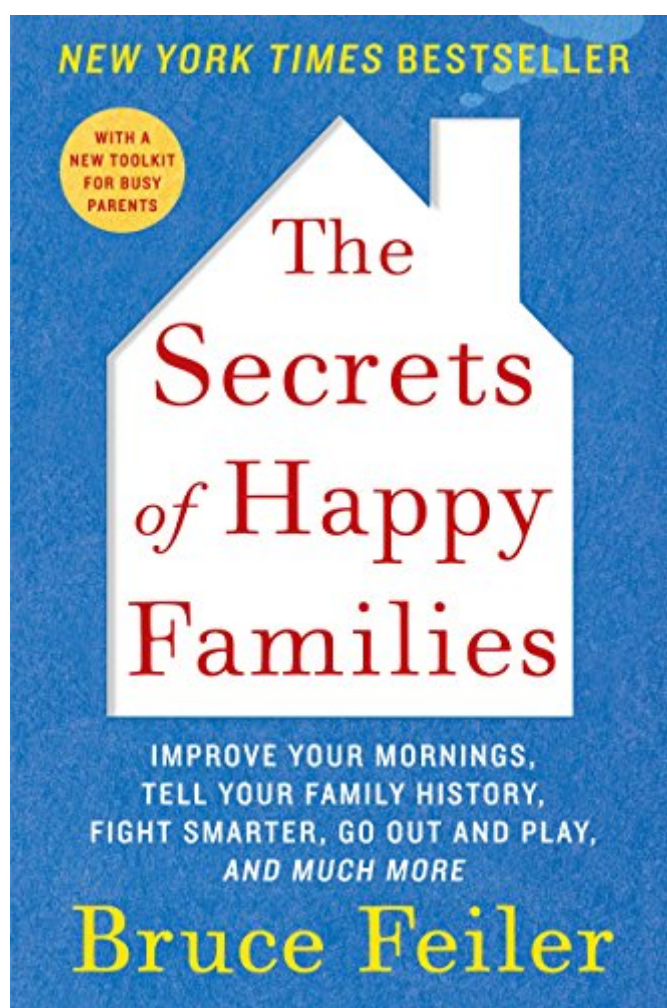


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The Secrets Of Happy Families: Improve Your Mornings, Rethink Family Dinner, Fight Smarter, Go Out And Play, And Much More



Synopsis

In *The Secrets of Happy Families*, New York Times bestselling author Bruce Feiler has drawn up a blueprint for modern families – a new approach to family dynamics, inspired by cutting-edge techniques gathered from experts in the disciplines of science, business, sports, and the military. The result is a funny and thought-provoking playbook for contemporary families, with more than 200 useful strategies, including: the right way to have family dinner, what your mother never told you about sex (but should have), and why you should always have two women present in difficult conversations. Timely, compassionate, and filled with practical tips and wise advice, Bruce Feiler's *The Secrets of Happy Families: Improve Your Mornings, Rethink Family Dinner, Fight Smarter, Go Out and Play, and Much More* should be required reading for all parents.

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Customer Reviews

I read Bruce Feiler's *The Secrets of Happy Families* ahead of the birth of my first child (which is still a month away), and so, to be honest, I'm not in the target

audience for the book. Plus, seeing as the large majority of the book concerns a life with kids, I'm far from the most qualified person to assess it. So, I could well be revising my opinion over Feiler's work as the years go on. Nevertheless, as of now, I found it very interesting, full of ideas that I would consider implementing in the future. The book's premise seemed to me, once I read the introduction, to be a silly one. The author proposed to look at insights from different careers and fields of study to see how they could improve family life. For instance, how would a professional trained in conflict resolution deal with family arguments? How would a green beret build a sense of "team" in the family? This sounded pretty ridiculous (the team one still didn't work for me) until I read the first chapter and began to see the specific ideas these people had. I found particularly intriguing the sections on "family branding," family weekly meetings, and the need for having close relationships with extended family. Many sections of the book have original ideas, and Feiler has done his best to support them with relevant research. I think that almost all families would find some useful and helpful ideas here. My only criticism of the book is that it definitely seemed to trail off at the end. This section largely had to do with entertainment. Some of the advice was just weak or obvious (the creators of Farmville suggest playing "20 Questions" on car trips). Even Feiler seemed to think that the idea about making family trips more like an extreme competition (think: Amazing Race) was a little absurd. On the whole, though, this was a quick read with some useful ideas. I would recommend it and expect to revisit it myself in the future.

I read parenting books occasionally - mostly when the kids are making me nuts for an extended period of time or I'm feeling like a bit of a failure as a mom. Usually what I read frustrates me because I am reminded that I shouldn't yell - in fact, shouldn't ever lose my cool, or has a complex process that I'm not going to implement long term. I read the sample of this book and decided to buy it. I actually stayed up late reading it and finished it this morning. Normally, only fiction has that affect on me. I've already recommended it to a friend and am thinking of buying it for a few people. I liked the way the information was presented, I like the no-nonsense lack of navel gazing, and the tips provided (not all, but a lot of them) make sense to me. Most of this is specific, checklist task type of items all designed to improve communication and increase happiness and satisfaction within the family. Who doesn't love that? My family is having our first weekly meeting tonight. This idea appeals to me a lot, because as I read this book, it occurred to me that I'm the one who keeps the calendar/logistics in my head for our family, which stresses me out somewhat, and my kids and

sometimes my husband are the ones who can get caught off guard when we're suddenly trying to do three things while heading into as many different directions. We're going to use our meeting to talk about what went well, what we can improve on, have the kids pick their punishments, review the schedule for the week and set a positive tone for the coming days. I love the idea of getting together at breakfast - some days, this makes MUCH more sense than trying to pull off a dinner together given different schedules. I love the suggestions to start empowering the kids. I'll update in a few weeks after we've been implementing some of these practices. I'm feeling pretty positive at this point.

Needed this book for a Marriage and Family class in college. I did not read it in its entirety, but it does read similarly to the Love Languages book.

Loved this book! I actually couldn't put it down - well researched, great stories and examples, and filled with ideas that work!

I highly recommend the book as it will for sure broaden your horizons and it will give you multiple tips on how to do better - for your, your kids' and your partner's sake! I liked the fact that the practical tips are backed up by research and/or experts in respective fields and that you can extend them beyond your family life too. The reason I'm not giving it a max score is that I had expected even more subjects/tips in there based on the raving reviews. Scoops on improving kids' learning/studying habits, inner discipline (motivation) for the whole family ;), etc. would be v. helpful. What could be also great addition to the book is an appendix and, ideally, a web page with a repository of the ready-to use ideas, lists, etc.

A good read, there were a lot of helpful tidbits in here, unfortunately every time I suggested my husband and I implement anything from the book he acted like I was torturing him so we might not benefit from it long term but I'm still going to try to implement the tips within when I can.

This book is changing my life and my family life. I already have a pretty good family life, but there are so many tips and techniques in here that would benefit any family. I like that Bruce Feiler doesn't try to boil everything down into a top ten. Instead, he shares dozens and dozens of nuggets from academia, family studies and his own interviews. I especially like the fresh take on using agile methodologies to improve family dynamics and get things done, the idea of a family mission

statements, and how to foster conversation during meals. Bruce is right when he says there's a lot written about raising happy, healthy children, but precious little about happy, healthy families. Love this book and have given it to many of my friends.

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