

Pipher's list of qualities of strong families

("The Shelter of Each Other," pp. 228-230)

- Strong family members manage to strike a balance between freedom and commitment to the family. ... Helping each other is not considered pathological, rather it's acknowledged as important."
- In a healthy family, self-definition is encouraged, but not worshipped. Diversity is tolerated, even valued.
- Core values. [One family's] creed endorsed self-improvement through education, civic mindedness and ethical living.
- Good parents try to be available emotionally but not omnipresent in their children's lives. That means struggling to find the right blend of closeness and distance.
- Strong families have the knack for optimism, for taking long views and a "big picture" perspective.
- Families teach people to manage pain.
- Good families know that no experience is worthless if it teaches lessons. ... Along with transcendence comes forgiveness.... Healing requires forgiveness, not for the sake of the causer of suffering, but for the sufferer. The alternative to forgiveness is anger, which can destroy from within the person who feels it.
- Strong families teach their members to be people on whom nothing is lost.
- That which doesn't kill us makes us stronger. The difference between denial and resilience is that the resilient person processes experience realistically.
- Good families are about joy. (Shelter, p. 230)