

THE SQUIRREL FAMILY

Dangers to our Families today

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Intent of the story and this story:

- ✓ *To study the values most of our families live by in to day's world.*
- ✓ *Consumerist values destroy the family.*
- ✓ *Causes of unhappiness in our homes.*

THE FABLE

Narrator: Within the hollow of a tree, there lived a squirrel family. Their food was simple, their nest poor, yet they were very happy. Father and Mother Squirrel loved their children and one another. They spent lots of time together. They shared all they had, they talked, they laughed and they suffered together. That's why they were so happy. One day, Father Squirrel confided to his wife

Father: "Honey, you know, when I see you and our kids having such hard time, and I compare myself with the other inhabitants in the forest, I feel very bad. They have big, posh dwellings, they give their children and wives lots of comforts and luxuries. But I?, poor me! I feel guilty for being such a poor earner, a bad husband and a hopeless father! I have to do something about it!

Narrator: From that day on, **to give more and better things to the family**, Father Squirrel began working very hard. Before sunrise, he was out in the forest to collect the choicest fruits and nuts. He returned home late, far in the night. Forever he kept telling himself: "I have to make it! **I have to give my wife and children the very best!**"

Narrator: Before long, Father Squirrel ranked among the richest inhabitants in that forest. Now, his wife could dress like a queen, and his children live like princes and princesses. Yet, our Squirrel was not satisfied. **He wanted to have more and more.** Money, wealth, prestige had become his goal in life.

Narrator: In their palatial nest, his wife and children were rolling in the lap of luxury. They never had it so good. Nevertheless, in their wealth and comfort, mother Squirrel and the little ones were feeling very lonely, insecure and unloved. She could never see her husband, and the kids, could not talk with their Dad. They were not able to enjoy the togetherness and blessedness of the family life of former days. She felt worse than a widow. The kids felt like orphans. No one could hear Dad's voice, nor feel the warmth of his loving touch. One day, in tears, the little Squirrels told their mother:

Little Squirrels . "Mum, where is Daddy gone? He is never at home! We feel lonely! Has he left us? Does Dad, not love us any more?"

Narrator: Turning her face one side, with one or two tears rolling down her cheeks, with a quivering and unconvincing voice, she replied:

Mother: “Oh! No! Daddy loves us very much! He works very, very hard to get for you and for me the best things money can buy. He wants to give us the best food, the best clothes, the best toys; only the very best of everything. See how much he loves us!”

Narrator: That night, she waited for her husband to return. It was in the wee hours of the morning. Then, she told him:

Mother: “Darling, I have to tell you how lonely I feel. Without you, I feel sad, deserted and unloved. How I long to spend time with you, but I never get a chance! I need you. I need a husband, not your money! I am longing for you, for your voice, for your touch, for your company. The children too, want you. The little ones crave for your love! Stop giving us money. Give us your love, your company, give us yourself! We want you!”

Narrator: ; Father Squirrel was very hurt. In a bout of temper, he shouted:

Father: “What? What are you saying? That I don’t love you? Can’t you see that I am killing myself for you to give you the best the world can offer”. I want to give you and my children the best education, the best house, all possible comforts, success, a high standard of living, economical security and respectability in society! And now you have the cheek to tell me that I do not love you? How ungrateful you are”.

Narrator: Meekly mother Squirrel replied:

Mother: “Yes, I know all that, but it is not a big house we want, but a happy home! We are not craving for money, for luxuries, for comforts, for exquisite food! I long for a husband! The children are craving for their Daddy!

Narrator: Distraught and furious Father Squirrel yelled:

Father: “What? You don’t seem to understand! You are always asking for love and more love, for affection and more affection! Do you think that in today’s world, we can live on love and affection? Don’t forget, ours is a competitive world. I want to give you and my children a bright future, economic security, a high standard of living and a life free from worries!”

Narrator: Calmly, but firmly, mother Squirrel replied

Mother:“ The first thing that you, as a husband, have to give us is love, company, a listening ear, emotional security, understanding, laughter, friendliness...in other words” yourself”.

Narrator: In a rage, Father Squirrel shouted:

Father: “If this is the case, it’s better for me to quit. I can clearly see that you do not love me’. I cannot live with you in this house anymore! Too late I discovered that I married the wrong woman! You ruined my life! You have failed to love me in return for all I do.

Narrator: From that day on, Father Squirrel never returned to his luxurious house! The children did not see their father again..

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

House Vs Home.

- A ‘house’ is made of things; a ‘home’ is built of people’s hearts
- A ‘house’ is cold and dead, a ‘home’ is warm, alive and welcoming.
- We need a ‘home’ more than a ‘house’
- We do not need wealth to build happy families, but love and togetherness.
- The ‘quality’ of family life is not to be measured by the quantity and the monetary value of their gadgets and possessions.

What is wanted for a happy home

- What children and grown-ups as well, need are affection and acceptance, not necessarily material comforts
- What the spouses need is not a luxurious bed-room, but a loving and meaningful relationship.
- Money is not enough. Money fills the pockets, not the hearts.
- A modicum of material goods is needed for a happy home, but not superfluities, riches, affluence and opulence.
- For a happy ‘home’ the most wanted commodity today is ‘time’. Time to talk, time to play, time to pray, time to fool, time to enjoy and time to eat together.
- Children need their Parents’ presence. There is no available substitute to fill up the void created by the absence of the parents.
- To build your ‘home you must ‘understand and accept’ your people.
- Do not fall into the temptation of making life in your home too comfortable.
- Be ‘fatherly/motherly’ not ‘paternalistic/maternal’

Dangers and Pitfalls

- Do not mistake the ‘standard of living’ with the ‘standard of life’. Your living standards may be poor, yet your standard of life may be very high.
- Let your family be unique, do not try to compete with your neighbor’s families with other Joneses.
- Don’t be bluffed into the myth of ‘The great tomorrow’. Do not strive to give your family a wonderful tomorrow; rather give them a ‘wonderful today’!
- Do not be swallowed by the rash and frenzy of the competitive spirit of today’s society.
- Do not toil and moil to have more and more! Strive, rather, to be more! Yes, more and more human, more and more loving.
- Work-holism is a modern plague! Be aware! Get soon immunized!

- By working more and more, we become less and less humane..
- As a rule, the ‘quality of family life’ is inversely proportional to the ‘quantity’ of one’s wealth
- Do not fall into the trap of giving to your children material goods beyond their real needs.
- Do not give your children, as a vicarious satisfaction to yourself, the luxuries you could not enjoy as a child!
- This “vicarious-satisfaction” is a trap where many good modern parents get caught. up.. This trap will spoil your children and ruin the happiness of your ‘home’!

Consequences of falling in those dangers and traps.

- Once we surrender ourselves to greed, we are swallowed up by it! It’s a deadly trap.
- By wanting to have more than others, we end by feeling inferior, to all and frustrated!
- The more we have, the less we can enjoy! It’s like food; the more we eat, the less we enjoy it’s taste..
- By struggling to have more and more, we ‘burn ourselves out’ and feel weary and exhausted. .
- By running the ‘rat-race’ we become rats and robots; we lose our identity. We end becoming just anonymous numbers in a faceless crowd.
- Modern life condemns parents and children to co-exist under one roof. It shuts the door to a warm, happy and gratifying family life.

What to do! What not to do!

- Educate your children to be ‘themselves’, to ‘stand on their own feet’; do not kill yourself to give them a secure future, rather teach them how to forge a ‘secure future’ by themselves
- Give your children a ‘good education’, a solid ‘formation for life’, not ‘life-insurance policies’.
- Be critical! Do not swallow the ‘slogans’ of modern publicity of “What a happy home should be”
- Challenge our modern assumptions of what is to be a successful earning husband and progressive working mother