

Family Synergy -- One Plus One Equals Three

Myrna Lapres
March 22, 2019



Some years ago, my parents decided it was time to start downsizing. While looking at the best way to pass on furniture, mementos and other significant items to myself and my siblings, my dad took photos and created a book with each item labeled with its significant history. Sending copies to each of us, our parents asked us to indicate which ones we were interested in.

The larger pieces went to my youngest sister because she lived the closest and could pick them up. But each of us had the opportunity to request items that held special significance and we received at least some of our top choices. I chose the cedar chest that had always been in my parents' bedroom. In order to ship it from Virginia to California where I lived, my father built a crate that met the standards of the trucking company complete with a slot underneath for the forklift to load and unload it.

There are many stories of siblings becoming embroiled in ugly inheritance battles when their parents pass away. The reading of a will can result in flaring tempers, siblings not speaking to each other and hurt feelings at a time that should be about reflecting on shared memories.

Dr. Stephen R. Covey said, "Synergy is better than my way or your way. It's our way." I am grateful that my parents practiced this while raising my siblings and I. Synergy is the habit of creative cooperation. Within a family, it is teamwork, open-mindedness, and the adventure of finding new solutions to old problems. I strove to bring this element into my own family whether it was planning a road trip or tackling a cleanup project.

But it doesn't just happen on its own. It's a process that takes commitment, time and making it a priority. Synergy lets us discover things together that we are much less likely to discover by ourselves. It is the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. One plus one equals three, or six, or sixty--you name it.