



Sometimes, We Need To Pull the Radishes!
by Patrick Cayouette, LMSW

As a gardener, I have received pleasure from planting many vegetables and found the satisfaction in enjoying the literal fruits of my labor. As I prepare my garden, I protect each plant and strive to have bigger and more plentiful plants through providing them with fertilizer, water and pulling the weeds to prevent them from being robbed of their nutrients. There is one plant which is an exception to this rule, the radish. In the spring, when the radish seeds are planted, the planter is required to plant more seeds than they will receive in produce. As the seeds germinate, the gardener must decide which sprouts look healthier and will produce bigger and better radishes. The smaller sprouts need to be weeded in order to allow the healthier sprouts room to generate plump, tasty radishes.

As parents, we need to bring this philosophy to our families. Our families tend to have many distractions which prevent the opportunities to generate healthy and plentiful relationships. We have many good things in our family's life: sports, church, work, socialization and the everyday must-dos. However, like the radishes in the garden, there may be times in which we need to look at the many activities and distractions and weed out things that even seem good in order to allow room for bigger and better family radishes.

Here are some ideas:

Instead of using media in separate rooms, have "media black outs" and sit as a family to talk, enjoy a meal around the table and/or read scripture or pray together. Studies show that families who pray together and eat 4-5 meals with the whole family have children who are drug-free, have higher grades and lower teenage pregnancies.

Instead of each child doing numerous activities at a time, prioritize their favorites, creating less stress from running around and struggling to meet everyone's needs and allowing opportunities for communication and presence (i.e. sitting to watch your child take part in the activities). Furthermore, studies show that families who spend more quality time together have fewer mental health struggles such as anxiety, depression and even ADHD behaviors.

Having a healthy and plentiful garden takes time and hard work to experience the fruits of the labor. This time and labor and LOVE are also needed in our families. Which radish sprouts do you have to remove?

Want more info on Patrick? Visit his counselor page [here!](#)