



JERRY CAMMARATA IS SUPERPOP

Celebrities speak out for family

Last week some pretty observant kids told us, in no uncertain terms, that they wanted to be loved, understood, involved and part of an institution of life—the family. We have had a week and, indeed, enough time to plan our own strategies as parents so this new year of 1981 will allow our kids to find happiness, peace and joy in the family.

As we go about our days this year trying to fulfill the needs of our kids, there are celebrity parents and family members that have an ever greater stake in the survival of the family. Many celebrities who are constantly in the eyes of the public and committed to the survival of the family use their energies to see that we understand what must be done for the family unit to work. The answer, of course, is complex and the reality is there is no one right way to raise a family. It would be of interest to you to absorb some of the comments of the following celebrities and attempt to integrate their attitudes into our own philosophy and formulate a creative parenting direction.

Some amazing thoughts

The Amazing Kreskin, this country's greatest mentalist and expert on ESP (extra sensory perception) has an exhaustive performance schedule that keeps him away from home for weeks at a time. Kreskin does, however, have a reverence for the family. According to Kreskin, "The American family as we know it seems to be disintegrating. I sense an urgency of family members, particularly the youth, to be understood. This understanding does not seem to be coming..."

"Of my hundreds and hundreds of concerts each year, I particularly enjoy speaking to the youth on our college campuses and trying to impart some of my family experiences in the hopes that they will grow to understand the need for the family to exist. Of the many topics discussed with students, I mostly hear these three: first, family members should listen to each other. They should listen to each other rather than dwelling upon what will be said when the speaker finishes speaking. Second, families should use more tactile communication. The bond of sharing hands and touching individuals on the shoulders means you have closeness. It is this closeness and warmth that adds very positive feelings toward those around you. Every family member should share hand shaking and touch to add greater fulfillment to the unique and beautiful institution of togetherness. Being a pluralistic society, we certainly can take the lead from the Latins and Spanish in this regard. And third, family members should practice the art of empathy. We must



Lawrence Welk

feel for one another and be understood.

"As we share ourselves with our family and as we share ourselves with the world society, the future of the nations will be brighter and man will become a more successful being in the eyes of God."

Family song

Ben Vereen, who has danced his way into many of our households, is an active voice in his well-orchestrated family. According to Vereen, "The family is the most important element in our society—a sense of security which we might not necessarily discover from other sources. There is absolutely no substitute for the family unit.

"My wife and children give me stability as I exist in a business that is reknowned for its lack of stability. Their love has enabled me to weather many emotional storms and I am richer and stronger when I realize that I am first and foremost a husband and a father."

Champagne family affair

The bubbles and champagne music have made **Lawrence Welk** an institution in the entertainment business. The secret to his popularity is simple, he says: "As a product of a close-knit family of eight children, a happy husband of near 50 years, proud father of three and grandfather of ten, I consider myself a richly blessed family man indeed.

"I even call our orchestra my 'musical family,' and perhaps rightfully so. A genuine family feeling exists throughout our organization—among our office staff as well as among our performers—because we operate like a family in the way we care for, treat and share with our people."

And now, the president

The chief executive of our country, **Jimmy Carter**, summed up the relevance of the family in the '80s last June when, before the Baltimore gathering of the White House Conference on Families, he said: "Family ties are based on more than blood kinship. There are also kinships of shared experiences and shared dreams and shared joys and sorrows. Most of all, they are based on love, love that can span vast distances and also span the barrier between generations.

"Families are or should be the first place that we learn... It is the first school. We can learn how to live in harmony and helpfulness with one another, and nourish the individuality of those who live in the same home; respect one another, even though we are different."

The family will never be fully understood by all of us this year or any other year. We do have a lifetime with our parents, children and friends to try to find out as much as we can. I for one *listen* to Kreskin, Ben Vereen, Lawrence Welk, Jimmy Carter and many many others. When it comes to being a good family person, an open mind can be the best teacher.