



THE
Gross
GOODS



HI!

We are The Gross Family.

YES, THAT IS GROSS, AS IN 12 DOZEN.

Currently, as we write this, we are almost 20 years married with a 15 and 12-year old. We live in Los Angeles, CA where we run a non-profit ministry called Fireproof Ministries. The focus of the ministry is on people caught up in online addictions, and that lead to starting strongermarriages.com.

CRAIG recently started a company with his friend, Jeff Bethke, where they publish books and video courses plus some other things for social influencers, authors, and artists.

JEANETTE has worked behind the scenes of Fireproof Ministries since it's conception in 1998 and is known as the jack of all trades around the place.

ELISE is a competition dancer that loves the styles of jazz and contemporary.

NOLAN is a photographer, tech genius, actor, and Youtube extraordinaire.

Like we mentioned in the video, we heard Jeff and Alyssa talk in Maui about the idea of making a plan for your family and marriage that you filter your decision through.

THAT TALK LEAD US TO WHY WE CAME UP WITH OUR FAMILY MISSION!

THE “WHY”

There are numerous things we have wished for our marriage and hoped for our kids someday. We think we have done a great job trying and doing some things in our home that point us to those hopes. What we hadn't done a great job of was stating the goals or mission of our family and why we do what we do. We realized if our goals were thought out and stated, it would help everyone in our home understand why we value certain things, be a filter for what we say no and yes to, and get us to implement our goals instead of just hoping our family and marriage would turn out well. When thinking about our mission, it reminded us of the quote, “Live by design, rather than default.”

So, we decided to put pen to paper and figure out what's important and what's not while we raise our family and strive for a healthy marriage. Once our basic goals were written down, we wrote more detail about how we were already putting them into practice. If we weren't already doing it, we wrote out how to accomplish them. We also included quotes that we always seem to say to the kids. We want to share the vision and mission of our family with you. Our last name is Gross, thus the name of our family mission:

THE GROSS GOODS

WE WANT OUR FAMILY TO BE GOOD WITH:



GOD



MARRIAGE



FAMILY



FRIENDS



HEALTH



WORK



MONEY



FUN

G O D

Church:

We are committed to going to a Sunday church service whenever possible. The kids always say yes to youth nights or retreats. Jeanette goes to a mid-week weekly Bible study.

Accountable to other Christians:

To grow in your faith and keep you on the straight and narrow, accountability is key. Accountability should always be with another believer who points you to Christ. Jeanette meets with Katie via phone or FaceTime to go over a book they are reading together. In that time, they are vulnerable, honest, and transparent.

Meditation and prayer:

We have found a way to relax, refocus, and find God. We all took meditation classes this past year. We so wish we would have found meditation at a young age like our kids. It helps to cope with stress, health, and your mental state.

We pray with our kids at night. But, we also pray during a time of crisis (we do have teens now, so a crisis could be “girl drama” at school) or sickness. Be about prayer as if it an everyday thing that is a part of life.

Reading, studying and putting to memory God’s word:

Jeanette is on a 3-year Bible reading plan. She leaves her Bible out, so it reminds her to read her chapter a day.



Her Bible study also prompts her to read the Word and apply it. Jeanette will sometimes put Bible verses on the chalkboard fridge but could be more consistent with this. Things are easier to memorize when they are in front of you. Find appropriate level Bibles for the kids as their age changes and encourage them to set aside time daily to read, even if it’s just a chapter.

Let other people lead your kids.

We, as parents, can’t be the only ones to disciple our kids, in fact, other people can do it better than us.

MARRIAGE

Be intentional. Don't go on auto-pilot, always work on bettering your marriage (i.e.. still go out on dates, show interest in other person's interest, read marriage books, go to marriage conferences or talks, listen to podcasts together, listen to a sermon about marriage). We have read books before and gone to and put on a few marriage conferences. We try to talk and not watch TV at night for a period, and try to have date nights and date days while the kids are in school. Craig runs a website called Stronger Marriages. Marriage material is all around both of us!

Continue growing as a person and together (spiritually, mentally, and emotionally). Craig reads a lot (leaders are readers), and we both have people around us (and we have each other) that challenge them us on all of those levels. As parents, we continually talk to the kids about emotions, who they are (like taking the Kolbe test), and how to become better.

Set up your marriage and family goals early on, even while dating.

Would have been beneficial to do this early on before we got married and before we had kids! That being said, it's never too late!

No secrets and full transparency. We know we can look at each other's emails and text messages whenever we want.

And we always tell the truth no matter what is asked.

Date a long time. Ask family and friends what they think. We dated three years and seven months before our wedding day. We now know from other couples that they were warned by others not to marry and it blew up in their face. When dating, it should be taken seriously, and you need to already be in marriage mode, reading and learning from other people about what marriage is like, what it entails.

Like each other... and the things we don't like we have come to realize is something that every married couple deals with. You have to choose to make those little things you don't like not a big deal. Because YOU have things he/she doesn't like either. Try to remember the things you do like about your spouse. It will help the negative things fade out.



FAMILY

"Friends come and go, but family is forever."

The four of us are all we have. We want all of us to be close, not just now, but forever. We all want to like each other later on in life and bring others into our solid family. That's why we are big advocates of no sibling fighting, being kind to each other and look at the positive in each other.

Find things that others in the family like or are interested in learning more about. We currently do a monthly thing where each family member gets a month to do an activity that the whole family has to participate in. For example, one month we couldn't buy anything on Amazon or online. And each week we had to purge something from our toy chest or closet to either give to someone we knew or to charity. The kids were encouraged to purge things that kind of hurt. We wanted them to see that we already have everything we could want or need and to be generous, even when it hurts. One month it was how to play poker, another month it was having to watch football as a family on Sunday's.

Support each other in all activities we are involved in. We go to any and all dance performances/recitals, we go to all sporting events and cheer each other on, we ask about auditions and things we all do outside of our house.

Be intentional. A great family doesn't just happen, that's why we stay on our kids about talking nicely to each other, thinking the best in each other, and thinking of activities to do together for bonding.

Experiences over gifts. For Christmas and birthdays, we have ditched the gifts and implemented experiences. It's getting harder to connect with the kids as they get older and have different interests. So, with giving experiences, it makes you think about what they like and spend time doing it with them. It's all about making memories together!

Circle time. Circle time is where we all sit down, and one person asks another person a question. It can be very deep or surface. This exercise brings up many good conversations as you get to know the heart of each person. And it also helps the kids to be good at asking good questions.

Steal stuff from other great parents. When Jeanette was pregnant with our first child, she enlisted the help of another mom that was years ahead of her. They met once a week for almost the whole pregnancy, Jeanette took a lot of notes on how to be a mom and how to parent.

FRIENDS

"You are who your friends are."

Accountability. People need people. The best way to go deeper with any friendship is to be accountable to each other. This means being vulnerable and transparent about more important topics than just the weather. And it means holding each other up in prayer and asking hard questions.

Be intentional. If you want a better friend, be a better friend. Call people and set up times to hang out. Good friendships and relationships don't just magically happen; they take work.

Talk, not text. We always encourage real-life friendships by picking up the phone and talking.

Serve your friends. Be generous with them with your time and resources.

Your friends are a reflection of yourself. If you are hanging out with

negative people, you will become negative. If you hang out with drug users, you eventually will be tempted to use drugs.

Run with people who run faster than you. Friends who push you to be the best person you can be are always the people you want around.

We will always have people at our house. We want to be a house where all are welcome, whether that's to stay the night in our tiny house or come over to have a meal.

Everyone's favorite subject is themselves. Learn about others by asking questions and listening. God gave you two ears and one mouth for a reason!

Knowing people (and yourself) is more important than knowing stuff.



HEALTH

"You have nothing if you don't have your health."

Active. 4-5 times per week do something active. We like OrangeTheory Fitness, our 15-year-old has been working out with us since he was 14.

Eat correctly and in moderation.

Go to the doctor for yearly or bi-yearly check-ups. Keep notes about your medical health history, so when you are asked by the doctor, you know what you are allergic to, when the first day of your last period was, that you are anemic, what kind of vitamins you take, etc.

Go to the doctor when you are sick.

Don't wait it out and if it's something major, don't put it off.

Know how to cook healthy balanced meals. We try to teach cooking lessons

more in the summer when there is more time.

Know how to restaurant order.

Practice asking the server questions about the menu items and how things are prepared so you can make the most healthy choice.

Learn to eat sugar and unhealthy foods in moderation and have self-control.

Practice moderation and self-control.

Practice this in all areas of your life.

Know how to take care of your

home. Learn how to clean it properly, do the dishes, do laundry, etc.



WORK

Find what you are good at and do it over and over. Maybe someday you will get paid to do it! As a family, we all took the Kolbe test which shows you how you work best. We are trying to push our kids to things that they will thrive in. We see far too many young people that don't have a clue on what they would like to do to make money.

Learn valuable skills you can get paid to do.

Continue learning. Reading, watching Youtube videos, asking people who know a certain skill. NEVER be afraid to ask questions.

Do what you love for work. If not, do work so you can do what you love.

Find good people around your work/team. God is all about relationships. If you don't have good people around you, in any aspect of your life, you will fail.



MONEY

Know how to save and spend.

Learn to make a budget. Learn discipline to stick with it.

Investing. Risk VS. Reward. Learn what a 401(K) is-what age to start it, the benefits of having it and rules of it (like taking it out too soon or getting a divorce).

Your time is money. And your time is worth every cent.

Learner. Find smarter people around you in regards to money and learn from them. And then someday, pass that onto someone younger than you.

Generous. Strive to have a generous spirit all year. If there is a cause that you have a heart for, be generous. If a friend is having a slow month financially and you can buy them gas, do it. We pick up the tab when we go out with friends; we take family and friends to concerts and trips without asking for a dime. Don't hold this over friends heads or think you need anything in return. Your generosity will spark generosity in them. God gave

you all that you have, so share it, don't hoard it. At Christmas, we bless another family by providing gifts for them. We have been doing this since the kids were old enough to understand, to put their own money into it, and give input on what to buy or give the family. One of the bigger memories from this is when we gave a single mom a car.

Live on less than you make.

Have the same bank account as a married couple. To have complete unity, you need to be working on the finances of your life together.

Start tithing (to your church or para-church ministry) when you join bank accounts. Don't wait or stop because it will 10 times harder to start again.

What do you want your financial life to look like? Make proactive decisions with your money to make it happen (wife stay home with kids, save money for vacations, etc).

FUN

"If it's not hell yes, it's a no"

Work hard, play hard.

Write a bucket list or dream list. And fulfill them.

Travel and see people that live far away.

Have things like Fantasy Football, Disneyland Passes, etc.

Have some hobbies that you frequently do.

Always have to have something to look forward to. Or life just becomes mundane.

Use stuff, experiences, and interests to be together. Use your stuff with strategy.

Like when Craig travels for work, he will bring all or one of us with him. And then he tacks on a day to spend in that state doing something fun. Pretty much every traveling experience we have had as a family involves work. We have seen almost the whole USA and even foreign countries as a family.



THE “HOW”

Now it's your turn!

Now it's your turn! Go ahead and steal any ideas from us that you think would work with your unique family. Over the years, we have stolen ideas from couples in our lives that we admire. So, stealing is perfectly acceptable! A mission statement comes in many forms. It can be a paragraph that's beautiful and perfectly worded. It can be eight words like ours that represent the pillars you feel like your marriage and family are called to. Or it can be a mixture of both. Feel free to word it or do it however you would like. The key is putting to paper the things you feel called to and are passionate about to guide the ship and create a legacy for your family. It won't take as long as you may think, you have things rolling around in your head right now. We think it will only take you a few afternoons to complete your mission statement.

ASK EACH OTHER THESE FEW QUESTIONS TO GET THE BALL ROLLING:

1. What is different about our marriage and family?
2. What other marriages and families do you respect? Why?
3. What is important to our marriage and family?
4. What kind of marriage and family do we want to have?
5. If others talk about our marriage and family, what do we want to be known for?

After spending some time on the above questions and getting the discussion going, write down a rough points of your family mission. This could be just one word like ours. It took us a few days to nail down exactly what our Gross Goods were and even then, we added a few later on. Your family could have two or three things at first, or more like ours. You may find that you add more as life changes with having kids or getting older. You may even add another point a few weeks later after you have had time to mull over everything.



OUR MISSION AND VISION

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

DETAILS OF OUR MISSION AND VISION:

After you write out your basic points, start to define and pinpoint why your points are important and what you are going to do to accomplish them. Ours were sloppy at first, we just wrote down a short sentence until we could come back around and go into detail on it. Like under our friend's section, we had only the quote, "You are who your friends are" for the longest time. Then we came back around and defined what we meant by that.

- 1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Now that you are finished, we encourage you to do what we did-display it in your home. We made a chalkboard print that has our eight points with pictures and small details for each. Then, we had books made for the kids with the full points for them to take with them through their life. A manual for life, per se.