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Multigenerational Families Facing Life Together

Writers and directors of the film *The Croods* explore the dynamic of a multigenerational family and how such a family can defeat the impossible together. With about 54 million American living in multigenerational households (Lawrence), the creators of the movie *The Croods* appeal to this intended audience with the featured family's efforts of achieving the greatest of challenges together of their time. The represented caveman family of the movie, the Croods are shown working together in order to retrieve their needed breakfast in the first scene of the film. The battle between the cavemen and the other greedy animals composes a challenge for the wanted bird egg. Risking their own lives while in the hunt for food, the family intensely relies on one another in order to defend their own efforts of retrieval. This movie family consists of three generations of blood relations. There are characteristics of such a family to successfully live together in the same household. Some of those aspects are that each member has their own assigned role in the family, they rely on one another in order to reach success, and this unique loving family dynamic will respect and trust each other in what they do.

In order for a family with such a large age range to live in a content environment, a system has to be established, which can be shown through a couple of anomalies of the first movie scene of *The Croods*. Identified anomalies that stand out throughout the film clip are the tailed grandmother and strangely crazed baby among the whole unusual cavemen environment of a variety of fictional animals and actions of all the characters. In the beginning, the father flips

the grandmother like a coin calling out heads or tails, which determines if the daughter or son goes to retrieve the egg. The grandmother has some sort of proportionally sized lizard's tail, which is even abnormal for the time when cavemen were assumed to exist. Even though such a characteristic is strange, the grandmother has critical role when it comes to making a family decision. The father also plays a very important role of facilitating this routinely done flip. According to Klein, "owners of the home tend to have the stronger position of control," which is illustrated by the strong authority of the father. Another anomaly presented during the movie scene is the outrageously portrayed baby. During the high intense action scene, the father shouts out to the mother to "release the baby" rather than the commonly known term the beast in place of the baby. This commonly known phrase also represents that releasing of the baby is a routinely done move. The baby has her own role in order to help the family as a whole to reach success along with the assistance of the mother. "Established routines should be respected" (Lawrence) within a multigenerational family dynamic. "Consistency will help minimize the inevitable disruptions" (Klein) created, especially when it comes to fighting one's life against irrational animals. These strange, comedic anomalies represents that routines and having assigned roles creates an organized environment, limits stress, and forms an understanding among others in the same household.

It is important for family members of a multigenerational dynamic, to rely on one another during times of need, and there are a couple of patterns of frequency of the movie clip that describes this concept quite clearly. Patterns of frequency seen throughout the rivalry are the bird egg and the constant switching of avengement between the members of the family. The bird egg that is being fought over for a primary source of food, is the main object being showcased throughout the movie clip. This prize sets a goal in mind and a meaning to the whole scenario.

Every family member receives a chance on retrieving the egg, but then they are defeated by the opposing animals who also want that source of food. Once a family member is defeated though, another relative comes along to avenge their loved one. A way Lawrence states such a situation is that “dividing up and assigning chores is a necessary part of keeping the wheels greased.” This constant action of willingness develops a perception of working together smoothly as a team. Also, trusting in one another will “enhance family bonds,” (Lawrence) providing a more delightful way of living as a family. Being able to rely on one’s own immediate relatives creates a trust that is essential when being surrounded by loved ones, because otherwise, one will suffer from a lack of a support system in their own family. These developed patterns of frequency showcase a trusting family that relies on one another in order to achieve the toughest of daily challenges.

Trusting one’s own family members is important in improving relationships and being able to know that there are people one can rely on, and a couple of constant patterns from the movie scene establish such a concept evidently. The opposing teams of cavemen versus animals and the predator action of the furious beast and the protection of the woolly mammoth type animal towards the end of the movie scene enhances that idea of trust. A sense of contrast is between the conflicting groups of cavemen and animals. As they both fight over the wanted bird egg, there is an equal representation of the two sides throughout the movie clip. This equality creates the sense of competition among the whole situation, which presents the occurring event more intriguing for its intended audience. The pathos of this contrast heightens the desire of wanting to know the ending result. Embedded in all the action, there is also the aspect of trust as every family member has their chance with retrieving the egg. One can interpret this competition that when it comes to a difficult situation among three generations of family, most of the time

one cannot accomplish such a task alone. Another example of trust is shown between the sense of insecurity and security with the raging beast and frightened woolly mammoth type animal. The sense of captivation with this developed setup intrigues the intended audience even further into the scene. As the entire family escapes in order to save their own lives, writers create a fascinated hope with the getaway. There is also a valued trust in one another among the family in order to get back home safely. These patterns of contrast not only illustrate the importance of trust in a multigenerational family, it also advances the pathos and understanding of the movie itself.

While working together as a family, respect is needed, which is represented with the movie clip's two moments of intensity. They are when the son awakens the beast and when he also drops the obtained egg towards the end. The central focus is changed when the son accidentally awakes the beast that then chases after the family for revenge. It becomes a situation where hunting for their breakfast is not always just fun and games; there is still also a chance of death in the wild. When it seems that the family was just going to settle down, the son also drops the egg on the ground once they all get back home, which identically continues the fast paced action of the movie clip. There is a very quick shift from escaping death, to having to eat their breakfast before it goes to waste. Also, both of these moments are provoked by the son himself presenting a naïve existence of the character. The family already has a settlement of respect because no one seems to be angry or upset of the catastrophes created of the situation. Klein suggests to "have regular family conferences to discuss issues before they become problems," because respect and understanding in multigenerational families are key points in achieving success. These moments of intensity create instant changes in the meaning of the situations that

develop a further understanding on how this particular family lives their weekly lives by working together and taking into account on what is truly important as a family.

According to Klein, the most common multigenerational living arrangement is having three generations under one roof. Since “16 percent of the total U.S. population [lives] in a family household that [contains] at least two adult generations or a grandparent and at least one other generation,” (Klein) writers of the movie *The Croods* had an abundant audience to appeal to. It is perceived that when every member of such a family has their assigned place, contains the ability to rely on one another, and has developed an overall family trust and respect, the impossible can be defeated together. It is remembered to “have fun and treasure the time” (Klein) one has with their family. Even though living with such a large family dynamic can be stressful, there is still the existence of unconditional love. There is “a better sense of what it mean[s] to be a family” (Lawrence) when there is so much love to be offered.

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