



I've always wanted a younger sister. Well actually, at first I wanted a younger brother, then I got one, and decided I wanted a younger sister instead. Boy, was 6 year old me in for a reality check. Babies are a lot of work, and it doesn't get any easier when they grow up. Some might say toddlers are even worse. Though trust me, it doesn't get any worse than being wedged in between two crazy boys. They can get really rough and rowdy and you just have to sit there in confusion while they practically jump on each other. And they ALWAYS want to play/watch football or basketball, morning, noon and night. I genuinely can't remember the last time I actually watched normal television and not some hour-long Fifa gameplay. Surely now you can understand why I wanted a sister, however, during a rant about my brothers to some of my closest friends, I found that both my friends actually enjoyed the idea of having brothers and thought that having a brother would be easier than handling their younger sisters. This epiphany left me flabbergasted and I came to the realisation that: we are all doomed. Older brother, older sister, younger brother, younger sister, it doesn't matter...either way you're in for a ride.

Yesterday was the International Day of Families, an opportunity to commemorate the relationships you have with those close to you. In 1993, the general assembly decided that the 15 of May every year would be observed as International Day of Families, with the aim of promoting awareness about issues relating to families and the knowledge of social, economic and demographic processes that affect families. Families, no matter how big or small, face challenges, whether these relate to personal struggles, finances or even relationships with other members. It's never easy. But this provides a day to acknowledge that, acknowledge that sometimes things will be hard, but the joy of having a family is that you never have to face those hardships alone. It is also a day to celebrate the joy in having families, in having people care about you so deeply. Upstairs is someone who wants you to do well, downstairs is someone willing to comfort you if things don't go so great and across the hall someone is ready to celebrate you when they do.

Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, keeping families together, is all about having the right to live with your family, if they can keep you safe. A child should not and cannot be separated from their family unless it's in the best interest of the child, and if they are separated, have the right to stay in contact with both parents if this is possible. The consequences of separating children from their families echo throughout their

lives, often manifesting as emotional trauma or developmental setbacks. Article 9 advocates to keep that family fabric intact, especially in child welfare systems like foster care and adoption.

Article 25 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, review of treatment in care, states that even if you aren't living with your biological family, you still have the right to be looked after, attended to and cared for. If placement conditions aren't good enough for a child to develop, steps should be taken to improve them.

Articles 10 and 18, contact with parents across countries and responsibility of parents, also coincide with this special day, highlighting both the need to keep a family unit united and the responsibility that falls under parents when looking after their children.

1 in 5 families are living in poverty in the UK, that's 14.3 million people - including 8 million working adults and 4 million children. Poverty can be linked to numerous other factors like poor mental and physical health, academic underachievement and decreased economic opportunity. Poverty puts a massive strain on family life, excluding children from everyday activities and subjecting parents to a number of mental stresses. Daily tasks, like food shopping, can cause substantial worry and parents may find it hard to control their emotions; which could also easily upset the child. The number of children living in poverty differs across regions and ethnic groups. Areas like Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have demonstrated high rates of poverty. A family of subsistence farmers is often composed of both adults and children. Because the children are also working to provide for their families, they don't get to go to school or have time to play. And as for the parents, excessive physical workload, especially in nations that don't tend to monitor these things, can lead to serious injuries and physical ailments. This is only one of the many issues that strike families across the globe.

So what can we take away from all of this, well, families are hard. Your siblings will pinch at you, your parents will nag you and you'll probably do the same to them. Difficulties within the family unit are an inescapable aspect. Through it all, families are still a source of comfort, emotional support, confidence and unconditional love. I've always wanted a younger sister. But honestly, I can't imagine life without my brothers. Yes, they drive me crazy, they're noisy and loud and such a hassle, but they're all I've got and they mean the absolute most to me. I only have one family and so it's important I make the most of every opportunity I have with them. A family is a foundation that you can always rely on to stand by your side. Use today as a chance to celebrate your own family and extend your appreciation for all that they do for you.