



The importance of Family Unity & Harmony

As identified in Mutual Trust's recent publication [Why the Modern Family Office Matters](#), the domain of the Family Office has evolved significantly over time. From a largely transactional wealth creation and compliance vehicle pre 1980s, to a focus on successfully preparing wealth inheritors pre-2020s, through to the more holistic outlook underpinned by the family purpose which features in today's modern Family Office approach.

At Mutual Trust, we place great value on Family Unity & Harmony. As part of our multi-faceted approach to wealth, we focus on understanding family dynamics, strengthening family relationships and promoting clear lines of communication across generations, alongside some of the more traditional focus areas, such as Financial Prosperity. This is how we help our families achieve what matters most.

Why is Family Unity & Harmony critical to a family's long-term success?

Family Unity & Harmony can be defined as a family's ability to appreciate strong family relationships, values and trust while building communication and problem-solving capabilities. It also considers a family's ability to allocate roles and responsibilities using each person's strengths while valuing their differences.

When a family builds Unity & Harmony, they become better equipped to successfully navigate some common challenges that can arise through intergenerational wealth transfers. These include:

- Generational differences;
- The psychological impact of selling a business;
- Relationship changes;
- Discussions about separating wealth; and
- Engaging subsequent generations of family members.

How can a family come together to build Unity & Harmony?

One of the best places to start is by engaging the support of a Family Office. Through a knowledgeable, empathetic and objective approach, a Family Office Advisor can create an environment where all family members feel comfortable to engage in open and honest dialogue where the focus of the discussion is on both financial and non-financial matters.

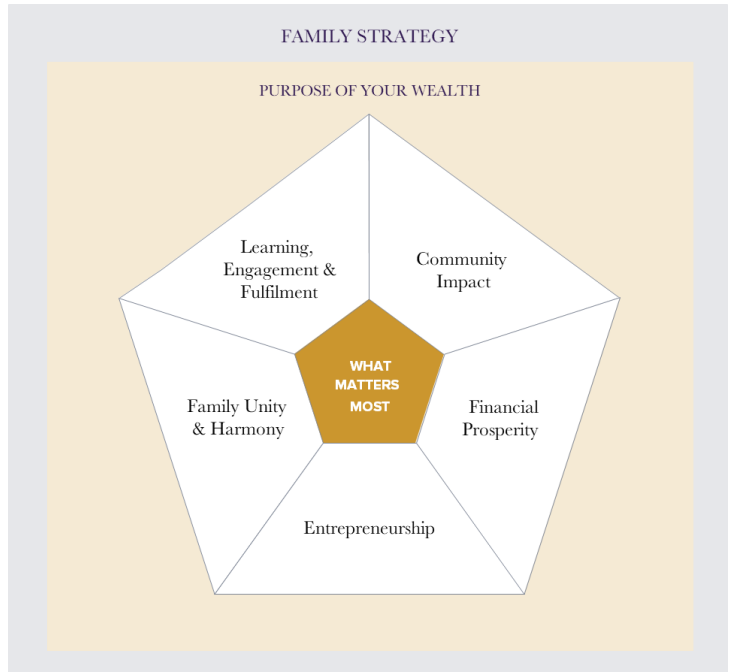
At Mutual Trust, our Advisors use the Gemstone Framework to uncover what matters most to a family. Family Unity & Harmony is one of the key facets of this framework.

We begin by uncovering an understanding of what’s most important to family members, individually and collectively. This may include: perpetuating the family legacy, maintaining the family farm, addressing climate change or ensuring all family members have the same opportunities as the founding members.

The output is documented in the Family Strategy, ensuring all family members are on the same page with a purpose-led approach that encompasses individual and collective family needs.

The Family Strategy is then operationalised by putting in place family roles and responsibilities to implement the Strategy, with a governance model on which everyone agrees.

The Mutual Trust Gemstone Framework 2023



All families experience Family Unity & Harmony differently.

When it comes to planning the transition of wealth to the next generation, there is no right or wrong approach. Family Unity & Harmony can be built and maintained in many different ways. In some cases, families might choose to keep their wealth together, whilst others will mutually agree to separate it. There are also families who decide to proceed with a mix of both options. As long as family members are able to communicate openly, maintain trust, value their individual strengths and recognise their differences, Family Unity & Harmony can be maintained regardless of the approach taken to transition wealth.

Mutual Trust Case Study

Working together to uncover the right approach

The Cassell* family built their wealth through an organic produce chain, which began as a local operation in Kangaroo Point, Brisbane and grew over the years to become the successful enterprise it is today, with over 180 employees and seven warehouses across Queensland.

Edith Cassell, matriarch of the family, was concerned about how her three adult daughters would manage the family wealth when she was no longer around. Relationships between the siblings were strained, and two were not even on speaking terms. Edith worked with her Mutual Trust Advisor to seek help in finding a way forward.

With Edith’s engagement, the Mutual Trust Advisor brought the family together. During this meeting, the siblings learned of their equal inheritance of the family business, an investment in a sizable property development on the Sunshine Coast and a cherished family home in the hinterlands.

Initially, the three daughters each had a different view on what they wanted to do with their inheritance. The Advisor worked with them, collectively and individually, to help define their aspirations and the purpose of their wealth.

Through this process, they were able to identify some common goals and come to an agreement which all three siblings were happy with. The business would continue, with the two eldest daughters acting as Board members and the youngest, who had been involved in the business since high school, staying on as the Managing Director. They agreed to divest the property development and their Advisor helped them to locate a suitable buyer's agent. Finally, the eldest daughter bought-out the other siblings to purchase the family home outright.

Through the objective expertise of a third party, the daughters were able to put their differences aside and come to an agreement. When Edith passed away three years later, she was at peace knowing her children were able to manage their wealth in harmony with each other, even though in this case, not all of the family wealth was kept together. The daughters are now on speaking terms and the eldest daughter even hosts an annual family day at the family home.

To discuss how Mutual Trust can help your family with Unity & Harmony, please contact your Relationship Manager. For a hard copy of Mutual Trust's report 'Why the Modern Family Office Matters' please click [here](#).

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*Family name has been changed to protect privacy

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