



■ It's a funny thing about families. They can love each other a lot, and yet, they can hurt each other, too.

I'm 14, and I have two sisters and a brother. When we were small, we seemed to get along all right together, but then, as we got older, things changed.

There were more and more fights around the house, usually over little things. Our father died when we were all still pretty young, and Mom had the job of raising us alone. Since she has to work, there are a lot of problems

that come up and she isn't always there to settle them.

Anyway, it began to look like our family was really falling apart. My younger sister, who's 12, would borrow my clothes without asking and I'd really blow my stack.

My older sister—she's 16—began acting like a mother. I mean she gave me orders, and handed out chores for me to do. As for my little brother, at 11 he was running around too much, getting into trouble at school, cutting classes.

CHANGED MY LIFE



The "Partridge Family." (l. to r.) Suzanne Crough, Danny Bonaduce, Shirley Jones, Jeremy Gelbwaks (whose part is now being played by Brian Foster). Standing (l. to r.) are David Cassidy, Susan Dey and Dave Madden.

What has the Partridge Family to do with my own family troubles? They sure have no trouble getting along. Well, let me explain.

I started watching the "Partridge Family" show quite by accident—just flipping around the dial. But from the first time I saw them, I felt like this was more than just a show. Do you know what I mean?

Those kids seemed so real to me, and so nice. David was the kind of big brother every girl would love to have. Not just because of his looks and talent, but because he's so great with the rest of the kids. They can depend on him for understanding, and encouragement. He kind of helps to hold the family together.

And Susan Dey, as Laurie—gosh, I used to dream of how great it would be if my older sister was even a little bit like Laurie. I couldn't imagine Laurie stomping around the house giving orders, and then blowing her stack when I didn't carry them out just right.

And if my younger brother and sister were like Christopher and Tracy, it would really be a ball. And who wouldn't want a brain like Danny for a brother—so smart, but with a sense of humor, too?

Of course, I just loved Shirley Jones. Sometimes I used to daydream about how it would be if the Partridges were my real family, and Shirley Jones was my mother.

I'd travel all around with them in that fantastic bus, and we'd be having fun all the time. But it wasn't just the music scene that attracted me as much as the kind of warm, kind feelings that everybody in the family showed one another.

And then, all of a sudden, after I'd

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