

# THE NAHREP 10

The Hispanic Wealth Project®

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Familia is where it all began for NAHREP Manhattan president Val Damico. At a young age, she developed her business talents as she helped her father operate and manage his retail grocery chains and wholesale produce operations in Brooklyn, New York. The experience of working beside her father inspired her to pursue her own business and she quickly found herself in the world of real estate sales.

Val quickly set new records in her local real estate market of New York City, and immediately earned recognition as a top listing agent and top commission earner, as well awards for innovation, teaching, and speaking. She quickly became one of the top agents across the entire nation, and was selected for a position as a corporate trainer where she traveled throughout North America and taught seminars before audiences of thousands of real estate professionals.

Despite all her business success, Val will tell you that her greatest accomplishment is her relationship with her three children. Because the world of sales can be so demanding, she set guidelines for operating her business schedule from the start of her career. "I was a single mother for the first 12 years of my career and I didn't want my kids to have memories of a busy working mother who was always out showing homes and never there for them," she said. "I set standards to be home for dinner every night. This forced me to delegate certain business tasks and to manage my time with care. On weekdays I was home by 5:00 cooking dinner and by 6:00 food was on the table. I made our dinner time a sacred place for our family to connect on a daily basis. I realized that it was more about quality time rather than quantity time."

To connect with her children, Val developed a routine in which every member of the family took turns sharing a highlight and a low-light of their day, giving everyone an opportunity to open up about their day. "You could be home all day, but not have a chance to connect with your family if you're not intentional about it," she explains. She instilled positive thinking and encouragement as a mother, creating another tradition where every night an alternate person receives "the special plate," a unique platter that they would eat off of, designating them as the special person of the night. Whoever received the special plate also received encouraging words from every family member around the table. "We spend hours at the dinner table telling stories, smiling, and laughing. We keep our family close through that special bonding time and even use that time wisely to pray for one another and memorize scripture."

The dinner table has become a sacred place of bonding for Val and her family. "With so many technological distractions in this day and age, it's essential to create an atmosphere where family can connect, open up, and feel safe," she stresses. "I can't imagine a better place to do so than at the dinner table united by our two favorite things, food and family!"

