

# Traditions Create Meaningful Memories

*November 1, 2022*

In just a few weeks, the holiday season begins. A season which for many of us is ripe with traditions. But what exactly is a tradition and why are they so important? Traditions are rituals, customs, beliefs or stories that celebrate or note meaningful events. Their roots are often found in our culture, heritage, region or religious/spiritual backgrounds. The benefits we reap from our traditions are plentiful and hence their importance to us as humans.

To begin with, many of our traditions can help to reinforce our families' values. If for instance, your family takes time at Thanksgiving to speak about what each member is thankful for, then the younger members in the family are taught by example to spend time thinking about gratitude and appreciation.

Traditions can also strengthen family bonds. Holiday celebrations can be an opportunity for different generations to spend time together in a meaningful way. Family history and lore is often shared at such events. Studies show that just by knowing one's grandparents and knowing about one's family (personal histories), children's self-esteem and well-being are enhanced.

Traditions create meaningful memories. How precious are our own childhood memories about holiday gatherings? And how often are memories of beloved family members and friends who have passed called forth? This is because traditions invoke emotions and nurture spirit.

Traditions can give us a sense of identity. They can help us to know where we belong in the world and how we fit in. The rituals we practice in our traditions can also help to create meaning in our lives. Something many of us can struggle with.

Lastly, traditions are important to our mental health. Besides giving us something to look forward to, they can give us the stability and predictability in the fast-paced changes of our unpredictable world.

So with all the reasons traditions are so vital to our well-being, maybe we could consider creating more traditions in our everyday life and not just wait for the holidays. New traditions do not have to be complex, time consuming or costly. They just need to be meaningful. So they can be as simple as a regular game board night with family and friends. You could set regular time aside for reading to either elders who can no longer do so for themselves or to children or better still both at the same time. There can be a regular movie night complete with popcorn or just a bi-monthly special meal. Your new tradition can be a monthly trip to the salon with a friend, or thinking on a larger scale, a yearly group vacation. Incorporating new and more traditions in our daily lives can only help but enhance them.

"At the heart of every family tradition is a meaningful experience."

- Unknown

"Traditions are the stories that families write together." - Unknown

"The human soul can always use a new tradition. Sometimes we require them." - Pat Conroy

"Because traditions are soothing when everything else goes to h\*\*\*." - Courtney Cole

"Sooner or later we all quote our mothers." - Unknown