**When to Keep or Replace Family Traditions**

Family traditions are a beloved part of our holiday celebrations.

Until they aren't anymore.

Just because your family has been doing something for years doesn't mean you should keep doing it forever. As your family changes, your traditions need to change and adapt as well. Otherwise, you risk making your holidays more frustrating than festive.

Here are three signs that it might be time to retire or update old family traditions and start making new memories that will add to everyone's life this holiday season.

**1. Let's be honest ... No one likes this.**

The casserole based on great-great grandpa's recipe that everyone sort of picks at. The party game that always leads to fighting. Trudging out in the snow to chop down your own Christmas tree. The off-color jokes or stories that make half of your guests uncomfortable.

Maybe there was a time that these activities were novel ways for your family to spend time together or honor your past. Perhaps the people who introduced these traditions really loved them. But traditions that don't inspire feelings of happiness and togetherness in everyone aren't going to bring your family closer together during the holidays. And things you do because you feel like you have to aren't traditions -- they're obligations. Work up the courage to talk about putting some traditions to rest and you'll probably find more relief than hurt feelings.

**2. It's just too hard.**

Thanksgiving dinner at grandma's house has been a family tradition for years. Grandma is a fantastic cook, and she prides herself on planning out the meal, buying all the ingredients, and making every dish from scratch. No one else is allowed near the kitchen -- that's part of the magic.

But grandma isn't as young as she used to be. Preparing to host multiple generations of her family and fill an expanding dinner table gets a little more stressful and a little harder every year. And by the time she's pouring coffee and cutting pie, grandma is too tired to spend time enjoying her family's company.

This could be the year that everyone chips in for a catered holiday meal so grandma can relax with everyone else. And if any of your other rituals around wrapping presents, decorating, or baking cookies no longer fit in with your holiday schedule, don't feel bad about cutting a few corners, calling in some extra help, or even paying someone else to do the work. The time you save will be more time you'll have to share with your loved ones, which might lead to new holiday traditions.

**3. Not everyone feels included.**

As your family grows, it will become more diverse -- generationally, culturally, racially, religiously. It's unrealistic to expect every tradition to mean the same thing to every person. But family gatherings that are inclusive and welcoming also tend to be the warmest and least contentious.

Maybe instead of ending some traditions, your family should consider making room for new ones that honor every branch of your tree. Ask children, teens, and new family members about activities that they'd like to see incorporated into your holiday celebrations. You could also start an annual charitable initiative that everyone can get behind, such as supporting your local food bank or contributing to a holiday toy drive. And letting a few new faces into the kitchen could liven up the menu at your family gatherings throughout the year.

One “tradition” many folks would love to get rid of is stressing about money during the holidays. Our Life-Centered Planning process can help you create a holiday spending plan that fits with the rest of your financial goals and sets you up to start 2024 on the right foot. Get in touch and let’s schedule an annual review meeting.