

12.22.24

The Significance of Rituals

It's almost Christmas and I'm thinking about Christmas past, rich with tradition and ritual.

I have evolved to think of rituals as emotion generators. Once a particular set of movements, becomes linked to a particular emotion, like going to a candlelight Christmas service evokes feelings of being a kid going to church with Mom, that ritual summons the relevant emotion. It's akin to a catalyst in the kitchen is sourdough bread starter.

Here is my list of odd, yet significant rituals that are practiced at Christmas and often year round. Email me at rick@successmadetolast.com with your most unique ritual.

1. Playing every Bing Crosby, Andy Williams and the Carpenters Christmas song is a ritual. I am hoping that my son in law eventually likes Karen Carpenter. After all, she's the rare percussionist with perfect pitch.
2. Using a variety of drums we have acquired, we hold a little family concert all playing Little Drummer Boy. Our Grands are particularly adept at this ritual. "The Ox and Lamb keep time."
3. Reading the Christmas story from Luke 2 started with our daughters in 1989. That year, Gigi almost started the house on fire with her overactive candle.
4. And the thoughts of burning, conjure up the ritual of burning the corners of scalloped potatoes, an homage to Mom's wretched oven that made everything extra crispy.
5. Going on a walk, especially after Christmas dinner, is a signature ritual. Wearing my Merrills and putting icy hot on my left hip are small, mundane rituals that go with this.
6. I continue to channel emotions with the ritual of carving turkey or dismantling the roasted chicken from Costco. I have tried to pass this ritual to others, but there are no takers.
7. Every Saturday morning, even during the Christmas season, Carla and I have a gratitude breakfast featuring pancakes. It's our time to say thanks and plan for the coming week. There's no substitute for Syrupy Saturday!
7. Walk past a bakery and step inside to breathe in buttery, flaky pastry. Savor the feeling that life is RIGHT now, and at that particular moment, very good.
8. Opening gifts on Christmas eve and saving the big ones from Santa for Christmas morning remains a cherished ritual.
9. Our monthly ritual of decluttering is particularly useful after Christmas. The ritual is fueled by a simple question and habit. We pick up each object one at a time and ask ourselves- "does this spark any joy or happiness?" Given that joy is very personal, if you get no joyful reaction, it is time for the object to find a new home.
10. Call it a ritual or habit, I write a newsletter every Sunday on the significance of something. Thanks for sharing the newsletter with friends and family.

As you celebrate your holidays, may you be reunited with rituals of the past, either through food, drink, or experiences of the past that will enrich your lives.

Quote I'm Pondering: This is from a person who now works at home. "I'm hungry for ritual. Every day, I get dressed, put on shoes, make coffee, pour it in mug and tell my two housemates that I'm headed to work. Then I walk in few circles and settle in at a desk in the corner of our living room, just a couple of feet away."

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<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/dr-ken-blanchard-on-success-if-you-win-the-rat-race-of-life-you-are-still-a-rat--62069523>

Seek a life of significance in 2025. Rick

Wishing you and yours peace, good health and prosperity for the coming year. Here's to new chapters, new and renewed rituals that will bond you and your family and friends together.