

Dynamic Traditions

By Suze Hargraves

So what are your holiday season traditions? If you are, in your sugar plum filled head, expecting things to always look, feel and otherwise be the same, you're creating stress for yourself and leaving a wide margin for disappointment. Family dynamics change. Individual's lives change. That change is sometimes good and sometimes not so good. You need to make your traditions dynamic ones that can change and grow with the people you love. That said, how do we create these dynamic traditions? Aren't dynamic and tradition contradictory words? Let's explore.

Webster's defines "tradition" as "an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior". They define "dynamic" as "marked by usually continuous and productive activity or change". Combining these two requires some introspection. Make a list of your holiday traditions. One example would be "decorate". Now take a closer look at each item. Consider the process from beginning to end. Do you have the time? Does it create stress for you or your family? What changes in your life effect this tradition? How can you change the tradition without losing it in order to better accommodate the very real changes in your time, family life, work and home? Be flexible in your thinking.

As example let's say you've always hosted a large party on New Year's Eve but have recently moved into a smaller house. You need to reconsider things like location, guest list and other factors that are impacted by your move. Forcing those you love into a tight space just because you've always hosted the party and its tradition is simply being hard-headed. Get real with yourself and accept the changes life has lain in your path. Cramming everyone into a too small space and expecting things to remain exactly as they were is unrealistic and it isn't likely to make your guests feel very festive. Your traditions need to fit with your reality.

Don't get stuck with a tradition that creates stress for you and those around you just because you've always done something a certain way. Stress isn't good for anyone including you. It's bad for your body, mind and soul. Having the flexibility to create dynamic traditions allows room for you and those you love to grow and change. Remember traditions, at their heart, are about showing people how much you love and appreciate them. What better way to show that than by creating dynamic traditions that give your loved ones room to grow.

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