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Whisking Up New Traditions This Thanksgiving

FILL YOUR HOLIDAY WITH GRATITUDE AND GAMES

The holidays are a magical time that brings together loved ones and a little chaos. Between the pie-making and travel plans, it can be easy to forget what we're gathering to celebrate. This Thanksgiving, let's not just carve the turkey, but also carve out some time for mindful traditions the whole family can enjoy. From sharing what you're thankful for to hosting a family Thanksgiving talent show, this year is the perfect chance to create new traditions that deepen connections and spark laughter. Get ready to gobble up the fun together.

GATHER FOR GRATITUDE

Thanksgiving is all about honoring what we are grateful for in life, and it can be a fun activity for you and your children to share. You can gamify gratitude in several ways, like creating a thankfulness jar where everybody adds slips of paper describing what they most appreciate. You can take turns reading them after dinner and even make a guessing game out of who wrote what. It could be as simple as gathering around the table for breakfast and everyone saying one thing they're grateful for.



TURKEY DAY TRIVIA

There's no better way to digest after the big Thanksgiving feast than having fun. Pick out some of your favorite board games or a deck of cards for a post-meal game night. You could test everyone's knowledge with a holiday-themed trivia competition or create a scavenger hunt around the house. No matter the game, ensure everyone from grandparents to kids can join in. Keep it focused on connection, not just winning. If you want to go all out, challenge all your guests to be ready with their best skills for a family talent show.

A SOUNDTRACK TO THE STUFFING

Create a perfect soundtrack you can play while everyone helps with the cooking or winds down after dessert. Before the big day, ask everyone in the family to add one or two songs to a Thanksgiving playlist. Prompt them to pick tunes that remind them of the season, happy memories, the joys of being together, or even their favorite dishes. You can keep adding to this list in subsequent years, turning the songs into a playable family history.



THE MOTTLEY CREW REVIEW

11/25

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GRACIOUS GESTURES

THE THANK-YOUS I'LL NEVER FORGET

Although any profession has drawbacks and days when you wonder, "Is this what I should be doing?" I inevitably have moments that remind me of how lucky I am to be in this line of work.

As someone who handles catastrophic injury cases and other litigation that can have life-changing ramifications for clients, I've faced some pretty serious and intense situations over the years. Although things ultimately work out, my clients' journeys can sometimes overwhelm them or make them anxious about the legal process.

Part of my job is to help people navigate that process with as little anxiety or pain as possible. It's always deeply rewarding to receive their expressions of gratitude when their case reaches a positive conclusion. Sometimes, those thank-yous come in very surprising and memorable form.

For example, I once worked on a very tough and hard-fought case representing a client who had sustained a brain injury. The road to a settlement was long and often arduous, but my client was eventually awarded over \$5 million. Within a year, my client invited us to the new dream home he and his wife had purchased with a portion of his settlement. While the house was gorgeous, seeing my client's mindset go from depressed and anxious to proud and content was even more beautiful.

Years ago, I represented a man in his mid-20s who had injured his spinal cord. Wheelchair-bound and unable to communicate, he relied on his mother for everything. His family, originally from Bangladesh, didn't speak English fluently. Communication was sometimes difficult, but we all did our best to work together in the young man's best interest.

One day, in the middle of the case, my client's mother called and said she wanted to come by the office and bring us something. She presented us with *biryani*, a dish made with chicken, spices, rice, and all kinds of wonderful things. I loved how delicious and spicy it was. Everyone here at the office dined on it for a week following her visit and loved every bite. Verbal conversations with her may have been challenging, but her home-cooked meal for us spoke loudly and clearly about her gratitude. By making us something that reflected her family and culture, she expressed her thanks for what we were doing for her son in a deeply personal way that transcended words. It was a gesture I will always appreciate and never forget.

On a more humorous note, I once had a client give me a bunch of gift cards for the ice cream parlor he owned ... although those cards were more of



an attempt to pay off his bill than an actual token of appreciation. As much as I love ice cream, I wasn't in a position to accept free sundaes in lieu of payment. Besides, the ice cream parlor wasn't even in my town.

All joking aside, I thought sharing some special thank-you gifts we've received over the years would be a great way to celebrate Thanksgiving in this newsletter. I'm grateful for every client who has entrusted my firm to help them through some of the most significant challenges they've ever endured. I appreciate these gifts and every other expression of gratitude I've received more than I could ever say in an article.

Whether it's Google reviews (*always* helpful and greatly appreciated) or lovely home-cooked meals brought to our office, every thank-you reminds me that every tough day or complex case is worth it.

Who in your life has helped make your tough times better? Who has done something to really impact your life and happiness? Now is the perfect time to let them know how much their acts of kindness mattered. The more people do that, the more meaningful this Thanksgiving will be.

—Kevin Mottley

THE SECOND ACT YOU DESERVE

CREATING A LIFE YOU LOVE IN YOUR 50S AND BEYOND

Who says the best years of your life have a curfew? Midlife isn't about winding down; this exciting second act is an opportunity to blossom, find new joys, and explore your dreams. If you're at a standstill or having trouble envisioning the future, small changes and mindset shifts can help you rediscover yourself and find happiness in this part of your journey. From focusing on your health to setting new goals, here are a few ways to make the most of middle age and enjoy the ride.

CULTIVATE A HEALTHIER YOU.

It's never too late to focus on your health. If it hasn't been part of your routine in the past, you can start small with manageable exercises and easy diet changes. Ensure your meals contain whole foods, like fresh fruits, vegetables, lean meat, and plenty of water. Fitness journals and apps can help you log what you eat and even provide recommendations. According to the American Heart



Association, you should also be physically active, exercising at least 150 minutes a week or 30 minutes a day. Daily walks are a simple, low-impact way to get in shape and can be a relaxing way to start or end your day. Sleep is even more critical as we age, so create a healthy bedtime routine.

CELEBRATE WHO YOU ARE.

This new chapter of your story can be one of the happiest times to celebrate who you are. Appreciate the little things in your life, whether it's family or watching the sunrise every morning. Gratitude can help you remember everything you have, even when you feel down or not at your best. You can keep a gratitude journal or take a few minutes daily to think about three things you're thankful for. You get to determine your happiness, so this is a great time to identify ineffective routines or counter-productive patterns over the years and try something different. Establish new habits that put your well-being at the forefront. Don't compare yourself to the younger you or other people around you. As we age, it's normal for our bodies to change. Have confidence in your skin now and remember that you are still evolving. This is your beautiful and bold reinvention.

When Strength Craves Space

CAREGIVERS NEED CARE, TOO

Thanksgiving isn't the only reason November is a special time for me.

You may not be aware that this is National Family Caregivers Month. As a personal injury attorney, I'm privileged to know and work with many caregivers who serve as a lifeline to my clients. These incredible individuals often range from physicians and medical staff to therapists and other professionals. However, some of the most remarkable acts of love and care I've witnessed have come from my clients' family members and friends. These folks go above and beyond in caring for their loved ones, and their selflessness always deserves support and acknowledgment.

While caregiving is honorable and meaningful, it's rarely easy. I've seen many caregivers become physically exhausted, overwhelmed with demands, or even frustrated with the person they're caring for.

These moments can lead to guilt or a sense that they're letting their loved ones down.

If you've been feeling that way yourself lately, I'd like to share a few words of support I hope will help.

First and foremost, **never let these feelings convince you you're not a great caregiver.** One person can only do so much; even the most dedicated caregiver needs time to care for *themselves*. If you're having difficulty keeping your thoughts together, getting agitated more often, or experiencing aches and pains, it's time to rest your mind and body. Find at least a few minutes daily for yourself, even if it's just to take a nice walk around the neighborhood. Hydrating regularly, eating well, and following a consistent sleep schedule will also give you a positive boost.

Above all, **you don't have to carry everything on your shoulders.** When the



weight becomes too much, reach out to other family members or friends who can fill in some of your schedule and give you some self-care time. You may also find helpful resources through online support groups or consulting a mental health professional who can provide you with new tools you can use moving forward.

If you're a caregiver, know you're seen and appreciated. Thank you for showing us the power of compassion. May you always show yourself that same level of love and care.

—Kevin Mottley



Thanksgiving Truths

Virginia's Forgotten First Feast

What if I told you everything you knew about the first Thanksgiving was wrong?

When you were in school, you likely heard about how a 1621 harvest celebration between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag people in Plymouth, Massachusetts, set the foundation for the holiday we know and love today. However, a closer look at the evidence uncovered over the past several decades reveals that **the first Thanksgiving occurred here in Virginia.**

In September 1619 (more than a year before the Pilgrims arrived in New England), Captain John Woodlief gathered a modest crew of approximately 40 settlers and crew members. He and his companions boarded the Margaret (a modest, 35-foot-long ship) and departed England, hoping to eventually arrive along Virginia's James River.

The ship's 10-week journey to its destination was arduous, stormy, and risky. Once the tired crew finally set foot on Virginia soil in an area later known as Berkeley Plantation, they joined one another in prayer to give thanks for their safe arrival. Instead of indulging in traditional Thanksgiving fare, the crew is believed to have received sustenance from a meager supply of oysters and ham. This moment became known among Berkeley settlers as a "day of Thanksgiving to the Almighty God."

Within two years of that first day of prayer, natives attacked and killed hundreds of settlers, including many at the Berkeley Plantation, in a dispute over land ownership. Everyone left the area, and the history of the first Thanksgiving was lost to the sifting sands of time.

That is, until the son of a former U.S. president uncovered the ship Margaret's history more than 300 years later.

While researching in 1931 for a book he was writing on early Virginia history, Dr. Lyon G. Tyler (son of John Tyler, our nation's 10th president) uncovered British documents detailing the original Berkeley settlement's early activities, including their Thanksgiving practices. The discovery gained historians' attention in subsequent years, eventually prompting President John F. Kennedy to recognize the Berkeley settlers in his 1963 Thanksgiving Proclamation:

"Over three centuries ago, our forefathers in **Virginia** and in Massachusetts, far from home in a lonely wilderness, set aside a time of thanksgiving."

So, there you have it: Virginia's little-known but fascinating impact on the history of one of our country's most beloved annual traditions.

—Kevin Mottley

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8	5	1	9	2	6	4	7

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Slow Cooker Brisket

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (1-oz) envelope onion soup mix
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 1 3-lb piece of beef brisket (flat cut)
- 8 fresh thyme sprigs
- 8 whole garlic cloves
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 lb carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 lb baby golden potatoes
- 3 celery stalks, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 large sweet onion, cut into 8 wedges
- 2 1/2 cups beef stock
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tbsp cornstarch

DIRECTIONS

1. In a small bowl, combine soup mix, sugar, salt, and pepper. Sprinkle over brisket.
2. Place meat, fat cap side down, into an 8-qt slow cooker.
3. Top brisket with thyme, garlic, bay leaves, carrots, potatoes, celery, and onion.
4. Whisk stock, Worcestershire sauce, and cornstarch until fully dissolved. Add to slow cooker.
5. Cover and cook on high for 5–6 hours until tender.
6. Remove to a cutting board, fat side up. Remove thyme and bay leaves.
7. Thinly slice brisket against the grain.
8. Serve with vegetables, drizzled with gravy from the slow cooker.

Inspired by ThePioneerWoman.com