Thanksgiving Rituals to teach Gratitude

By: Dr. Laura Markham of Aha Parenting

“If we want to be happy, and to raise happy kids, we need to practice gratitude — deliberately, and consistently, or we may end up feeling more entitled than appreciative. When we feel entitled, we often stew about unfulfilled expectations. Entitlement makes us more likely to feel disappointed when we don’t get what we think we want, rather than grateful when we receive something. Disappointment is not a happiness habit. Gratitude is.” – Christine Carter

Thanksgiving will be celebrated in the United States this week, kicking off a month of holiday frenzy that includes Hanukkah and the Winter Solstice and culminates finally in Christmas. The busyness and consumer focus often leave both children and parents feeling overwhelmed and unsatisfied, focused on acquiring more things but never feeling like it is enough, aching for a different experience of the holidays.

But there is another way. You can give your children a meaningful, joyous and peaceful holiday season. You can celebrate the start of the new year feeling more connected as a family. Mommy (or Daddy) meltdowns and going into debt are completely optional and avoidable.

How do you start? By feeling appreciative for all you have! That makes gratitude into a mindset, or a habit.

A whole body of research now confirms that adults, children and adolescents who report feeling gratitude are happier, healthier, more content, more optimistic, and more likely to be helpful to other people in every way. They’re also less materialistic, less envious and less likely to be depressed. And what better time to begin than Thanksgiving? Here are 13 proven gratitude practices that will help you invent your own meaningful family gratitude traditions, for Thanksgiving and beyond.

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CELEBRATE NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH!!

5 Ways to Honor Your Child’s Adoption Anniversary

American Adoption News

Adoption is a significant event in adoptive families’ lives, full of special dates, unforgettable moments and significant milestones. The day your child is born, the day you get the call, the day you first meet each other, the day he or she comes home, and the day your adoption is finalized are all special moments that help shape your family’s history.

For many families, these important adoption anniversaries are cause for celebration. If you are looking for simple ways to celebrate the completion of your family through adoption, here are five ideas for honoring your child’s adoption date:

♥ Retell the story.
♥ Start a tradition.
♥ Make a favorite meal.
♥ Host a celebration.
♥ Acknowledge loss.

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Post-Adoption Support Services

From the Four Oaks website www.iowafosterandadoption.org

Thank you for becoming a forever family for an Iowa child! Even after adoption, it’s normal to still face some unique challenges. That’s why we provide post-adoption support services, which are free to families with a DHS-subsidized adoption. Adoption changes lives—so can support!

We’d love to assign a post-adoption support specialist to you who can be your listening ear, attend school or service provider meetings with you, provide curriculum with behavioral tips, support a birth family relationship, find community resources, respond to a crisis and support you in many other ways.

Highlights of services
- You can contact your post-adoption support specialist at any time
- A custom support plan is created to meet your family’s unique needs—even if you don’t yet know what your needs may be!
- Support through phone, email or even home visits

What’s post-adoption support look like? Here’s some examples:
- Offering guidance when an adopted daughter wanted to reconnect with her birth family
- Attending a school meeting with an adoptive family and their child
- Helping a family find resources for a child’s behavioral issues

Interested in adopting again?
Check out our family profile section where you can create your own online profile for DHS Adoption Workers to meet your family and see if a child who needs a forever home would be a match for your strengths.

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Adoption Respite

From the Four Oaks website www.iowafosterandadoption.org

Adoption Respite is a service available to adoptive families for their subsidized adopted children. Each adopted child who is subsidized and under the age of 21 is eligible for 5 days of respite service per fiscal year at $20 per day. Adoption Respite is ONLY available to adopted children who receive adoption subsidy from the state of Iowa. Subsidized adoptive families living out-of-state are not eligible for the five days of adoption respite.

How is Respite Accessed? What is the time frame?
- Each child is eligible for 5 days per fiscal year. The current fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.
- When respite is needed, the adoptive parent selects their own respite provider (see respite ideas listed below), and makes necessary arrangements. To receive payment, provider must be an adult (age 18 or older) and not a parent of the adopted child.
- Payment will be sent directly to the provider.
- Payments to providers for this program are contingent upon continued Adoption Respite Program funding from DHS.

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AMBIGUOUS LOSS

by Jae Ran Kim

As an educator, social worker and adult adoptee, I search for ways to help adoptees, adoptive families, and those who interact with us better understand the nuances and complexities of our experiences. Ambiguous loss is a concept that provides a rich framework for thinking about the losses in adoption. The word “ambiguous” has several meanings—it can mean “open to more than one interpretation,” it can mean “unclear” or “unstructured.” It can mean “doubtful and uncertain.” “Ambiguous loss” is a way of thinking about losses in one’s life that are confusing, or seem to have unclear resolutions or boundaries. It’s a concept developed by Dr. Pauline Boss, a researcher and professor at the University of Minnesota. Her work on ambiguous loss was not specifically focused on adoption, but the concept fits well with the experiences of adopted people and their families.

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