



David A. Hjorth*, ChFC®, CLU®, AEP®
Nicholas D. Hjorth**, CPA, CLTC

414 NORTH SECOND, SUITE C
UPLAND, CALIFORNIA 91786
(909) 981-4951
(909) 981-2768 FAX
www.dh-financial.com

A Registered Investment Advisory Firm

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Happy New Year!!

Traditions, the Gorilla Glue of Family and Business Ties

When something unusual occurs in a family or business—something that binds members together in appreciation or laughter or reflection—the event can take on a life of its own. It stays in the back of minds, coming out on similar occasions or in similar circumstances to reestablish its meaning and emotions to family members and business associates.

The pattern, or “tradition”, is ancient and universal. Similarities between our modern life experience and what life was like a hundred years ago can be hard to find. Social norms, together with the opportunities of technology, truly put us in a separate world. Yet, the way we hold on to and pass along meaningful traditions perfectly links us with our ancestors as tightly as our genetic code.

What keeps traditions alive?

In a family or any longstanding group, traditions can keep alive some purpose everyone wants to hold on to. It might be sustaining group identity and uniqueness. It could be a tradition that instills values and confidence in young members. Or, it can offer comfort and security for the stress of life’s transitions.

Traditions can sustain ethnic memories and spiritual heritage that could otherwise drop away in favor of modern customs and conventions. Traditions also create a circular sense of time, returning awareness to deeper roots. Maybe most importantly is how the thread of traditions can connect generations with much more than a common name. Geography can spread families apart and blended relationships add more

* David Hjorth, Registered Representative offering securities through NYLIFE Securities LLC, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Licensed Insurance Agency
140 Via Verde Ste. 200, San Dimas, CA 91773, 909-305-6500

**Nicholas Hjorth, Registered Representative offering securities through NYLIFE Securities LLC, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Licensed Insurance Agency
675 Placentia Avenue, Ste. 250, Brea, CA 92821, 714-255-5100

complexity. Because of this, bonding by traditions are more necessary and more important than ever.

How can you create your own traditions?

The traditions you enjoy now may seem hard to trace, because their origins were probably organic. It was a happy accident or a surprising change—anomalies that easily stuck in a group memory. But after the initial event, two things turned them into traditions, instead of random memories. First, the initiating event was in varying degrees meaningful for everyone involved. Something important attached itself to the experience, and, secondly, some of the original participants felt the impulse to consciously support that importance.

Think about creating a tradition out of events that you know will occur—like First Days. Every child has a first day of school and dozens of other first days into adulthood and beyond. Create a tradition of celebrating first days in a unique family way that brings all members together to share each other's firsts.

Is there one food or dish that every family member is expected to learn to cook? Then you have the personal equivalent of an annual chili cook-off. Is there one spectator sport shared among family members that can create an annual outing? Or, one competitive sport that can create a tournament? Is there a certain place that has meaning across the family that can become a periodic pilgrimage? The value of family traditions is unlimited. But the trick to creating one lies in paying attention for possibilities and paying attention to its growth.

In your business, have you created a tradition to host an Annual Kick-Off Meeting with your associates where you take time to reflect on your firm's purpose (mission and values) and set team goals for the next year? What about creating moments together as an operation to provide service to your local community on a charitable level? These are ways in which you are able to build a sense of camaraderie and traditions within your “work family.”

Continue to share your traditions with others

Traditions that don't evolve as the family or business grows could become stale rituals. Instead, their renewal brings new expressions of happiness and new appreciation for the power of traditions. Thank you for participating in sharing your cherished traditions with us. What beautiful memories made with your loved ones. Below are a few pictures of our “Tradition Tree.”

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We hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday season!

Best Regards,

David A. Hjorth, CLU, ChFC, AEP – Partner
Nicholas D. Hjorth, CPA, CLTC – Partner
Joanna L. Denny, CLTC - Director of Operations

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