

Parenting Teens Just Got Easier!
is a free monthly eZine for parents of pre-teens & teens
By Patt and Steve Saso
Lessons from the Thanksgiving Table
November 2008

Parenting Tip This Month: On Thanksgiving Day, we gather and create meaningful family traditions — but here's why we need to do it more than once a year.

* Remember to vote on this historic 2008 Election Day. It is our duty and privilege to do so as citizens of the United States.

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Announcement Hot Links
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It would have been impossible to know what to expect and prepare for on the test without Mr. Saso's class. It made me feel a lot more prepared and confident. -- Daniel Braunstein

Parenting Resources:

Do you want to reduce the conflict you and your teen?
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November 2008 Featured Article
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Lessons from the Thanksgiving Table

By Patt Saso

www.SasoSeminars.com

This Thanksgiving will mark the twenty-eighth year I've sat down with my in-laws and shared this American holiday. Over

the years much has stayed the same, and yet a lot has changed.

Steve comes from a family of eight children. The family has expanded as siblings married and had babies. There have been divorces, remarriages and more grandchildren. Virginia Saso, our Italian Momma Matriarch, even has nine great-grandchildren.

We have also suffered losses. Two of Steve's brothers were robbed from us prematurely from cancer. Papa Louie lived a full life and died after his sons.

When we gather now there is a new appreciation for family. We don't take each other for granted.

This Thanksgiving there will be no less than forty members coming to eat. In one corner it will be loud with laughter and in another a sing-a-long with guitars and violins. Others will gather in the kitchen and some out in the garden. There will be kids running wild and sometimes tears. It is not an intimate setting, by any means, and for an introvert like me it can be overwhelming at times.

However, there is something poignant about the sameness of things that ultimately matter most to us; the importance of family, togetherness, and traditions.

Profound lessons are learned and passed on to the next generation through mealtime.

Table-time is fertile ground for building memorable family stories. And I'm not just talking about the once a year Thanksgiving meal.

Lessons learned from the kitchen table

Over the past three decades there has been a decline in families' dinner together. The number one reason cited by parents is "lack of time."

There is a truck load of convincing evidence about the implications of regular mealtime. It gives kids the edge they need to not only survive, but to thrive in this world.

Reduces high-risk behavior

In a research project by Dr. Blake Bowden of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Center, 527 teenagers were studied to determine what family and lifestyle characteristics were related to good mental health and adjustment.

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Bowden concluded that kids who ate dinner with their families at least five times per week, were least likely to use drugs, feel depressed or get in trouble with the law.

Improves self-esteem

Family mealtime nurtures a sense of belonging for kids, so that they will have less need to seek acceptance and inclusiveness elsewhere. Teens crave the security of being a part of something greater than themselves.

Decreases chances of sexual activity

Sometimes kids seek connection through sexual intimacy. Dr. David Elkind, author of *The Hurried Child*, says, "Contrary to popular opinion, most young people engage in sexual activity for psychological rather than hormonal reasons."

Here's something else to remember from Elkind. "If teens feel secure, loved, and appreciated at home, they are not likely to seek comfort and support outside the home in the form of sexual intimacy."

Strengthens family connections

Eating together opens the door for dialogue. Communication is how we connect with one another. Interfacing with family members builds strong relationships. Meals are a time to share, support, laugh and listen. It's an opportunity for problem-solving. The family table encourages all these skills and shapes self-esteem.

Improves academic performance

Eating as a family appears to give children an edge in the classroom. A study by the University of Michigan found that the single strongest predictor of higher achievement scores and fewer behavioral problems in children was more family mealtime.

Healthier lifestyles choices

Families who regularly sit together tend to eat healthier. Teens guzzle more milk and less pop. They tend to eat less junk foods and more fruits and vegetables.

Be a caring and connected family all year round.

Mealtime is an opportunity to pass on from one generation to the next long-lasting family traditions. Sitting around the kitchen table builds community and allows kids to feel connected to something greater than themselves.

As you set the table this Thanksgiving, remember the long-term impact that regular mealtime has on your son or daughter. This can make all the difference in the world.

Happy Thanksgiving!

For more parenting resources go to:

<http://www.sasoseminars.com>

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Raising teens is no picnic
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If you find your son is becoming mouthier, or your daughter suddenly resents you for asking about her day, or you're feeling frustrated cause your teen is talking to you less then we recommend our parenting tool packages at:

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/tools.html>

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(Sorry, November 15 already full)

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Testimonies:

It would have been impossible to know what to expect and prepare for on the test without Mr. Saso's class. It made me feel a lot more prepared and confident. -- Daniel Braunstein

This was an extremely great preparation for the test. The

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placement was a breeze especially through taking the practice tests Mr. Saso gives. -- Kevin Kim, student

Mr. Saso not only prepared me for the HSPT, but provided me with a sense of confidence. I highly recommend this course. -- Christina Jones, student

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Until next time,

Patt & Steve Saso
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