

# November

## happyhome habits

thanksgiving & the value of gratitude

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# happy home habit 1

once-a-day: dinner conversations

Spend time together talking about what matters most. Transform the dinner table into the place where you have fun and memorable conversations that give everyone a sense of belonging. Dinner is our best opportunity to connect as a family - to celebrate victories, talk about problems, instill values and pass on cherished family stories. It's where we teach our children about life. We need to insist that teenagers come to the table and we need to limit the activities that cut into this valuable family time.

*the value of  
gratitude*

If you lost all your  
material possessions,  
would you still be  
happy?

*the value of  
gratitude*

What do you  
appreciate about the  
neighborhood you  
live in?

*the value of  
gratitude*

How would your life be  
different without running  
water?

*the value of  
gratitude*

In 15 seconds, list all the  
things you are grateful for.

# happy home habit 2

## once-a-week: family fun night

Stop all the hustle and bustle and do something fun together. Put family first by setting aside a day and time to just have fun: monopoly, bowling, hiking, a craft or cooking project. It's especially important in today's dizzybusy world to show our children that it's ok to slow down, turn our phones off and do something that's not on our to-do-list. Society has convinced us that more sports, music lessons and chess clubs are going to prepare our kids for a better life. Some of that is great, but all the extra-curricular activities in the world will not make up for the lost opportunity we have to build strong family ties.

### *Turkey Placemats*

This year have your kids help you assign seating for Thanksgiving with homemade, personalized turkey placements. Select a color of textured construction paper that goes with your Thanksgiving décor (tan, olive green, gold, burnt orange) and buy enough to cut placemats for every guest. Have the children place their hand on the placemats and outline their hand with a pen or pencil to make a turkey shape. Dress up each turkey with torn paper feathers in harvest colors and add the name of the person who will be using that placemat for dinner. If you want to make these placemats really special, ask the children to write what they are grateful for about each person on that person's placemat. Make it a surprise for the adults. Not only will everyone know where to sit, but they will have a memorable Thanksgiving keepsake to take home.

# happy home habit **3**

once-a-month: treasured traditions

Share a simple family tradition. Many of our favorite childhood memories revolve around family holidays and vacations that we have repeated over and over again. Good smells, good feelings, good times. Family traditions are the building blocks of strong, caring, happy families because they create the memories that connect us forever.



## *Leaves of Thanks*

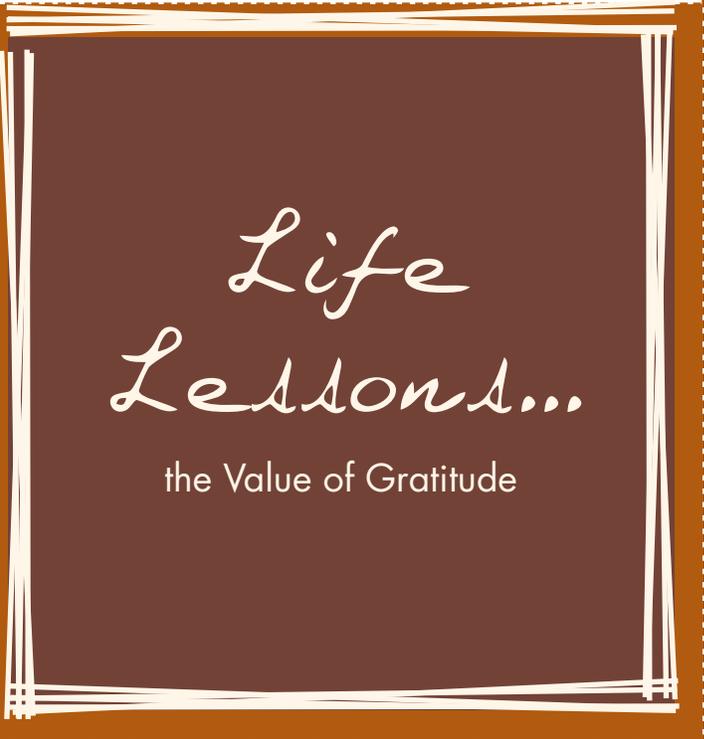
There are some traditions that are timeless, and the Leaves of Gratitude is one of these kinds of traditions. We can never show enough gratitude toward each other, and the purpose of this simple tradition is to add to the splendor of the Thanksgiving meal. Place a paper leaf on each plate and ask everyone to take a quiet moment before the meal begins and write at least 2 things he/she is grateful for on the leaf. Have everyone then hang the leaf on a small tree used as a centerpiece, or pile them in a small bowl or basket. Just before dessert, share what is written on the leaves. Make the moment even more special by dimming the lights and holding hands. The more often we express out loud what we are thankful for, the more everyone around us will know just exactly how much we really love and appreciate him/her.

# happyhome habit **4**

once-a-year: your family story

Create a legacy of love to pass onto future generations. Dedicate one day a year to developing your own family's story. Write letters to your children. Ask older members of the family to share (write or record) their favorite life stories. Collect precious handprints or fill in a family recipe album. Make a family tree or a family album together as you reminisce over good times. Cut out the cover below along with one or more pieces of plain paper of the same size. Form a booklet by folding the card with the blank pages inside and then stapling them together along the center fold.

Use the Activities booklet to record a personal story or lesson you've learned about gratitude. Was there a time when it was hard to feel grateful, but you made a Gratitude List anyway? Share your story with your loved ones and describe the experience. You might want to praise a family member, in your booklet, who has recently demonstrated gratitude. Talk about situations in your home where gratitude might make things better.

A decorative graphic of a booklet cover. The cover is dark brown with a white border. The text on the cover is in a white, elegant script font. The title 'Life Lessons...' is written in a larger font, and 'the Value of Gratitude' is written in a smaller font below it. The booklet is shown with several pages fanned out on the left side.

*Life  
Lessons...*  
the Value of Gratitude

the *Value* of Gratitude

# happy home habit 5

once-in-a-while: gifts of love

Surprise someone you care about with a gesture of love. It doesn't take much to touch someone's heart, especially when it is unexpected. Leave love notes under a pillow, in a lunch box or taped to the steering wheel. Do a chore without being asked. Take the time to really listen and understand. Or send a card of appreciation to someone you care about.

As a family, send a thoughtful note to someone who has done something special for your family. Maybe a friend who listened when you needed it, or someone whose unexpected help made a difference in your life. A little appreciation goes a long way.



“ Let us be **grateful** to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom..”

~ Marcel Proust