**Playbook to Inject Balance back into the Family System**

*Unmet Primal Need Seed*

**Reclaiming Family Traditions**



**Who:**

* Our entire family – the Smith’s (Mom, Dad, Jennifer, Jacob, Michael)

**What**:

* We will reclaim the tradition of eating dinner together 2 nights a week and 1 night on the weekend (Saturday or Sunday)
* We will reclaim the tradition of family hugs
* We will start two new family traditions – to be voted on at the first family dinner (choices are listed below)

**When**:

* Reclaimed tradition of eating dinner together will occur 3 nights each week (Monday-Friday) and one weekend evening (Saturday or Sunday)
* Reclaimed tradition of family hugs will occur each night before bed

**Where**:

* At home

**How:**

* The family dinners will be scheduled by mom and dad each Sunday evening when they review the family calendar for the upcoming week
  + During the family dinner, we will do the following:
    - Begin with gratitude: start the meal by having everyone share something they are grateful for that day
    - Family news: everyone takes turns sharing something positive and negative that has happened to them during the day
* The family hugs will be initiated by mom and dad as they both hug each child once a day before bedtime. With the hugs, parent and child will say, “Three, Two, One, Smiths” to drive home our family identity
* Two new traditions will begin after the first family dinner after the family selects from this list:
  + Develop a family “secret handshake” to be used anytime a family member leaves the house
  + The “What We Learned Today” Journal – each night before bed, each family member will write something they learned during the day in the journal – to be kept for safekeeping and read together at each holiday
  + Bedtime Story – no matter the age of the children, Dad will read a short story aloud each night before bedtime
  + Evening Walks – the family will take a walk together after the family dinner to just get fresh air, be together, and talk about life
  + Family Game Night – once a week, play a family game together
  + Family Pizza Night – once a week, everyone pitches in to make their own mini pizza (they can choose their own toppings)
  + This list can be added to as new ideas are generated by the family…mom and dad have final approval of any new idea to add to the list

**Therapist’s Guide for this Playbook**

Before beginning the Reclaiming Family Traditions playbook, review this Guide with the family…

What is a tradition?

* Traditions are behaviors and actions that you engage in again and again – regular rituals. Traditions can be big or small but they differ from routines and habits in that they are done with a specific purpose in mind and require thought and intentionality. Traditions, when done right, lend a certain magic, spirit, and texture to our everyday lives.

Why are traditions so important for families?

* Traditions offer numerous benefits to our families, including but not limited to the following:

1. Traditions provide a source of identity
   1. Traditions can teach children where their family came from or give them insights into their cultural or religious history
   2. Traditions can serve as reminders of events that have shaped your family and children
   3. Traditions play an important role in shaping a child’s personal identity. Children who have an intimate knowledge of their family’s history are typically more well-adjusted and self-confident than children who don’t
2. Traditions strengthen the family bond
   1. Researchers consistently find that families that engage in frequent traditions report stronger connection and unity than families that have not established rituals together.
   2. Traditions provide for face-to-face family interaction, help family members get to know and trust each other more intimately, and create a bond that comes from feeling that one is part of something unique and special
3. Traditions offer comfort and security
   1. Family traditions are the antidote to the harried feeling that comes from our fast-paced and ever-changing world. It is comforting to have a few constants in your life
   2. Researchers have found that family traditions provide comfort and security to children, even if a main source of their stress originates from within the family itself
4. Traditions teach values
   1. Traditions provide the opportunity to impart and reinforce values. For example, through daily family prayer, the importance of faith is re-enforced; through nightly bedtime stories, the value of education is re-enforced; through regular family dinners or activities, the centrality of familial solidarity is instilled
5. Traditions connect generations
   1. Family traditions are a great way to cultivate that valuable grandparental involvement
6. Traditions create lasting memories
   1. Positive childhood memories can help make your child a happier and more generous adult.
   2. Research has shown that reflecting fondly on one’s past actually provides a myriad of positive benefits including counteracting loneliness, boosting generosity towards strangers, and staving off anxiety