

LifeMapSM



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

June 3, 2008

This Week's Message:

Create Your Own Holidays.

Paths Forward

Tired of boring meetings??

Resources

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Create Your Own Holidays.

One of my favorite episodes of the television comedy *Seinfeld* concerned "Festivus" - a holiday invented by George Costanza's ever-grumpy father. With its stark, undecorated aluminum pole, display of feats of strength and (my personal favorite) the airing of grievances the Costanza holiday of Festivus was to be an antidote to the rampant commercialism and enforced cheeriness of the Christmas season. I find it both amusing and instructive that there are

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now web sites about Festivus, books about Festivus and, yes, people who actually celebrate Festivus - all in good humor and with tongue firmly in cheek.

I like the idea of creating one's own holidays (though perhaps not as kooky as Festivus) so I did a little reading on the topic. I'm not opposed to a day off from work now and then but holidays usually serve a larger purpose. They often commemorate important national events (for example here in the U.S. we just celebrated Memorial Day and next month we'll do the same for our Independence Day). Holidays sometimes reflect religious practices (e.g. Christmas, Rosh Hashanah or Eid Al-Adha) or celebrations of one's ethnic heritage (e.g. Chinese New Year, Kwanzaa or St. Patrick's Day). Holidays can be opportunities to teach important history lessons (e.g. Juneteenth or Presidents Day) or bring some multi-cultural awareness into the workplace (e.g. Transfer Day celebrated by Virgin Islanders, El Dia de los Muertos celebrated mainly in Mexico and by people of Mexican heritage living elsewhere and Canada's main patriotic holiday, imaginatively named Canada Day).

Some holidays are really just about having a bit of fun (e.g. Halloween, Mardi Gras / Carnival or Groundhog Day). I have been known to celebrate all three of the above holidays in addition to St. Patty's Day, Cinco de Mayo, and Patriot's Day / Boston Marathon Day (the latter often celebrated on the same day). Families often create their own fun holidays on birthdays, wedding anniversaries or a "Gotcha Day" celebrating the day a child is adopted into his or her new family.

I suggest that we should all pick and choose the holidays that are meaningful for us and also create a few that reflect our own unique values, heritage and lives. It is important to put time aside to celebrate special occasions, to note milestones, and to honor our histories. Sharing these observances and rituals (small and major alike) with those dearest to us help us cement our identities and enhance our relationships with those whom we so value.

Paths Forward

• **Create Your Own History.** Is there an important date in your family worthy of commemoration? How about the day you gained citizenship, the day your grandparents emigrated, the day you were adopted, the day you got your pilot's license, the day you won an important award, the day

you sold your first book? Maybe there is an ethnic holiday with which you are not yet acquainted? Celebrating your family's unique history is a great way to honor one's forbearers and to bind the generations together.

• **Create Your Own Fun.** Some of the most enjoyable St. Patrick's Day celebrations I've ever attended were on the island of St. Croix and, trust me, the majority of revelers did not look like the sons and daughters of the Emerald Isle! Who says you have to be of Mexican heritage to celebrate Cinco de Mayo? Who says you have to be Italian to celebrate Columbus Day or Catholic to enjoy a saint's feast day or a religious street festival? When observed with respect and openness to new experiences these are great ways to learn about our neighbors and bind us to our communities.

• **Not Every Celebration Has To Be "Important".** You can have "small" celebrations too. They don't all have to be momentous historical, family or life events. For example many folks celebrate an annual sporting event like opening day at their hometown ballpark, an annual tailgate party, Super Bowl Sunday or a favorite horse race on, say, the first Saturday in May. Many a life-long memory has been created at a youth league pizza party or an impromptu "the renovation is finally done" or mortgage burning party.

Your Life Is Worth Celebrating. I am uncertain about an afterlife and doubtful about reincarnation - though I respect your opinions about both. What I am certain about is that *this* is the life we have right now and it is worth celebrating. Life will surely hand us our share of challenges so it is up to us to keep our heads to the sky. It is up to you and I to create the memories we want rather than waiting for a bolt from the blue, or lady luck, or world history to create them for us. Yes, it takes a bit of thought and some effort but our lives are, essentially, a collection of memories and the hope of events and memories to come. We can create our own rituals, celebrations and holidays and in doing so we become the authors of our own histories and our own, authentic lives.

LifeMap is about helping you to live a life of your own design that reflects your own history, values, and goals.

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Sincerely,

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