

An Old Irish Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind always be at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.



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Family Traditions

For years I let our preschool or school take care of much the holiday “stuff”, like making hearts for Valentines or a “hand” turkey for Thanksgiving. Then one year a leprechaun came to our house the night before St. Patrick’s Day and turned our milk green. I have never seen my children so excited! That day I decided to bring more traditions into our home. Our family traditions have added to our family bonds as well as an increased richness and

"But I said..."

What percentage do you think the actual words count for in person-to-person communication?

- a. about 50%
- b. less than 5%
- c. about 25%
- d. over 75%

The answer is b, less than 5%. So what makes up over 95%? According to communications research, it’s all the other variables going on around the words, especially the nonverbal communication: how close

Good Listeners

Active listening skills involve:

- paying attention without distractions and maintaining eye contact
- clarifying through reflecting what is heard (This involves using similar words to express back to the speaker what was understood about the content of the message.)
- showing empathy by identifying with the

meaning in our annual schedule.

Here's what I found as to why traditions are important:

Traditions cultivate connection between immediate family members and between generations. Family scholars Nick Stinnett and John DeFrain say that traditions are the "we always" of families, like "We always make snow ice cream at the first snowfall," or "We always have games and popcorn on Saturday night." Because such traditions have meaning that is special to an individual family, they create feelings of warmth and closeness. By spending time together in a fun and special setting, family members grow closer.

Effective traditions promote a sense of identity and a feeling of belonging. They also promote a feeling of safety and security within the family by providing a predictable and familiar experience. Family members have something to look forward to which gives them a sense of assurance in a hectic and ever-changing world.

they stand (proxemics), eye contact, posture, body language, facial expressions, gestures, etc. The nonverbal communication is seen by most people as "more true" than the words.

I've used this information to help my children understand that how they say something is even more important than what they say, i.e. even though they *said* they were sorry to their sibling, the message they sent was that they were *not* sorry. Also, when there's a misunderstanding, we try to ask, "What's my point?" or "What am I trying to say?" to help insure that the message sent was the message received.

other's feelings

- listening with an open mind in order to understand another person's point of view

Parent with the End Goal in Mind

Take time to figure out what you want your children to be like when they're 18. Make a list of the important things, like their morals and character. Boil it down to the top five, such as love, respect, fun, integrity, etc. Place this list somewhere you'll see it and use it to help guide your day-to-day parenting decisions. – Susan Fee, Licensed Professional Counselor

Four New Penny Stones Editions

We're making four new versions of Penny Stones.



Faith-Based Edition

Sample questions: 'one word to describe God', 'what is faith' and 'importance of forgiveness'. Questions were created with input from pastors and church leaders. Not specific to one religion, can be used by any faith.

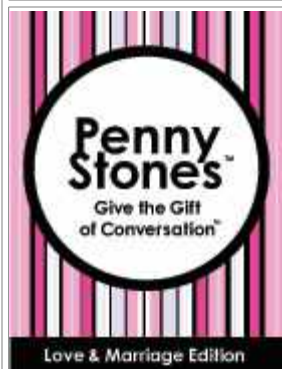
Perfect for: Youth Groups, Family and Friends, Bible Studies, Small Groups, Camps, Retreats and Fellowship Events



New Parents Edition

Sample questions: 'traditions you'll share with baby', 'best parenting advice you've received' and 'favorite baby names'.

Perfect for: Baby Showers, Expectant Parents, New Parents, New Grandparents, and Adoptive Parents



Love & Marriage Edition

Sample questions: 'how you met your mate', 'your first kiss' and 'favorite proposal story'.

Perfect for: Bridal Showers, Anniversaries, and Couples



Slumber Party Edition

Sample questions: 'trophy you'd like to win', 'all-time favorite teacher' and 'your three wishes'.

Perfect for: Slumber Parties, Birthday Presents, Summer Camp, BFFs (best friends forever), Team Building, and Girl Scouts

Each edition has its own color accent on the draw-string tote bag and coordinating tag.

Penny Stones in the News (Hopefully)

Penny Stones (and Tammy) are in the Leading Moms in Business 2009 Competition. If you'd like to help us win, you can go the Penny Stones website, www.pennystones.com, and click on the "Vote for Us" button daily. There are currently over 1,500 contestants. The winners will receive national publicity. Thanks to everyone who has already voted and keep voting! Voting ends in April so all your clicks are appreciated!

Penny Stones Stories

There's now a Penny Stones Fan Club on Facebook called Penny Stones Stories. It's a place for people to share Penny Stones stories, suggest new questions, or just see what the latest is with Penny Stones. Click [here](#) to check it out or to join the club. hyperlink:
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=49907678696>

A Penny For Your Thoughts....

Each set of Penny Stones contains 21 Penny Stones, one penny and an untold number of great conversations. They are proudly made by disabled individuals in Cleveland , Ohio . They're available for \$15 at the Penny Stones website or at a number of gift stores in Northeast Ohio ; see the website for locations, www.pennystones.com.

If you have ideas you'd like to share, or have your own Penny Stones story, we'd love to hear it! Please reply to this e-mail or send Tammy a note through the Contact Us page on our website, www.pennystones.com.

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