

Ella Tristani

Family Communication

Dr. Morgan

4 November 2021

Family Rituals Paper

For this assignment, I decided to interview my father on a ritual that started in our family when he was a child, and that he has kept alive throughout the years. I decided that my father was the best person in my family to interview for this ritual because he has lived this ritual through with each of the generations of my family since it started with my great grandparents. The ritual is that every Sunday, for as long as I can remember, my family has some type of pasta for dinner.

My father explained, “Pasta Sunday is a family tradition that the Tristani family has that is basically a set time every Sunday where the entire family comes to somebody’s house, it was always my grandmothers, where she would make a traditional Italian dinner”.

This family ritual dates back to my fathers grandparents, after they immigrated to Fairmont, West Virginia from Pietransieri, Italy. My great grandfather got a job working in the coal mines when he came to America, along with all the other Italian immigrants in his community. In my interview with my Father, he explained that Sunday was typically the only day of the week the miners got off of work. For my great grandfather, Sunday was the only day he got to be with his family. So every Sunday, the whole family would gather at my great grandparent’s home after church to eat a meal together. Being Italian, almost everything in my family revolves around food. If someone is sick, bring them food. If we are celebrating, eat a big dinner together. Cooking for others is a way of saying “I love you” or “I appreciate you”. So, it

makes sense that on my great grandfather's only day off of work during the week, he chose to spend it eating a big meal with his family and that it was very important to my great grandmother to cook the pasta meal for everyone.

When this ritual started, the meal was always served at noon on Sunday, after church. My father stated, "My grandmother used to say 'if you aren't here at noon, if you're even five minutes late, the door is locked. Be here before noon so you can eat.'" Naturally, this has changed over the years. Today, this has changed into a more traditional dinner. Now, we usually meet at my father's home around 6 to eat, and he is not as strict about the time. The way my father views the ritual now, is it is "an opportunity for the family to get together to talk, have dinner and dessert, and hang out". I've always enjoyed Sundays for this reason. Since I only live 30 minutes away from home now, it is nice to always look forward to spending this time with my family, even though the tradition looks a little different now.

Aside from just eating pasta and leaving with a full stomach, this family tradition leaves everyone feeling more connected and close with each other. My father explained that historically in the older days of this tradition, while my great grandma and aunts cooked, all the men would go in the living room and talk and watch sports which was a way they bonded together. As time went on this changed as my great grandmother and grandfather passed away, my grandpa began to cook the dinner, and all hands would be on board to help prepare the dinner.

As our family grows and changes, it has been really enheartening seeing how this tradition lives on. Now, my grandpa and great aunt still host a Sunday pasta dinner in my grandpa's home which is the same house my great grandparents lived in and started the tradition in. My own family has even brought this tradition with us from West Virginia to Green Bay

where we will celebrate the tradition each week. My oldest sister even carries on this tradition in Minneapolis by making pasta with her boyfriend every Sunday.

If an outsider came and observed the Tristani Family Pasta Sunday, it would be very apparent how close my family is because of this tradition. During dinner we usually talk about our weeks, what's going on in our lives, have some wine, and just really relax and enjoy our time together. Writing this paper has made me so thankful for the family that I have and the experiences and memories that we share, this ritual being one of them.

Interview Questions:

1. What is Pasta Sunday?
2. Historically, when did Pasta Sunday start?
3. Why did it start?
4. What do you remember about the original Pasta Sundays with your great grandparents?
5. How has this ritual changed throughout the years?
6. What is your favorite part about Pasta Sundays?
7. What does this ritual mean to you?
8. What do you think this ritual means to our family?