

# The Longer Table

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## Make rich memory traditions

Lisa, a Subcontracts Administrator for JH Kelly, a Vancouver, WA based construction firm that provides



services to commercial facilities told Session 4 of the Leadership Development Lab™:

‘Shortly after my husband and I were married, we decided to start a “Sunday dinner” tradition for our blended family of three children at our house. We started with close friends and immediate family. It quickly grew into quite the affair.

‘We told our friends to bring whomever they wanted that might lack community. They did! So many began looking forward to our Sunday gatherings.

Sometimes we had forty people, ten dogs, and bunches of kids running around. My husband built a large table for our family room made of reclaimed wood from the flooring of an old gymnasium. In addition to that, there is a huge picnic table for outside with a fire pit down the middle.



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‘Eventually, we





started a "Sunday Dinner Motorcycle Club." The club adopted a family each Christmas that we blessed with gifts. We even started doing clothing swaps for those with small

children. We would gather and help older neighbors with yard work and little chores. Our kids were teenagers and unlike some teenagers, really looked forward to our extended family Sunday dinners. This tradition went on for many years until after our kids left the nest. After the kids were out and gone, we bought a camper and started travelling most weekends, and our Sunday community dinner fizzled out.

'To this day, people reminisce about our Sunday Dinners. A friend sent me a quote she said reminded her of us and our tradition. It reads:

*"If you have more than you need, build a longer table, not a higher fence."*

This beautiful quote is now framed on our kitchen counter.

'The lesson I learned from our Sunday Dinner experience is that everyone wants to feel they are a part of something: connected, loved, known, and appreciated.



'The action I call you to take is to open your heart and your home to someone lacking community or relationships. You can never have too many positive, supportive, connections and friends.



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Keep an  
extra  
open chair  
for a  
welcomed  
guest at  
your  
table.

‘The benefit you will gain is a more enriched, purposeful, and fulfilling life.’

This is such an uplifting story with so many ripple effects, touching more than those who benefitted directly from “Sunday Dinners.” The examples set for their children will ripple on to the next generation. Lisa and her husband will never even know all the ways they’ve enriched the world.

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