

Combining Cultures – Creating Traditions

Harry was Scottish, Priya was from Sri Lanka, and they had recently married in England, where they now lived together. Their wedding had been a simple celebration of their relationship. Neither of them was particularly religious, so they had chosen not to have a religious ceremony. Instead, they had invited their friends and family, exchanged their vows, enjoyed good food, and spent the day celebrating together.

As their first Christmas as a married couple approached, they began thinking about how they wanted to celebrate it. Christmas was everywhere in England at that time of year, but neither Harry nor Priya felt a particularly strong connection to the religious meaning of the holiday. At the same time, they loved the idea of bringing the people they cared about together.

They decided to create something of their own.

For the second day of Christmas, they invited their friends and family to their home for a new kind of celebration. They deliberately avoided giving the event a religious theme. Instead, they wanted it to be about the people who were important to them and about the different cultures that were part of their family.

They asked everyone to bring their favourite dish for a large shared buffet. There were no rules about what people should bring. Someone could prepare a traditional family recipe, bring something they had recently discovered, or simply contribute the food they enjoyed most.

They also told their guests that they could dress up if they wanted to. Some arrived in smart clothes, while others wore colourful traditional clothing. Harry's Scottish relatives brought dishes and stories from their family, while Priya's family contributed food and traditions from Sri Lanka. Their English friends added their own favourites, and soon the dining table was covered with dishes from many different backgrounds.

In the afternoon, everyone gathered in the living room. Instead of Christmas songs, they played games and sang songs that had a special meaning to different people in the group. Some were traditional songs from particular countries or regions, while others were simply songs that had been part of someone's childhood.

The atmosphere became increasingly lively. People who had never met before began asking questions about the songs and food. A game that one family had played for years became a favourite among people who had never heard of it before. Stories emerged about childhood celebrations, family gatherings, and traditions that had been passed down through generations.

Harry noticed that something interesting was happening. The group was not trying to create one single tradition that represented everyone. Instead, they were making space for many different traditions at the same time.

After dinner, the furniture in the living room was pushed aside and the room became a dance floor. Music from different countries and generations played throughout the evening. People danced, talked, and tried cocktails that Harry and Priya had prepared.

For Harry and Priya, the evening was not about reproducing a celebration from one particular culture. It was about creating a new tradition from the cultures, experiences, and relationships that already existed around them.

The following morning, everyone met again for an extensive breakfast. The house was quieter than it had been the night before, but the conversations continued. People talked about their favourite parts of the celebration and joked about who had danced the longest. Leftovers from the buffet appeared alongside fresh bread, fruit, eggs, and other breakfast foods.

Harry looked around the table and felt that the event had become more than they had originally imagined. They had wanted to do something special for their first Christmas as a married couple, but they had also created an opportunity for their families and friends to share parts of their lives with one another.

Priya felt the same way. She liked that nobody had needed to give up their own traditions in order to participate. Everyone had been able to contribute something, whether it was food, music, a game, a story, or simply their presence.

As they began clearing the breakfast table, Harry and Priya decided that they wanted to do it again the following year.

Perhaps the details would change. New people might join, new dishes might appear, and someone might introduce another game or song. The celebration itself would develop over time.

But that was exactly what they wanted.

Their new family tradition would not come from one culture, one religion, or one established holiday. It would be something they created together—an event shaped by the people who joined it and by the different backgrounds they brought with them.

For Harry and Priya, that felt like the perfect way to begin their life as a family.

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