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Modern Family

Read about some
great **holiday**
traditions and
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(one size doesn't
fit all!)

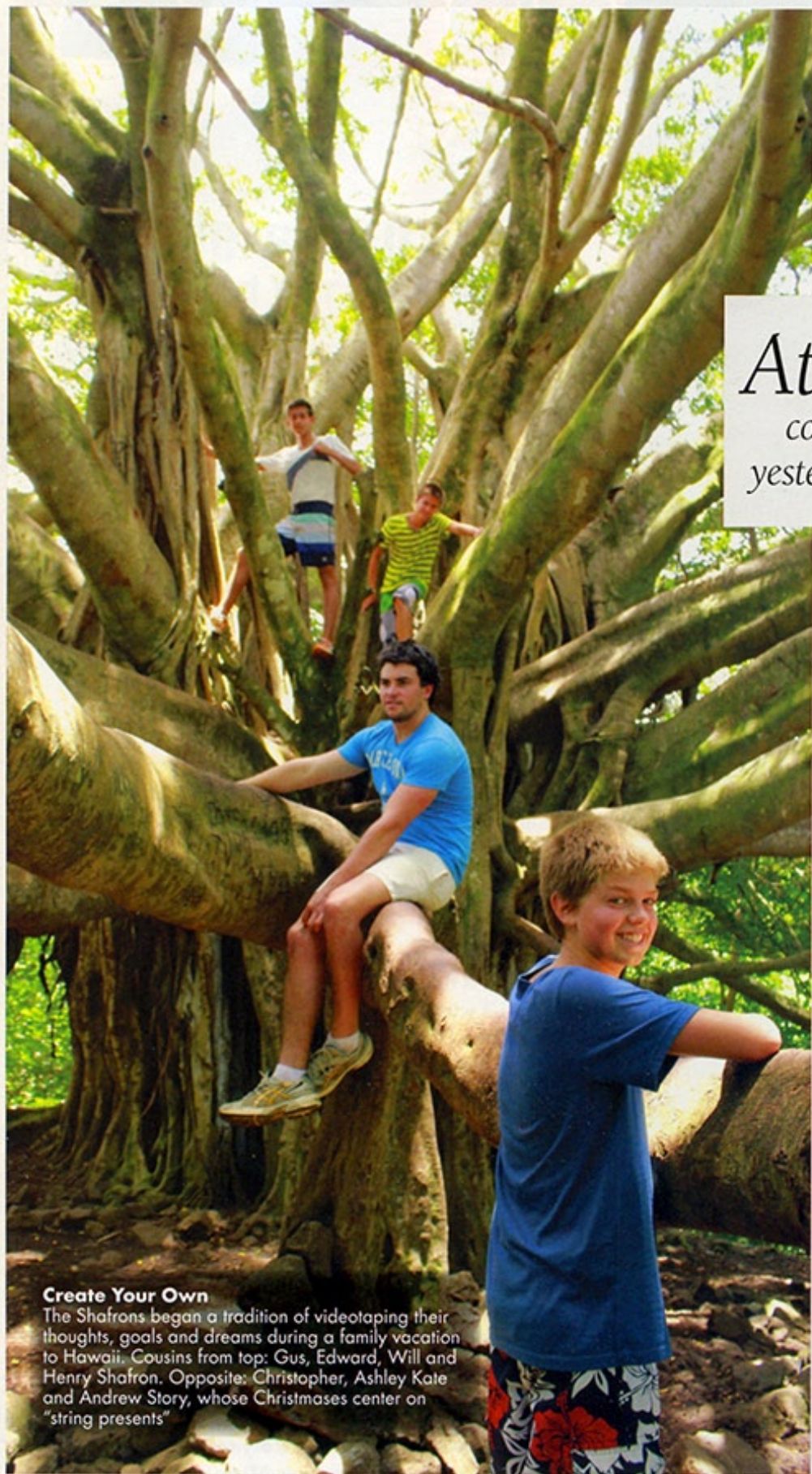
by **Beth Douglass Silcox**

BE A GREAT LEADER

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From Abandoned
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At their best, traditions connect today with all our yesterdays and our tomorrows.

Family traditions instill in people and their "tribes" a sense of belonging and stability in an otherwise chaotic world. They allow individuals to feel a part of something larger than themselves and also integral members of the family unit. In so doing, our "tribes" are stronger, more engaged with one another and more likely to thrive, Leavy says.

Engaging Connections, Meaningful Conversations

Jane Shafron understands what Leavy means by engagement. She produces private documentary films for families, and wades through hours and hours of family videos. "It's endless video of everything but the people. It's so disappointing," Shafron says. "I realize what missed opportunities those videos have been. What we really care about are the people."

So when Shafron's California family rendezvoused with her brother-in-law's Australian family for a Hawaiian adventure last summer, she knew to turn the camera around. Despite spending seven glorious, fun-filled days together, Shafron kept thinking they were missing an opportunity to truly connect with each other.

Then on that last night, Shafron announced plans for a one-on-one video interview with everyone on the trip. It was

Create Your Own

The Shafrons began a tradition of videotaping their thoughts, goals and dreams during a family vacation to Hawaii. Cousins from top: Gus, Edward, Will and Henry Shafron. Opposite: Christopher, Ashley Kate and Andrew Story, whose Christmases center on "string presents"



The Ties That **Bind**

We asked *SUCCESS* staff members and our Facebook fans to share their family traditions. Here's what they said.

My mother bought a plastic tablecloth 10 years ago for Thanksgiving dinner and every year all the family members write what we are thankful for on the tablecloth. It is great to read what was going on in past years and what we were thankful for.

—Melinda McQuillin, *SUCCESS* Media customer service

I met my wife, Georgia, on a blind date on May 7, 2000. Every May 7, we dress in the same clothes, go to the same place and do the exact same things we did on the night of our first date.

—Darren Hardy, *SUCCESS* publisher

low-key, filmed on an inexpensive, flip camera. She started slowly with questions about the beaches and snorkeling, high points, who woke up first most mornings and who was the grumpiest. Family dynamics made for some funny answers.

"Then I asked them about their plans for the next 12 months and a few life questions. Wow, it was a hit!" Shafron says. "I just listened to what they had to say. It was delightful. It made the whole trip worthwhile on a personal level for me." And just like that, a new family tradition was born.

Adults and teens alike had a great deal to say, many of them revealing untold goals and ambitions. The younger people talked about what was going on in their lives, what they cared most about.

"Often you don't get around to those meaningful conversations," Shafron says. "You are often talking to other adults and let the kids wash around you." But as she found, the teenagers really wanted to talk to her about what they felt. "I was very happy to have gone to this little bit of trouble to connect with them."

Connectivity

What psychotherapist David Klow loves about Shafron's new tradition is that it incorporates technology. "We see iPad commercials with people chatting face to face. Grandma and Grandpa are waving as their granddaughter graduates from high school. If used right, technology can bring people together in new traditions. This is a great, creative use of video," he says.

As affiliate psychotherapist at the Family Institute at Northwestern University, and in his practice as a licensed marriage and family therapist, Klow explores how groups affect people, how groups help people change, and how people see themselves in their relationships with others.

Traditions, Klow says, impact individuals biologically, emotionally and mentally. "Our brains are hardwired for repetitive interaction and predictability. That can be very satisfying to the brain and bring a lot of pleasure to know that the thing you are waiting for and planning for happens," he says.