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817.775.5364

420 E. LAMAR BLVD #110
ARLINGTON, TX 76011



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Thanksgiving conversation is often a minefield of topics: political divides, your English degree, and Aunt Marjory's insistence that you meet her neighbor's cousin's dog walker's uncle's son who's a fantastic up-and-coming podiatrist.

Between constantly passing the potatoes and dodging your relatives' questions, Thanksgiving can be an exhausting holiday. But it's a day to be grateful for what and whom you have in your life, so why do so many people leave their annual gatherings feeling overwhelmed and misunderstood? This year, when the conversation begins steering in an awkward direction, try these conversation starters for a more relaxing and fulfilling holiday.

- 1. What's your pet been up to?** Maybe Fluffy learned a new trick or Oscar is undergoing some intensive grooming next week. Whatever the case may be, people love to talk about their pets.
- 2. What Thanksgiving dish can you not live without?** Without going culinary critic on your grandma's meal, gush about your favorite dish. Just like with pets, people love discussing foods and recipes. You may start a fun debate or a recipe swap with this question.
- 3. Dad did what as a kid?** Getting to know your relatives, friends, and significant others better will only strengthen those bonds. You'll likely hear some interesting stories you can share with others and forge a stronger connection with your relatives.
- 4. Stupid human tricks, anyone?** Let's see those double joints! This one might not be for the squeamish at the dinner table, but it's a fun, goofy activity that's best shared over a glass of after-dinner wine.
- 5. How about we get coffee?** Sometimes part of the stress of answering your relatives' questions stems from holiday pressures. It may force you to address your bank account, love life, and general life choices. If you really do want to talk about your job or your love life with relatives, suggest meeting up again without the holiday atmosphere. While you're all in one place trying to enjoy a piece of pie, plan a family winery tour, beach day, or camping trip. Family situations will always be a little stressful, but without the pressure of the holidays, you might feel more relaxed.

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The Importance of GRATITUDE



Gratitude is an important part of my life. It's a very powerful emotion — powerful enough to overcome some of the most negative emotions people experience. When someone shares their gratitude with you and tells you how important you are to them, it sends a powerful message.

I often look at where I'm at now, and I'm grateful for all the wonderful things that have become a part of who I am today. That gratefulness is all the stronger when I reflect on where I once was. That said, my sobriety is one of the most important things in my life and something I'm incredibly grateful to have.

At one point in time, drugs and alcohol were taking their toll. They caused so much unbridled wreckage in my life. After a lot of hard work, I made it to a point where I could use my story and experiences to give strength and hope to others who are struggling with the disease of addiction.

I'm thankful I can tell them where I've been, what it was like, and what it's like now after having become an attorney. There were stepping stones, and there was a light at the end of the tunnel, even if, at times, it was hard to see.

Because of my experience, gratitude has become something I think about nearly every day. When

I open up my day planner in the morning, and as I get started on the day, I write down three things that I'm grateful for. I remind myself of what's good in life. It's hard to be in a bad mood when you're thinking about the good.

Gratitude also helps put my problems into perspective. When I do look at my personal problems, the truth is that they're Cadillac problems. I know there are folks dealing with far greater problems than me right now. Having a measure of gratitude gives me that perspective. I was once the person with real problems, and now I can help people with their own.

To really get down to it, I'm grateful to God. He has done for me what I could not do for myself. I continue to be amazed, just as I am grateful, for the life I have today — my family, parents, and friends, as well as my business success.

My parents, in particular, have always been behind me. They are an incredibly supportive couple of people. Along those same lines, there is my wife, Alison, who keeps me on track and focused. Without my parents and without Alison, I would be a very different person.

I'm also grateful for the nonprofits we've had the good fortune of working with. We've been working with both Doodle Rock Rescue and TangoTab — two organizations that do good in very different ways. I'm excited to work with these organizations even further — especially TangoTab this fall. I do want to mention that we'll be partnering with Mission Arlington along with TangoTab on Thanksgiving, handing out meals to those less fortunate.

Here's to gratitude and to finding the good in life,

- Matt Aulsbrook

Thanksgiving Prep for the Whole Family

Thanksgiving is more than just a feast; it's about coming together as a family and being thankful for one another. So why wait to get into the spirit until everyone is seated at the table? Here are a few ways you can make the actual preparation of Thanksgiving dinner fun and engaging for the whole family!

Give Everyone a Role

No, not those rolls — yet. Making the feast a family project can turn the day from a hectic list of chores into a magical bonding experience. It's important to match each family member to a job that best fits their abilities. Young children can mash potatoes or rinse ingredients in the sink. Older kids can take on more responsibility, like measuring ingredients, keeping an eye on timers, and setting the table. Teens and young adults can supervise their younger siblings and cousins in these important tasks and may be called upon to stir what's on the stove while an adult checks on the football game.

Roll Out the Decorations

Still not talking about bread. Not everything in Thanksgiving preparation needs to be tied to the kitchen. Creative family members of all ages can work together to bring some seasonal flare to the dining room. Maybe this means picking up some Thanksgiving coloring books, or perhaps the family can venture outdoors to collect autumn trimmings for crafts. It's a great way to let each family member put their own personal spin on the holiday!

Have a 'Roller Derby'

Finally. While an adult should be the one to put these delicious baked goods in the oven, the whole family can help shape the dough. In fact, Care.com recommends making this a contest. Set aside a time when everyone can vie for the title of Fastest Roll Maker, and you'll have plenty of warm, flaky, delicious treats come dinnertime.

Letting everyone play a part may take a little more planning and add slightly more chaos to your Thanksgiving preparations. But it's sure to produce a lot of great memories and bonding moments among your loved ones. And by the time you sit down to eat, you'll all have something to be thankful for right in front of you — *Those. Delicious. Rolls.*

4 MORE

Types of Compensation You May Receive After an Accident



In the previous issue, we looked at three types of damages often factored into the compensation you may receive after an accident, such as a car accident. These included medical costs, lost income, and damaged property.

In many cases, these three types of damages can be quantified — they have specific values. However, not every type of damage can easily be put into numbers. There are four other types of damages that are challenging to quantify, but for which you may deserve, and need, compensation to move forward after an accident.

Pain and Suffering After your accident, pain may linger for days, weeks, or longer. You may be compensated for any ongoing pain or suffering related to the accident. This may relate to your physical pain and suffering, as well as your mental pain and suffering, present and future.

Emotional Distress This can fall under the category of mental pain and suffering. Your accident and injuries may cause you ongoing stress that impacts your daily life. This stress may stem from anxiety, fear, loss of sleep, and more.

Loss of Enjoyment If you are experiencing pain or suffering, or your injury is keeping you from doing the things you love, you may be compensated for not being able to enjoy the simple pleasures in life. This may include hobbies or other everyday activities, such as exercise, recreation, relaxation, or enriching yourself. When you are unable to enjoy your life, you may feel stressed, frustrated, or even depressed, which can be considered mental pain and suffering.

Loss of Consortium When you are injured in an accident, it may change your personal relationships, including those with your spouse, your family, friends, coworkers, and others. You may be entitled to damages if your relationships suffer — that is, if your relationships deteriorate or become unsatisfactory.

Insurance companies will do what they can to avoid paying damages related to these issues. You may need someone by your side to fight for you. If you have any questions or you were recently in an accident, you can reach us at 817.775.5364 (LDOG) for the help you need.

Watch Out for These 3 Dangerous Drivers on the Road



Dangerous driving behavior is something we see all the time.

While it's a year-round issue for commuters throughout the DFW area, the holidays can often magnify the problem. People are hitting the road to visit family, and more people are driving while intoxicated. For the average motorist, driving defensively and attentively can be lifesaving. As you hit the road this holiday season, be on the lookout for these three types of dangerous drivers.

Frequent Lane Changers They never seem to be happy with whichever lane they're in. They weave in and out of traffic, hoping to get to their destination a few seconds faster — and then you always catch up to them at the next light. This behavior can force other drivers to swerve or hit the brakes, which is one of the leading causes of rear-end collisions.

Speeders Drivers who speed because they are in a hurry or because they feel the posted speed limit doesn't apply to them can often miss critical details and potential hazards. Speeding reduces the amount of time they have to react to hazards in and around the road, from debris to potholes to pedestrians.

Distracted Drivers While texting and driving is illegal in Texas, it is still legal in a couple of states. Texting and driving carries immense risk and is considered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to be deadlier than drinking and driving — and it's especially deadly among younger drivers ages 16–24.

Distracted driving isn't limited to cellphones. Any activity that takes your eyes and attention off the road is considered distracted driving. This includes reaching for an item, eating, grooming, and even gawking at an incident along the road. Any of these actions can carry serious consequences. Be careful out there!



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Just for Laughs



HOME COOKIN'



SPICY, CREAMY SWEET POTATOES

Sweet potatoes are a Thanksgiving staple, but they're often the blandest thing on the table. Luckily that's not the case with this recipe, which features Thai spices and coconut milk.

INGREDIENTS

- 5 pounds sweet potatoes
- 1 cup canned coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon Thai red curry paste
- 1/2 cup dark brown sugar
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 375 F. On a large sheet pan, bake potatoes until very soft, approximately 75 minutes.
2. Let potatoes cool until they are safe to handle, then peel and mash.
3. In a small saucepan over low heat, combine coconut milk and curry paste. Once mixed, add the mixture, salt, half the sugar, and half the butter to potatoes.
4. 30 minutes before serving, heat oven to 425 F. Spread potatoes in a baking dish, cover with foil, and bake for 20 minutes.
5. Uncover potatoes and dot with remaining butter and sugar. Broil until brown, crusty, and delicious. Serve hot.

INSPIRED BY THE NEW YORK TIMES

