

## Faith/Community/Balance

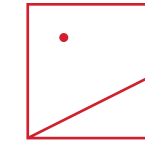
Lou Aiken, a great coach of mine, used to say to me, “I don’t care what you believe in—me, the church, God—just have faith.”

Wanda, my mother, used to send me to a different religion every time we moved. In Tomahawk, Wisconsin, I was Lutheran; in New York City, I was Episcopalian. Seventeen moves, seventeen religions. I pretty much discovered that they were all the same. Many years later, I majored in philosophy and ethics where I discovered that the foundation of just about every philosopher matched the ethics and dilemmas faced in religion. (Sidebar: Many more years later, I discovered that my great-grandfather taught Christian ethics at Union Theological College in Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom.)

I know I have a guardian angel and I believe in God, but my stepfather, James Hoffer, was an atheist his whole life except for one brief moment. He was seventy and thought he was dying so he decided to take up believing in God. I said, “Dad, you’d be bored in Heaven. All of your pals are in Hell and they drink, smoke, and eat meat with fat.” That was the end of religion for him. He was a rare bird and lived to almost 100. He could live without much contact with others as he couldn’t stand fools or people who didn’t use proper grammar. Organized religious and church services confounded and often infuriated him. He was good straight through. He didn’t have prejudices, and he just expected everyone to follow the Golden Rule and do everything in moderation. He had a great respect for all nature, and I only saw him kill fish he was planning to eat. He practiced all of the best tenets of the great religions. For religion is not where ethics originated, but it can be a powerful symbolic reminder of how to do what’s right. James Hoffer went to Heaven despite my teasing.

I join community groups to help others and to be inspired. To me, Rotary, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Church all fall into similar categories. They are communities of people joined together with the common objective to live with integrity, do good for others, and support one another. Many books have included chapters on faith and joining communities. The results are in—you’ll live longer and be happier. Running a business in a community means you have to roll up your sleeves and join the town. Faith in a higher power helps a person stay focused on living a good life. The leaders of our country recognized the need to allow any religions to flourish and they stipulated the right to pursue happiness.

Provide time to be balanced. Save a day off to worship, be with family, and help people in your community. Be sure to celebrate family traditions to bring everyone together to build lasting memories. The business will follow.



## Granny’s Stuffing

*My family’s Thanksgiving tradition*

### Ingredients

1 - 23 pound turkey

**Warning:** *Never stuff a turkey the night before.*

**Stuffing:** *(enough to stuff a 23 pound turkey)*

6 apples (*Macintosh work fine*), peeled and chopped into ½ inch pieces

5 stalks of celery (1 bunch), chopped into ¼ inch pieces

3 medium yellow onions, chopped into ¼ inch pieces

1 loaf Wonder Bread toasted on both sides, then torn into 1½ inch pieces (*I always buy two loaves as I invariably burn one loaf under the broiler.*)

Sage to taste (approximately 1 teaspoon)

Fresh parsley, cleaned, chopped (*reserve stems for gravy or put in freezer to put under roast chicken later*)

Salt and pepper to taste (about 1 teaspoon each)

**Gravy:**

Giblets: heart, liver, gizzards and neck

1 yellow onion, cut into quarters

1 carrot, cut into quarters

1 stalk celery, cut into quarters

Fresh parsley stems

3 cups water

¼ cup flour

Preheat oven to 350°. (*Be sure to turn on the oven!*)

Rinse turkey cavity out—check both ends for any guts or paper and remove them. Put giblets and neck in a small saucepan and add 1 onion, 1 carrot, 1 stalk celery and parsley stems plus 3 cups of water to make the base for gravy. Cook for 1 hour. Turn off. Remove all vegetables and throw out. Cut up livers, chop gizzards, remove meat from neck, (*these are the giblets*) and return meat to the gravy broth. Set aside.

Mix all of the stuffing ingredients together in a bowl. Insert into the cleaned turkey cavity. (*You can freeze leftover, uncooked stuffing to use for a chicken later as long as it never touches any raw meat.*) You may need to tent your turkey with foil or cover it until it’s almost done to prevent the skin from burning. When the turkey is done, (cook 15 minutes per pound at 350°) remove from pan. Pour off the turkey juices and skim off the fat. Add ¼ cup flour to one cup cold gravy broth and whisk until there are no lumps. Pour the flour mixture into the pan with the hot turkey juices. Stir in the rest of the giblets and stir with a whisk until thick. Add the rest of the gravy broth and cook on simmer until the gravy thickens fully again. Add salt and pepper to taste. (*Be sure to warm the turkey plates, serving dishes and gravy boat in the oven.*) Wanda, my mother, would add a half cup of white wine to the gravy.