



Issue 5, November

Hi Steve R,

In the U.S., the last Thursday of November is Thanksgiving, a holiday where Americans tend to gather with families, overeat, and perhaps take a moment to reflect on what we are thankful for. This is followed up by a frenzy of spending and consumption that lasts until the new year when hangovers wear off, gym memberships increase, and credit card bills start to roll in.

Have you ever been to a gathering of family or friends where dinner guests take turns describing what they're thankful for? This well-meaning, but awkward, social trope is intended as a moment to share what is meaningful in life, but honestly, I get a little anxious when the question comes up because it's a question that requires much deeper consideration, and I don't want the food to get any colder. So, I usually rattle off a safe but effective canned response such as, "I'm just thankful we can all be together." Ho-hum.

There will be someone who interjects with Dad humor: "I'm thankful for all this food that's soon to be in my belly!", eliciting eye rolls and polite chuckles.

And there will be someone who is thankful for their new car, PlayStation, or some other material possession, sparking another round of polite chuckles.

It's a harmless ritual that dances around a very profound question that we should ask ourselves more often. Understanding what we are grateful for is key to shaping how we relate to the world. To help, I came up with a simple exercise you can try.

Start by making a statement about a thing. An actual object that you are happy you possess. It could be a pair of pants that fit perfectly or maybe a painting on the wall that speaks to you. Since this newsletter is ostensibly about woodworking, I'll start with a

power tool for my example.

Statement: *I like my table saw.*

Now ask yourself, “Why do I like it?”

Because it helps me to make projects.

Each time you answer the question, ask a similar question. “Why do I like making projects?”

Because it’s fun.

“Why is it fun?”

Because it’s rewarding to start with raw materials and create something.

“Why is it rewarding?”

It gives me a sense of accomplishment.

“Why do I like accomplishment?”

It focuses my attention on achieving goals.

“Why is achieving goals important?”

It gives my life purpose.

You can take this game as deep as you like, but in just this short time I was able to get to a simple, root statement of gratitude. So when I say, “I’m glad I have a table saw” what I really mean is, “I am grateful to have purpose in my life.”

Try this out and let me know what you discover about yourself!

Next month, I’ll have some great gift making ideas just in time for the Holidays. In the meantime, have a Happy Thanksgiving and a nice November!

— Steve

P.S. Oh, I wanted to tell you about my new podcast. It’s called **Chad and Steve Have a Podcast**. It’s all about the social and cultural landscape of YouTube, and how we maintain our channels and run our businesses. It’s not about woodworking, but if you’re interested in YouTube and would like to hear stories and perspectives from two guys who have each been at this for more than a decade, check it out. (Chad is the producer of *Clean My Space*, a channel dedicated to help you clean, declutter, organize, and simplify your life.) Check out our podcast wherever you listen to podcasts such as

[Apple Podcasts \(iTunes\)](#) or [Spotify](#). You can also [subscribe to our YouTube channel](#) for video versions of our weekly conversations.

And don't forget, there is no better way to find deep meaning and purpose in your life than by learning woodworking! And, I just so happen to have an online course called [The Weekend Workshop](#) that will get you up and running and achieving workshop bliss this weekend! Treat yourself or someone else. You'll be ...wait for it...*thankful* you did! 😊



FROM THE VAULT

Transfer Photos to Wood

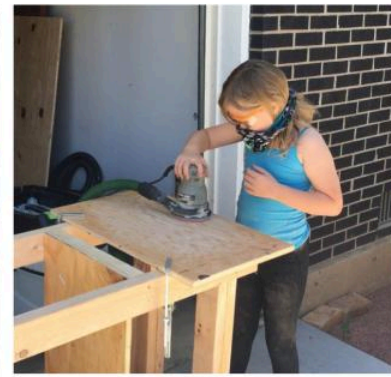
Consider adding photo transfers to your woodworking sometime. For certain projects, it's a great effect. The neat thing about inkjet transfers is that they're imperfect and can impart a rustic vibe as if the piece has been around a while. [Here's my simple method.](#)



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT

Paul, a school teacher and a member of The Weekend Woodworker community, is grateful to have spent many summer days completing the course with his two daughters.

While looking for a way to expand his woodworking skills he found my channel and thought the course would be a great way to make the summer memorable, so he jumped in! Not only did the course provide his family with hours of bonding time, but he and his daughters can also now enjoy their projects and memories for many years to come!



Beautiful projects built by course members

Check out a few of the awesome projects that members of [The Weekend Woodworker](#) and [The Weekend Workshop](#) built this month.



Excellently Designed Bed

Javed's first major project after completing [The Weekend Woodworker](#) is fantastic. I especially like the tops of the posts. It's a good example of how one single design feature can make all the difference. In fact, it's usually better to have one particular point of focus rather than introducing competing accents.



Nifty Knitting Box

This knitting box was such a specific project designed to my wife's specifications, so it was super cool to see that someone made it! I hope your Grandmother liked it, Drew. It looks great!



Crisp Shelving

I absolutely love the clean, contemporary design of this unit. It's just so visually interesting, and the light color of the plywood would look good as an accent piece in almost any room. Nice one, George.

Thanks for reading, be well.

- Steve

P.S. If you are new this month, you can read last month's issue of Notes From the Shop [here](#).

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