Symbolic meaning and representational and reflexive perspectives remain dominant orientations in the analysis of ritual. While these must be crucial, this essay argues that a focus on the perceptual dynamics of rite, especially as these are located in ritual aesthetics, may expand an understanding of the force of rite. The discussion develops critically upon Victor Turner’s seminal work, suggesting ways in which ritual analyses may be redirected. The related concepts of dynamics and virtuality (distinguished from the cyber-technological kind) are developed, indicating that these may be critical for understanding how rites change or transform the situations to which they are directed. Ritual as a dynamic in virtuality that has no essential or necessary relation to the ordinary realities that surround it may, because of this fact, be greatly empowered as a force that can pragmatically intervene in ordinary realities.
Rituals also provide continuity in meaning across generations with the anticipation for repeat performance and an investment that “this is how our family will continue to be.” When routines are disrupted, it is a hassle. The FRQ distinguishes between the practice of routines and the meaning of rituals. Future research endeavors would be strengthened if researchers would adopt these questionnaires, with established reliability and validity estimates, rather than using single-item or newly developed questionnaires with unknown psychometric properties. Families are proposed to be organized systems where behavior and representations are coded to promote development. Family dynamics at dinner: A natural context for revealing basic family processes. Her seminal work, Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice, which has become required reading among students of religious studies, launched a revolution in the way scholars think about those peculiar, unique, and difficult to define activities that are usually understood as ritual. Indeed, the book challenged the widespread assumption in ritual studies that there is any such thing as a universal, autonomous phenomenon called ritual; that is, a set of orchestrated human activities with distinct and recognizable features that differentiate it from other, more mundane forms of activity. THREE Ritual Symbols, Syntax, and Praxis: Questions of Cultural Meaning and Interpretation, 61 Symbolic Systems and Symbolic Action, 62. xiv CProenftaecnets. Linguistics, 68 Performance, 72. Part I: theorizing ritual: against representation, against meaning. Chapter 1. Ritual Dynamics and Virtual Practice: Beyond Representation and Meaning Bruce Kapferer. Chapter 2. Otherwise Than Meaning: On the Generosity of Ritual Don Seeman. Part II: experimenting with ritual: natives here, natives there. Chapter 3. The Red and the Black: A Practical Experiment for Thinking about Ritual Michael Houseman. Chapter 4. Partial Discontinuity: The Mark of Ritual André Iteanu. Part III: ritual and emergence: historical, phenomenal.