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CREATING THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT THROUGH GIVING

ADAPTED FROM THE WORKS OF SUSAN JEFFERS, PH.D.

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This past year has brought a lot of challenges that will make this holiday season different than any we've experienced. For some, the true holiday spirit might certainly be hard to nurture this year, but for all of us, it has never been more important to cultivate it. We have to hold it in our hearts and remember how much it means to us, to friends, to family, and even to strangers.

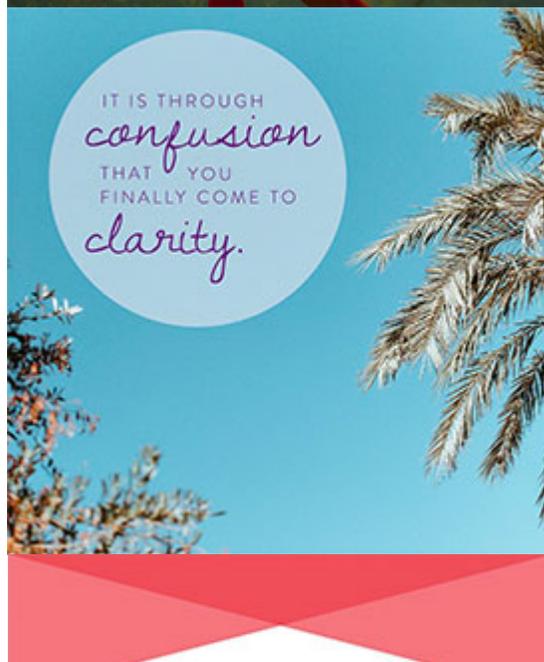
This holiday season, many of us are ready to get out of the house, to be around our friends and families, and disappointed that we won't be able to. Others of us would like to hunker down and not even think about the holidays. But it is important to keep up our traditions even if it feels like everything has changed. Those feelings of happiness, grace, and gratitude - the holiday spirit - helps us to mark the end of a year and set our sights on the new year with hope.

We also need to cultivate our spirit of

*If you know you can
create your own
misery, it stands
to reason you
can also create
your own joy.*



IT IS THROUGH
confusion
THAT YOU
FINALLY COME TO
clarity.



giving. The end-of-year holidays are about how we can make other people happy, that is a huge part of the holiday spirit. After such an uncertain year, it's not surprising that we're finding it hard to be in a giving mood. Yet, if we take giving out of the holiday season, we're closing ourselves off from the holiday spirit. Who would want to do that?

In, ***Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway***, Susan wrote that, "People who fear can't genuinely give. They are imbued with a deep-seated sense of scarcity in the world, as if there wasn't enough to go around. Not enough love, not enough money, not enough praise, not enough attention - simply not enough. Usually fear in one area of our lives spreads to others, and we become closed down and protective in many areas of our lives."

If our celebrations have to be more subdued than usual, it doesn't mean we can't give as much or more than usual. Even without much money, we all have something to give. As Susan wrote, "The kind of giving we're talking about here doesn't necessarily mean presents or money, it means giving of yourself."

Susan suggested starting with this list to learn how to become a genuine giver:

- Give away thanks
- Give away information
- Give away praise
- Give away time
- Give away money
- Give away love

An extra 'thank you' can go a long way to making someone's day just a little brighter. From your partner or child, your friend or parent, simply someone counting on, your expression of gratitude is appreciated.

Susan used as an example of giving the idea of 'give away information' in a work environment. Applying the idea to the holidays, perhaps giving away



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Everyone could use more positivity in their life, including you!

information is writing cards to elderly family members or friends who may be lonely living in isolation. Tell them what you've been up to and give them a new connection to the world outside through you.

Praise is one of the easiest things to give away. A 'you look nice today' or that's a great idea costs us nothing and can mean a lot to the person being praised. Leave a note for a neighbor acknowledging their holiday decorations, or find something nice to say to every family member on that video conferencing call.

Susan also addressed the idea of giving away time. "Time is something there never seems to be enough of, hence it is one of our most valuable commodities. It is also one of our most precious gifts. How do you give away time? You listen to a friend's problem, you write a note of thanks, you get involved in something bigger than yourself and become a participating member, you volunteer, you read a book to a child. All of these take you out of yourself and help you operate from a different part of your being - the part that is loving, nurturing, and abundant."

We're all expected to give money away during the holidays - every charity increases their fundraising at this time of year. A lot of charities are struggling this year due to a higher demand for their services and less money coming in. So think about, in addition to giving to your usual charities, you can give to charities that are doing the 'work on the ground' for all of us - food banks, services for the homeless, emergency services, and other organizations that are working the frontlines of taking care of people during the pandemic.

As for giving away love, that one is easy too. In one of the essays in ***Life is Huge***, Susan wrote, "What do you have to give? Certainly your love. You can radiate love to everyone around you. Even when someone is upsetting you greatly, you project the thought 'I love you. I love you. I love you.' That is a wonderful gift."

Cultivating a spirit of giving to inspire your holiday spirit can bring some normalcy to an otherwise crazy year. As Susan said, "Remember that the enjoyment of the holidays begins and ends with caring, sharing, having compassion for others, and radiating love."

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