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SPIRIT, MIND & BODY

This Holiday Season, Give the Gift of Light.

The glory of the holidays is upon us and it comes in a sea of light. In every direction, the night sky is illuminated as if by magic. Whether white, green, red or blue, 5000 lights or only just a few, the luminescent symbolism is the same: a glowing flame lights the way, brings us warmth and extinguishes the darkness.

We festoon our homes with brilliant lights for a number of reasons: To be festive. To symbolically light the way for those we love, in hopes they'll find their way home. To share the light with those who may feel lost. To warm our own hearts with the promise of new life during the darkest time of the year. The light may also let us see a new perspective on the life we are currently living.

Which of us has not felt the spirit of the Holiday Season at some point in our lives? Even if we don't celebrate Christmas, the wonder and magic of the season is in the air. The giddiness is contagious, like hearing somebody laugh so hard that you can't help but join in -- even if you don't think the joke is funny. Not everyone feels joy during this time of year, but if we let the spirit and light of the season into our hearts, it can be a rich and meaningful time.

This is a beautiful time to reconnect with the child that lives within you. What a great time to let the excitement deep down in your belly come forth at the sight of Santa Claus or the sound of jingling bells. We are never too old to let our youthful spirit out to play, to light up like a shining star. There is nothing

like sheer joy to subtract years from your age and add years to your life.

This season is an extraordinary time to give something of ourselves to others. Some wonder if we have lost the essence of what it means to truly "give". The giving part of the holidays is to show appreciation for the beautiful souls that cross our path and share our daily life. The greatest gifts we can possibly give are gifts from the heart. They can be as simple as a kind word at the right moment, a loving card with a personal note, or a batch of homemade cookies. If you let your imagination work for you, I am sure you could come up with a dozen creative solutions that fill both the giver and the receiver with the light of joy.

Another way to partici-

pate in this season of light is to help light the way for someone who can't seem to find it. The cycles of our lives do not always coincide with the calendar. All of us have been in situations when, in a time of joy for most, we found very little. It is not our role to remove people from their authentic experience of life but the holidays do present us with an opportunity to help remind our fellow man that there is a brighter day just down the road, around the corner or over the horizon. Open your arms, your hearts and your homes and invite in the stranger that one day could be you.

We live in a precarious time when a bright light stands even brighter against a field of dark uncertainty. If we can commit to bringing our

inner light to any situation, we may not get lost in the dark and we may be able to see the way toward our highest potential. Collectively, we need each other to stay positive and hopeful. We need each other to keep the flame burning in hopes of seeing beyond the darkness. We need to hold each other accountable to that which in our hearts we know is possible. So this holiday season, let your inner light come shining through. There is no more gracious gift than to give the very best of yourself.

"Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you."

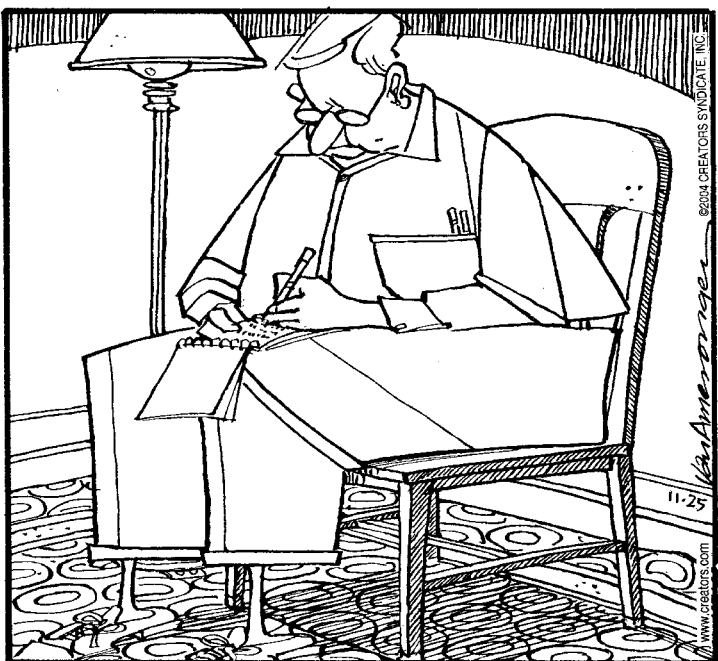
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