

HOLIDAY GIVING

December 3



Before recovery, holidays were often stressful. We worked overtime and over-did everything. There were too many people to please, too many parties, too many gifts to buy, and too much money to spend, even when there was none. Then came the baking, cooking, and our own exaggerated expectations.

Holidays became our permission to perform beyond the everyday norm and revel in our achievements. Look what we've done! Our payoff became more insanity, and less grandiose accolades than we thought were deserved.

We told ourselves we were unappreciated, overworked, and exhausted from giving and doing. We were resentful!

Recovery teaches that, not only do we seek balance in *all* things, but that we can satisfy our need to celebrate the holidays by giving of our time to those less fortunate. It doesn't bloat our ego, nor is it as flamboyant as walking in with an armload of gifts, but the rewards are genuine.

A loving sponsee was distressed at the thought of being alone over the holidays. Her child had moved away, and she cried, not knowing what to do. Someone suggested she buy fresh bouquets and visit those also alone in the hospital or nursing home. She recounted her personal satisfaction going room-to-room, leaving a flower and a piece of her heart as she gave of herself to a series of strangers.

When we give without expectations, it helps others while stimulating endorphins within our own bodies, and we feel fulfilled. We become connected to others on a spiritual level instead of a material level. As we give for the simple pleasure of giving, we lead with our highest, intuitive selves.

The pressure of giving enough, spending enough, and being enough is no longer a concern.

What fulfills us, is the act of rising above ourselves to experience a spiritual connectedness to others, and becoming a part-of, through the unselfish giving of our time.

This selfless giving is the essence of living in abundance.

TODAY'S MEDITATION

Please use me, God, to be a channel for your peace and an example for others.

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"If you want to feel the truest spirit of Christmas, go out and find someone sadder than you, lonelier than you, poorer than you ... The best Christmases always require the gift of self." —Toni Sorenson