

## It Is In Giving That We Receive A Greater Gift

This is the time of year when our vision can be blurred with all the holiday preparations in full swing. Making lists, checking them twice, and wanting the Holidays to be very nice can cause us to lose sight of a greater gift. With only a few more hours until the big day, so much to do, so little time you might want to take a deep breath, slow down, and remember what the Holiday really mean to you.

Take a moment to think about past Holidays and special memories of those Celebrations. Think about times together with family and friends, a shared meal, a special song, an act of kindness, and a time of service to others. Sure, we can remember a certain Holiday and that special gift we wanted, and there it was under the tree, but is that what we really remember about past Holidays? Or do we remember the good times that involved gifts of sharing time with family and friends, gifts of service to help and support those needing our help as being our very best Holidays?

Service is defined as the work or action of one that serves. Being able to see opportunities of service is a learned skill. Children and adults can learn this powerful lesson of generosity. Kids need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. By reaching out to others we fulfill the greater need within ourselves. "That it is in the giving we receive the greater gift." This is difficult for many people, especially young people, to understand. It can only be learned through experiencing acts of true service and giving to help others. The Holiday provides wonderful opportunities for children to learn the meaning of true service and experience generosity.

As you finish up your "Holiday list" take a moment and add to your list one act of service. Each of us engaging in one act of service to help someone in need will brighten his or her Holiday and ours. What will make that act even better is to include members of your family, especially children, who will learn that service is truly a gift. "That it is in the giving they receive the greater gift."

Is there someone living near you that could use one small act of kindness and service to brighten their Holiday? Is there someone you could call as you rush out to finish your Holiday preparations and asked if they need you to pick something up for them? Taking a moment to visit and share your time and concern for them will increase your joy and theirs this Holiday Season. Asking, is there something I can do to help you, what do you need are the questions of service? While you're fixing your Holiday food is there someone you could share that food with?

Is there a family member or friend, for whatever reason, you have not visited or called that could be added to your Holiday list?

Is there someone you know that has lost a love one and will journey for the first time through the Holiday without them? You say, "I don't know what to say to them, I don't want to upset them." Just stopping by or calling says volumes that you care. These acts of kindness and service that begin during the Holiday will continue to give all year. "That it is in the giving we receive the Greater Gift." It's clear that these experiences provide the foundation that helps us understand the "big picture" of life and helps us find purpose and meaning in our lives.

***"Service to others is the only true gift under heaven through which we can escape the prison of our own selfishness." Author Unknown***

From the WVU Berkeley County Extension Service faculty and staff, our very best Holiday Wishes. Our office is closed for the Holidays and will reopen 8:00 a.m. on January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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