

GIVING AND RECEIVING AT CHRISTMAS:

"The only gift is a portion of yourself" (Emerson) by SUSIE ITZSTEIN

This is traditionally the time of the year for Giving and Receiving. A time for JOY and PEACE and MIRACLES on Earth. It is a time to rejoice, to make merry and honour, and to drink a toast to all we've experienced and achieved this year. Let us sit back and reflect and count our many blessings and celebrate and applaud all our amazing lives and growth and breakthroughs.

Yet, some of you are maybe saying it's also a time of stressand hassles..... Hassles of shopping, shopping and more shopping, of endless queues and pushing and shoving.....not knowing what to get for people; and then, having to pretend that you like the gifts that are given to you that just aren't you; having to meet up with and share with family and relatives that feels uncomfortable and sometimes outrightly scary when you think of the things you'd really like to say to them.....and then trying to work out how to pay for all these extra outgoings that skyrockets the credit card balance.....feeling like it's just one big commercial rip off and farce and emotional drain.

And, maybe for some of you it is also a time of extreme loneliness and heartache. With a 50% divorce rate many families will be separated at Christmas and some just newly so. How do we work out whom the kids will wake up with Christmas morning? How do we work out where they, and we, will spend the day and the holidays? What about the in-laws and grandparents we feel uncomfortable sharing with, but the kids want to visit?

I invite you to consider making this Christmas a time full of rich blessings. How can I do that you say when I've answered yes to many of the above?

Well, what I am going to ask you to consider is, that what is happening in your life right now, at Christmas time, or at any time, in all your relationships usually has a direct link to the conditioning we received as we were growing up. And, we can learn how to change these patterns and consequently what happens in our lives.

As children we are 'taught' who we are allowed to be and how we can expect to be treated by others. We adopt a self-image and a world-image. We are all born having needs but what is overwhelmingly sad in our culture is a large amount of people *haven't learnt that it's OK to have their needs and that it's OK to ask for what you want and to get your needs met.*

And what we have learned to do *is to give our loved ones what we think they need rather than exploring and discovering what they truly want and listening when they tell us.* As well many people have the belief that if I have to tell you what I want then you don't really love me.

So what we are talking about here is checking in on what are your beliefs about giving and receiving, about having needs, about getting your needs met, about saying Yes and saying No by checking in on your own likes/dislikes and not what it means to the giver, and about whether I can authentically express who I am.

I believe in people getting what they want and living the life they want.
I believe my needs are OK and it's OK for others to meet my needs.
I believe your needs are OK and it's OK for others to meet your needs.
I also believe that I know best what I want and you know best what you want.
And, I believe that the reality that I live in has more to do with my thoughts and beliefs than any other factor.

So, what do you believe in and what beliefs do you want to have?
Do you know how to change them if they aren't?
I invite you this Christmas to check in on your self-image, your beliefs about the way you think others should treat you, and about whether it's OK to ask for, and to get what you want.

Gifts are a means to tell people you care whether the gift you are giving is a physical object or a gift of your time or talents or your presence. Gifts are a way to say: "Hey, you are unique and special and I want to treat or indulge and pamper you." And our gifts have to do just that. They need to 'hit the spot' to touch the heart of the receiver.

So start making a list of what makes you feel loved and cared for and communicate these to your family and friends. Or, as well, ask your loved ones to make a list for you and choose to give what makes you feel good and what is within your budget and means. Be authentic. A gift that has your authenticity and loving energy in it will have much more meaning **for you and the receiver**. And remember that *"love is a verb"* and that love grows in response to our getting our needs met.

Two quotes that are central to me are:
"all that is given is given to myself" from the Course Of Miracles and,
"the only gift is a portion of yourself" by Emerson.

So, in summary what are my beliefs about giving and receiving, about having needs and getting my needs met, about the meaning of Christmas....what is my self-image and my world-image?

I offer you wishes for much love and connection over this festive time. May you enjoy the practicing of traditions and rituals that bring you closer to your family and loved ones.

Know that we are all born with the capacity for giving and receiving unlimited love. Know that all your relationships and interactions are an opportunity for you to become more of who you authentically are.

Know that if this is not how you are living and experiencing your life then maybe the greatest gift you can give yourself and others is to explore and to learn how to create this.

And there are many courses that teach this.

May your Christmas and New Year be full of loving and sharing. May there be fun and playing and wonder and laughter. May there be giving and receiving and magic and miracles. May you indulge in many "glorious indelible moments....."as Sark would say.

And, above all may you discover the exquisitely precious Gift that You are.