

# CHOICES

AUTUMN 2015

## THE HOLIDAY ISSUE!

DISCOVER THE  
JOYS OF  
EMBRACING  
THE SEASON

### AN INTERVIEW WITH LYNETTE CHAPPELL

ACTRESS, DANCER, MANAGER  
AND CONSERVATIONIST

### FIND YOUR PASSION

LEARN HOW TO LIVE  
A MORE PASSIONATE  
AND FULFILLED LIFE



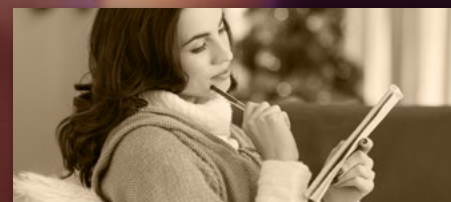
#### A SPECIAL HALLOWEEN

HOW A RESOURCEFUL  
FATHER SAVED THE DAY



#### HOSPITALITY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

HOW TO BE A GRACIOUS HOST  
AND A WELCOME GUEST



#### A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHRISTMAS LIST

RETURN THE JOY IN GIVING TO  
YOUR HOLIDAY SEASON

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# FROM THE EDITOR

The hustle and bustle of the holiday season is upon us. We are in danger of getting caught up in the hectic pace of getting all of the decorating, shopping, cooking and visiting done along with our regular schedule of activities. Many of us travel to visit family and old friends and host or attend holiday gatherings and celebrations. But it is also a time to celebrate peace. It is a time to allow ourselves to renew and regenerate our energy.

**H**ow do we accomplish this and still manage all of the other things that are expected of us? We do it by incorporating some new habits into our days.

First, **do no harm** – to yourself or to anyone else. It sounds simple enough. Most of us would not deliberately run head on into a brick wall. And yet, our words and actions create invisible walls that we crash into all the time. Treat yourself and those around you with respect and kindness.

**Allow yourself to think and act spontaneously.** Don't base your actions on past experiences or "what ifs" and fears. It's a new day. Let yourself enjoy the moment. Leave yourself time for an unexpected guest

or a cup of tea in the middle of the afternoon. Allow yourself to laugh at your mistakes and find new ways to solve problems.

It may seem impossible, **but stop doing things that irritate you.** There are only 24 hours in a day. Not everyone can do everything. Do the things you can and stop beating yourself up for the things you don't get done. Your time and energy can be better spent showing appreciation for the people that are truly important in your life.

**Accept and share love.** A smile, a hug or a kind word can make someone's day. You may be surprised just how good you feel when you give someone else a lift. Invite someone to share in a family holiday meal. Start a new tradition to build on each year. Stop

worrying about how much there is to do and how much it will cost. Focus instead on all you have to be thankful for.

Before you go to sleep each night, **count your blessings.** Each morning give thanks for a new day and a new opportunity to have the peace you seek.

All of us at *Choices* magazine, wish you a stress-free holiday season...much health and laughter. We are grateful for you. Thank you for being a part of our lives.

## OUR TEAM

**PUBLISHER** Lloyd Palm    **EDITOR IN CHIEF** Judi Moreo    **CREATIVE DIRECTOR** Jake Naylor  
**COVER PHOTO BY** Bob Patrick

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS** Anthony Burnside, Andrea Chestnut, Becky Grava Davis, Amber De La Garza, Anne Dreyer, Carleen Elliott, Gina Geldbach-Hall, Ridgely Goldsboro, Jaana Hatton, Suzanne Hawley, Shana Kai, Delores Ramsey McLaughlin, Lauren McLaughlin, Judi Moreo, Sandra Gore Neilsen, Joan S. Peck, Peter Shankland, Pat Turner, Judy Weaver

**ADDRESS** 1452 W. Horizon Ridge Pkwy #555 / Henderson, NV 89012-4480  
**TEL** (702) 896-2228    **FAX** (702) 617-0600    **EMAIL** Judi@JudiMoreo.com  
**WEBSITE** [www.ChoicesOnlineMedia.com](http://www.ChoicesOnlineMedia.com)

# PASSION IS A CHOICE

*“The happiness of a man in this life does not consist in the absence of but in the mastery of his passions.”*

**- Alfred Lord Tennyson**

BY JUDI MOREO

# W

hat do you get excited about? What do you feel strongly about? What would you do even if you didn't get paid? Are you willing to step out of your comfort zone and live a life of passion?

Passion is often thought of as a powerful, driving force from within. Passionate people are described as being zealous, driven, enthusiastic, and laser focused. Passion is also that spark of life deep inside which coaches, cajoles, and directs us even when we are not aware of its existence. We can bury ourselves in our pursuit of success as many of us do.

We can find our way into successful careers and forge relationships without ever consciously acknowledging our true passion. Passion usually appears when we believe in something, when our purpose is defined.

What if we could feel passionate about everything we do?

We can. Each of us has within us a multitude of talents, creativity, and inspiration. Yet, many of us have not allowed ourselves to discover these things. They are hiding right beneath the surface, just waiting for us to take the time and make the effort to call them out and move into a life of possibilities.

Many of us think we have no control over our lives. That's a myth. Failure to accomplish what we want in life is a result of faulty thinking. We allow doubts to sneak in and we make excuses about our time constraints, education, skills, and abilities. Doubt creates stress, panic, and anxiety. These defeat our passion.

What could your passion do if only you would unleash it? Passion is like the wind against the sails of a boat. It pushes us in the direction we want to go. Without passion, your boat might never leave the harbor. If you allow your passion to die or remain dormant, you just might end up on the rocks of mediocrity.

Think about how much time you have left to live. The average life expectancy is about 77 years. How old are you now? When are you going to start living life the way you really want to live? We were all born with incredible abilities and through many of our life circumstances we sometimes allow life to pull us down. Do not do that! Decide now how you want to spend the rest of your time. If you don't feel a burning passion inside of you urging you to fulfill your life purpose, then it is time to do something about it.

When we have passion, our minds focus on possibilities, we take great joy in our steps forward, and we set new goals, moving onward and upward to achieve them. In other words, when we are passionate, we get on with it!

Passionate people are enthusiastic people. The word enthusiasm comes from the Greek words, en theos, meaning “the spirit within.” We need to unleash the spirit within us. You can't expect other people to get excited about your ideas or projects if you aren't





excited. In fact, they may find you to be a bit boring. If you focus your enthusiasm toward your goals, approaching them with passion, others will want to help you achieve all that you desire.

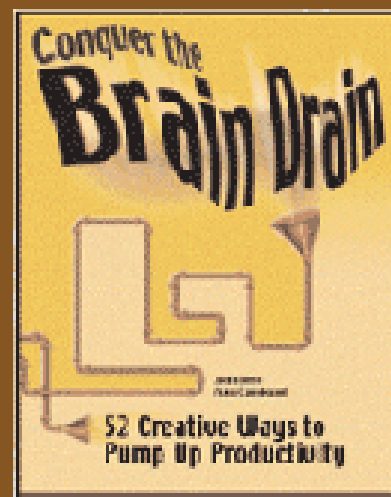
You may be thinking, “How can I be passionate every day when I am dealing with the stresses of life?” Your world is what you make it. You have engineered your life right up to this very moment. You have become what you are through your thoughts, words, and attitudes. Focus on the positives. Your brain knows how to think. Set your goal and point your brain in that direction. It will create the right path to take. Spend some time just thinking. Spend time in silence. Put positive thoughts in your head. Your subconscious mind doesn’t care what you put into it. It will respond to any thought it receives. It is up to you to focus on your biggest goal and see yourself achieving it. When you program your mind with positive thoughts, you realign your body chemistry.

Life is full of possibilities. It is up to us to open our minds to what “can be”



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Judi Moreo is the author of the award-winning book, “You Are More Than Enough: Every Woman’s Guide to Purpose, Passion, and Power” as well as its companion, Achievement Journal. She is a Certified Speaking Professional who has spoken in 28 countries around the world. Less than 10 percent of the speakers in the world hold this highly respected earned designation. To contact Judi or book her for a speaking engagement, contact Turning Point International, (702) 896-2228 or [judi@judimoreo.com](mailto:judi@judimoreo.com).



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and then make the choice to pursue it passionately. Dare to be passionate. Passion is like a magnet. It attracts the things and people we want in our lives. Passion energizes us to overcome fear. When we are passionate, we experience higher levels of joy, love, and satisfaction.

Passion is thought turned into performance...it's the energy that propels you to your destination. It is the wind in your sails. When you are passionate and act purposefully, you are putting faith into action. When you do that, you are giving up uncertainty and doubt. When you do that, you

can accomplish great things. When you bring something to a successful conclusion, your self-esteem and self-confidence rises. That adds even more fuel to your passion. After all, if you did that...look at what else is possible! Make the choice to go after what you want with passion.







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# THE TREPIDATIONS OF HALLOWEEN

BY JOAN S. PECK



alloween is a bit tricky for me (no pun intended). It is a holiday filled with fun and fear, one that easily bounces between those two emotions within a second in time. Maybe that is what Halloween is for most people; I am not sure. All I know for certain is that when Halloween rolls around each year, I am filled with happy and scary childhood memories, as well as anticipation of what is yet to come.

I am that child who hid behind my mother's skirts when things appeared scary or uncomfortable. I am that same child, who with tears streaming, cried out in horror as I watched the crazy, flying monkeys hunt down Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. Today, I still am

repulsed by those fake creatures each time I watch that film, seeing them as real.

As a child, Halloween was filled with fun as long as I could recognize those who were in costume. Times were different then without much elaboration for a costume so it was relatively safe and easy to spot my friends. I was terrified of the few older boys in the neighborhood who would wear large masks that hid their identity, allowing them to jump out of the bushes scaring us, without being punished.

We lived on a small street lined with bungalow houses where everyone knew everyone else. So much so that if we misbehaved in any small way and one of our neighbors saw us, our neighbor

reported it to my parents and we were reprimanded accordingly. That was the day of "it takes a whole village" because we didn't get away with anything!

The neighbors consisted of all ages, some with different cultural backgrounds, and all with good hearts. One neighbor, Mr. Fudge (his real name), was the big spender of the neighborhood offering a nickel instead of penny candy on Halloween. The catch was you had to sing or perform, which was always nerve-racking for me. But that nickel, which was a big deal back then, was always calling me. Finally, after sputtering out, "row, row, row, your boat..." I would hold out my hand and he would look me in the eye and say, "Okay, here it is." A nice memory.



Whether good or bad, I am blessed with an easy imagination that makes something unreal become “right-in-your-face” real. My sister is the same way. Not too long ago, she surprised me with a beautiful mask of a fortune teller from the artists in Venice, Italy which she had purchased while visiting there. When I put it on, it was amazing how the mask fit my face as if it had been made with my measurements. As I turned around to show her and several others how it looked on me, I could hear them gasp in shock. The mask looked so real and bewitching to them that my sister asked me to immediately remove it. With the mask still on, I looked at myself in the mirror to see why they had reacted the way they had. I kept staring at myself for I looked so real as somebody else that in panic I tore the mask off, never putting it on again, fearing I would lose myself within the mask.

Even today, each time I open the door to all sizes of Halloween “trick or treaters,” I hold my breath as I search out the eyes

of those wearing all kinds of masks and costumes until I can make them human again in my mind.

In spite of my overly active imagination, I love the thrill of Halloween – the adventure of it. I love the smallest, little children, who not fully understanding Halloween and what it is all about, come to my door for their treats. There is such excitement about them as they reach into the candy-filled plastic pumpkin and pull out their treat, unsure if this is really okay – the dream of endless candy being fulfilled. As I am enjoying this moment, I look over their heads to smile and nod at the parents who are keeping watch. They return the smile in shared pleasure of celebrating their child’s Halloween holiday.

And then, within hours, Halloween is over until next year, leaving me with leftover candy I shouldn’t eat, but somehow manage to nibble until it is gone.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joan S. Peck is an editor and the author of short stories, three spiritual books and a contributing author to two of the Life Choices series of books. She has a new book coming out this year – ***Prime Threat – Shattering the Power of Addiction***, a book written with her son from the other side.

She can be reached at:  
[joanpeck39@gmail.com](mailto:joanpeck39@gmail.com)  
[www.bejeweled7.com](http://www.bejeweled7.com)





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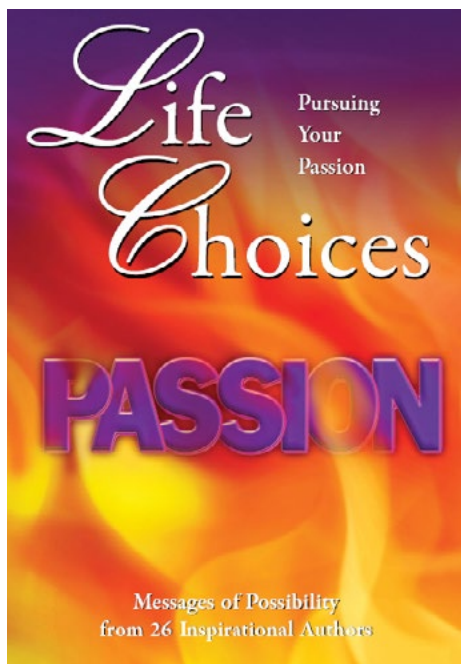
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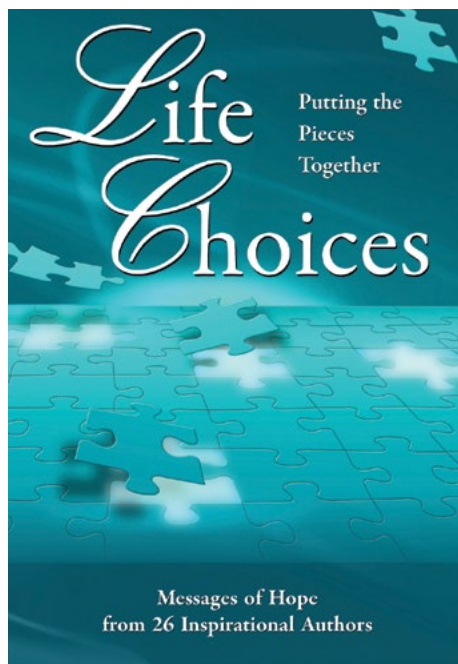
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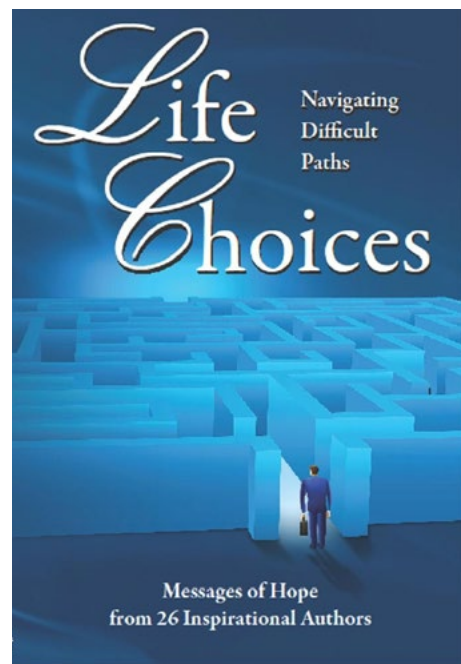




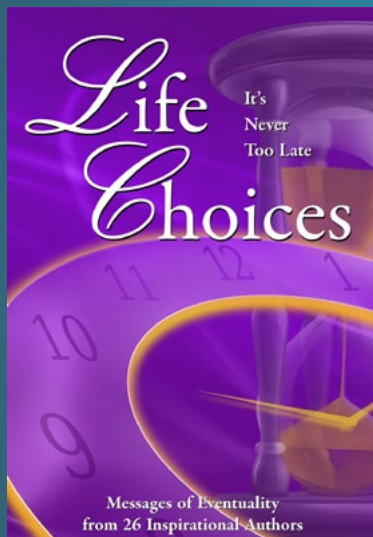
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# A SPECIAL HALLOWEEN CHOICE

BY ANTHONY BURNSIDE

“

*It only takes a second to make a choice. Yet, the choice made in that second can have ramifications for a lifetime.”*

Choices are as much a part of our lives as breathing air. Our choices can have some serious effects, both positive and negative in our lives. In just that moment, that fleeting instance, when the brain needs to process data and then make a decision, your path can change and set in motion causes and effects that resonate throughout your life.

When I need to really process things, and if I am also in California, I love to get into my car and drive up to my favorite lookout point on Mulholland Dr., right off of Laurel Canyon Blvd (high in the Santa Monica Mountains, where you can find an incredible view of the San Fernando Valley). I met a nice lady there one day. Her name is Melanie Barrie, a British attorney, who incidentally, was there to think, too. It became our thinking spot so often that she nicknamed us “The Mulholland Drive Thinkers”(no lie). She is from Europe and we quickly became friends. During our most recent thinking session, I shared with her the story of a

special holiday many years ago that had a significant impact on me when I first began in this business.

One of the most impressive thinkers I ever met was the comedian and actor, Steve Allen. Mr. Allen was one of my first clients. He was elegant and had a superior intellect as well as being very witty. I remember, during limo rides, he would spend time thinking and then he would speak into his micro-recorder making notes to himself to remember something or dictating something for his assistant to take care of later.

After my initial meeting with Mr. Allen, there was a science conference being held at the Americana Hotel in Kansas City. Jack Kevorkian was the keynote speaker and I was asked to be a part of the conference. I had so many things going on at that time that I almost decided to not attend (in jocularly, I claimed that I didn’t want to be stuck hanging out with a bunch of stuffed shirt scientists). My friend, the late philosophy professor, Paul Kurtz, convinced me to go and welcomed me to the conference.

This conference was starting a couple of days before Halloween. The highlight of the event was to be a séance (all in good fun) on Halloween night and we were to attempt to contact the spirit of Houdini,







who incidentally died on Halloween in 1926. Houdini told his wife, Bess, that if the spirit world truly existed, he would return and contact her with a code he created. She followed his instructions faithfully for 10 years and then, in 1943, she finally stopped participating in séances. She had a heart attack and passed away shortly thereafter in Needles, California.

The events leading up to the science conference and the séance were fun in and of itself. I started to work with Mr. Allen earlier that day at the hotel. After checking him into a suite, I took the elevator down to the lobby, where I met a young fresh faced TV reporter named Joel Nichols. He had come to the hotel to interview Mr. Allen. I spoke with Joel with regard to the interview. After a brief conversation and safety check, I approved him to do the interview.

We attended the séance and it was an interesting experience. It was conducted at midnight high atop the hotel, in a revolving restaurant known as

the Rain Forest Room. Ok, I admit, it was kind of spooky, even for a mock séance conducted by lovers of science. There was a medium and he chanted Houdini's real name repeatedly ... Ehrich Weiss. Suddenly, there was a flash of light and one guy started yelling something in Hungarian (his native tongue,) then he started acting possessed. No one was expecting this. It was creepy. However, no spirit materialized. Houdini never showed. But, it was quite a party. I learned that stuffed shirt scientists were not always so stuffed shirt.

I am grateful that I made the choice to attend that conference because so many wonderful things happened as a result. I started my own business working in protection details. This expanded into working in radio and television, being featured in a documentary film along with Penn & Teller, Eddie Izzard, Jamie Hyneman, Adam Savage from the TV show *Myth Busters* and others. In addition, I began working in Hollywood, contracting with and meeting some of the most high profile people on the

planet, and traveling the world. Also, I became a part of the security team for some of the biggest movie and music award shows in the world including the Golden Globes and the Grammys. One of the highlights of my life was being on tour and receiving a personal invite from one of my friends as he received his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

We all make choices in our lives. We can't get caught up in the "paralysis of analysis," just waiting for things to happen to us and never engaging in any action to make things happen. I will always remember that fateful Halloween choice I made to attend the conference and participate in that strange séance.

What a change in life a choice can make!



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anthony Burnside has conducted protection operations at the S.S.I. Conference at the prestigious U.S. Army War College for a former White House official and at the United States Air Force Academy. He has also done protection for VIP's at the Golden Globes, American Music Awards and the Grammy Awards.

In addition to his background in security, he is also an actor, voice over artist, author, and speaker who has hosted various television and radio shows.

Anthony can be contacted via:  
anthonywavex@hotmail.com

# A SPECIAL HALLOWEEN

BY JUDY WEAVER

**I**n the fall of 1980, our family lived in our second home in Flagstaff, Arizona. We lived about a mile and a half from Sechrist Elementary School. Most days, either Strode or I drove the children to school since there were no buses. If the weather was decent, sometimes they would ride their bikes to school... this was generally an adventure since part of the route to school was through a wooded area on a dirt road...quite bumpy and lumpy in places.

It was Halloween and our three children were excited about the whole affair... costumes, parties at school, trick or treating, etc. I headed to work after getting our children ready for their “costume” day. Michelle was dressed in a wonderful clown costume with makeup and all. Matt, age 8, was in a fabulous pumpkin costume—quite large and orange. Our youngest son, John, age 6, was a cute blue bunny.

For some reason, one I can’t remember, we had borrowed a friend’s truck for a few days. I think we were headed to the forest to cut wood. The plan was for Strode to drive the children to school in the borrowed truck.

When it was time to leave for school... the four Weavers ...3 in costume, one in a business suit climbed into the borrowed truck. It did not start!! After several ineffective efforts to start the engine panic set in...



Strode, being the resourceful father that he is, went to plan B. He rolled out the tandem bike from the garage. He mounted the “pumpkin” on the front handle bars, placed the “bunny” in the kid carrier on the back, “the clown” hopped on the second seat while Dad in his business suit climbed on the front

seat and steered the bike down the hill.


The four Weavers, costumes and all, bounced down the dirt road laughing all the way to school. Dad was the hero of the day.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Judy Weaver is a retired elementary school principal. Currently she teaches classes in memoir writing at Wenatchee Valley College in Wenatchee, WA. As an educator, Judy, has had the opportunity to serve children and adults in five states and nine school districts. Her current passion is encouraging adults of any age to write their life stories.





**Shadows of a thousand years  
rise again unseen,  
Voices whisper in the trees,  
“Tonight is Halloween!”**

---

**Dexter Kozen**



# WHAT'S THAT? HALLOWEEN

BY JAANA HATTON

I arrived in the United States for the first time in September 1983. Anticipation and anxiety alternated in my mind, with the images of the television show “Dallas” as my initial preparation. I had no idea everyday life in America was very different from the luxury of the Ewing family.

My husband had just resigned from the Air Force after several overseas assignments, and we had no home in America, other than his parents’ house in Hudson, North Carolina. As we pulled up to the ordinary-looking ranch-style house, with a vast but bare lawn all around, I felt cheated. This was nothing like I had seen on TV: no mansion, no horses, no swimming pool. They didn’t even have a bird bath. I had no idea the Unites States was so ordinary.

It took a couple of weeks to get over the jetlag and adapt to the routines of the household. We were going to be long-term residents there, as my husband was waiting to be cleared for a CIA position. That could take months. I had no idea it could be so hard to live with someone else’s parents.

The tiny town of Hudson, with its one major street and as many traffic lights,

offered little entertainment other than running daily errands at the one shopping center. I began to wonder about the huge displays of candy at the grocery store. Not only was there shelves devoted to sweets, but all along the aisles tall stands were bulging with Kit-Kats, Butterfingers, Snickers and more. I had no idea Americans lived on sugar.

Banners declaring “Halloween” hung everywhere. Was that yet another brand of a candy bar? I asked my husband, as Halloween seemed to suddenly be the big deal. He hadn’t realized it could be a mystery to anyone. Only to a Finn. So, I got educated on the tradition of trick-or-treating, the costumes and the obscene amounts of candy a child could accumulate in a few hours. Okay, but why? He didn’t know, neither did his mother. I looked it up in the dictionary – in 1983, the Internet had not made its grand entrance and google was just the sound you made when your mouth was full of candy corn. I had no idea a native person could celebrate a holiday and not know why.

Then came the night of Halloween, with trick-or-treaters, big and small. My mother-in-law’s metal mixing bowl, heaped with tiny candy bars was soon empty and we sat and watched TV the rest of the night. Again, I felt cheated –

what happened to the festivities?

In Finland, we also have a holiday at the end of October: All Hallows’ Eve. There is no candy, no costumes, but a serious day of remembrance for the dead. Candles are lit on graves and respectful memories shared of those passed from our midst. I had no idea it could be a carnival of circus costumes and a legal high derived from glucose and food coloring. I was sure the Ewings never did this.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jaana Hatton was born in Finland in 1960. When she was twenty-three, she met her American husband, Ronald, and they spent the next twenty-five years traveling around the world due to his employment with the US government. They now live in Wenatchee, Washington. They have two grown sons.

Jaana may be contacted at:  
jaana\_hatton@hotmail.com





## HALLOWEEN: A SHORT HISTORY

Halloween, one of our oldest holidays, is more than 3,000 years old! It is believed that Halloween was originated with the Druids in ancient England. The Lord of Death was supposed to have called forth certain wicked souls to do his satanic bidding.

Supposedly, trick-or-treating also started with the Druids, who visited farmers to collect food and money for the gods. If the farmer gave, he prospered. If he didn't give, he would reap vengeance.

The Romans added a wholesome influence when they decided to observe Halloween along with the Harvest Festival. They burned torches to frighten away supernatural beings and pumpkins carved into scary faces were placed on doorsteps to protect families from prowling ghosts and goblins.

Halloween has traditionally been the beginning of the harvest season celebrations. Apple dunking is a part of these celebrations. In the original version of this game, each apple was marked with the name of a person and the apple picked told who you would marry in the future.

Pagan rites were in contradiction to the church in the first century, A. D. but Christians celebrated the eve of All Saint's Day by honoring their dead. As this was a time already associated with spirits, it became known as "All Hallows Eve."

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# WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?

BY JUDI MOREO

**T**hanksgiving always reminds me of what I have to be thankful for. I have truly had a blessed life...a wonderful family, fabulous interesting friends, a great career traveling the world and studying other cultures. I live in a country where I am free to vote and practice whatever religion I prefer. I can speak out about whatever I choose to speak about.

I truly learned to appreciate all of this when I lived in South Africa during apartheid and witnessed the lack of freedoms and rights of many people...rights that we Americans often take for granted.

One year when I was in South Africa, a friend attempted to make a traditional Thanksgiving dinner for me and I so loved her for doing it. I was a long way from home and my family. She made the day really special. The meal was certainly memorable. As they don't get turkey in the markets until Christmas, we had Cornish game hens. Since they don't have real pumpkin like ours, they call their squash "pumpkin" so she made a pumpkin pie from squash and put chocolate sprinkles on top. It had the most unusual flavor.

Another year, I had dinner with some other friends who heated the cranberry sauce and poured it over vanilla ice cream for dessert. That was a real surprise to me, but actually it tasted quite good.



My most memorable Thanksgiving was the year I was speaking in Dubai for the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and my client actually had a turkey flown in so he and his family could make Thanksgiving dinner for me. They invited all the Americans they knew and we all cooked and enjoyed dinner together. The meal was delicious and the day was incredibly fun.

It's times like these when I realize that people around the world are people who are just like us...who want to have peace, happiness, and the love of their

families and friends. This year, I am especially thankful for my health, for overcoming cancer, and for still being able to speak, write and touch people's lives in a positive way.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Judi Moreo, CSP, is the President of Turning Point International, an award-winning author and speaker who has inspired people in 28 countries around the world. She has written 11 self-help books and hundreds of magazine articles and newspaper columns. You can sign up for Judi's free newsletter at [judimoreo.com](http://judimoreo.com).

# SHOWING HOSPITALITY DURING THE HOLIDAYS

BY ANNE DREYER



Hospitality is surely one of the greatest gifts we can show to someone visiting our homes. It is not about how opulent or how humble our homes are; it is about opening our homes and our hearts and being gracious and loving! In this fast and stressful world in which we live, holidays are the time to share with family, friends and most importantly- to show compassion to the lost and lonely.

## Being a Good Host

Good manners extend into acts of kindness, and then we can learn the rules of etiquette to better ourselves in order to serve our 'neighbor' well! Consideration is the most important factor here. We need to do what is necessary to make our guests feel the most comfortable, welcome and at home.

## Some Useful Hints for the Host

Not everyone has a guest room or more than one bathroom. So, for the period in which you are entertaining guests, remove all personal items from the bathroom, and give each member of your household either a small basket or toiletry bag to carry their personal toiletries to the bathroom, including their own towel- with an added rule to leave the bathroom clean, checking there is sufficient toilet paper when they leave.

Then also provide each of your guests a basket with a clean towel or two, perhaps add a bathrobe, some welcoming toiletries, like a cake of soap and small shampoo, for their use during their stay, regardless of whether they have their own bathroom or not.

Allocate bath times to ensure sufficient hot water, and availability- even if there is more than one bathroom.

Set up some simple house rules... who sits where in the lounge....who holds the remote of the TV, which programs the family watch.....the volume – just so the visit is pleasant and doesn't become a drudgery for the family... informed people are content people!

Always have clean linen on the bed, invest in some good pillows and add

fresh flowers in the room.

Make space for hanging and packing their things in a cupboard, with sufficient hangars- and a place to store their luggage.

Ensure there is a mirror in which guests can see to dry hair or apply makeup.

Meal times are the time for chatter and family to join in. Set a beautiful table, even if the meal is simple, always check food preference beforehand.





“ Guests, like fish, begin to smell after three days.”  
- Benjamin Franklin

Should guests stay for an extended length of time, it will be best to work out an itinerary, so everyone can plan around times and events to make the guests stay as pleasant as possible.

If you are going to let your guests contribute towards food and other bills, spell it out clearly beforehand, including if there are chores to be shared.

Remember everybody needs some personal and private space at times- so ensure that there are such times. And important- always set the tone for pleasant conversation, that is uplifting, joyful and pleasant!

### Rules for Guests

Should you want to prove President Franklin wrong- and if you are visiting for an extended time and want to be invited back...here is some good advice:

Arrive with a gift, and offer to pay towards expenses like food and entertainment.

Or better, check with your host and ask what you can bring.

Don't feed your hosts animals- especially from the table!

Don't hog the TV remote, telephone or bathroom

Don't help yourself to the fridge, food or other items belonging to your host. Always ask permission if you may!

Keep your bedroom and bathroom tidy....avoid leaving wet towels, dirty washing, and other items on the floor. Don't invade personal space...like the host's private bedroom, study or even their garage.

If they have a servant, always leave a tip for them, and don't give them your chores to do- they do not work for you!

Don't invite your own guests along to join in, without permission.

Don't put your feet on their furniture, or let your children touch with dirty hands...

...the list can go on- but in short... respect others privacy and property!

### Invite a stranger- Adult or Child

You may be alone this holiday season; most of us have fragmented families. So if you are, find out from your local church, club or even ask your children. They may have a lonely friend.... or ask a Children's Home- who may be alone- and invite them to join in the festive time with you.

It is far better to give than to receive and when your hospitality zone is stretched by the challenging needs of of someone who is hurting or who is lonely, no matter how bad-this is the beautiful picture of how God views people- to do unto others.

May you do unto others this festive season as unto yourself, and have a Blessed Holiday Season!



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Internationally Acclaimed Author, Speaker, Image and Etiquette Expert, Anne Dreyer walks the talk, sharing her dictum 'Irresistible for the rest of your life' - as she infects her audiences from all over the world with her warm personality and tangible style. Anne believes every person can blossom just where they are planted equipping themselves with 'People Skills' which never become redundant... and believing that every person can reach the pinnacle of their personal and business life....and be irresistible forever!

She leaves her mark on all who are fortunate enough to hear and meet her.

“The ornaments of  
your house will be  
the guests who  
frequent it.”

- Author Unknown

# IT'S ALL ABOUT US

BY PETER SHANKLAND

I recently had the good fortune of attending an intensive, four day, ten hour per day, Qi Gong (a Chinese energy practice) workshop with 175 other interested folks.

As the workshop progressed and I was soaking up all the energy and positivity born of learning and experiencing many new ways of thinking and being, a smile effortlessly painted my face. Several new friends complimented me on my grin. And, as has been my manner for years, I replied, "You're welcome."

"You're welcome?" they asked. "Don't you mean thank you?"

"No," I said. "I am glad my smile brought you a moment of happiness. By saying, "you're welcome," I am acknowledging that my actions unknowingly and with genuine intention, made you happy. For that,

you are most welcome!"

This brief exchange caused me to reflect on why I had taken to responding to a compliment in this seemingly unusual manner and I realized it was linked to my favorite holiday – Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is the one day of the year when we collectively focus on the power and passion of gratitude. We take stock of our lives and the people and things around us and we say "Thank you." We momentarily forget about "I" and instead, focus on all the elements of our lives that allow us to grow, prosper and love. We focus on the "we." We realize "it is all about us."

We acknowledge the life we live is linked to, and interdependent with, everything around us. We cultivate a heart full of gratitude. In doing so, we are lessening our strong, illusionary, and often times troublesome, sense

of a separate, independent self- a self that reflects back on everything from the perspective of "I" or "me."

When we say, "thank you," we are re-affirming our ego in the sense that "I" did something pleasing for "you". "I" am here. "You" are there. We are separate, interacting sentient beings.

By replying to a compliment with "you're welcome," rather than "thank you," we are briefly dissolving our independent sense of self, and turning it back on others with gratitude. We are acknowledging that we are indeed interdependent, our lives are inextricably linked to those around us, and we don't go through this life alone. Rather, we survive and thrive by cultivating a heart full of gratitude that ensures it is all about us.

Happy Thanksgiving!

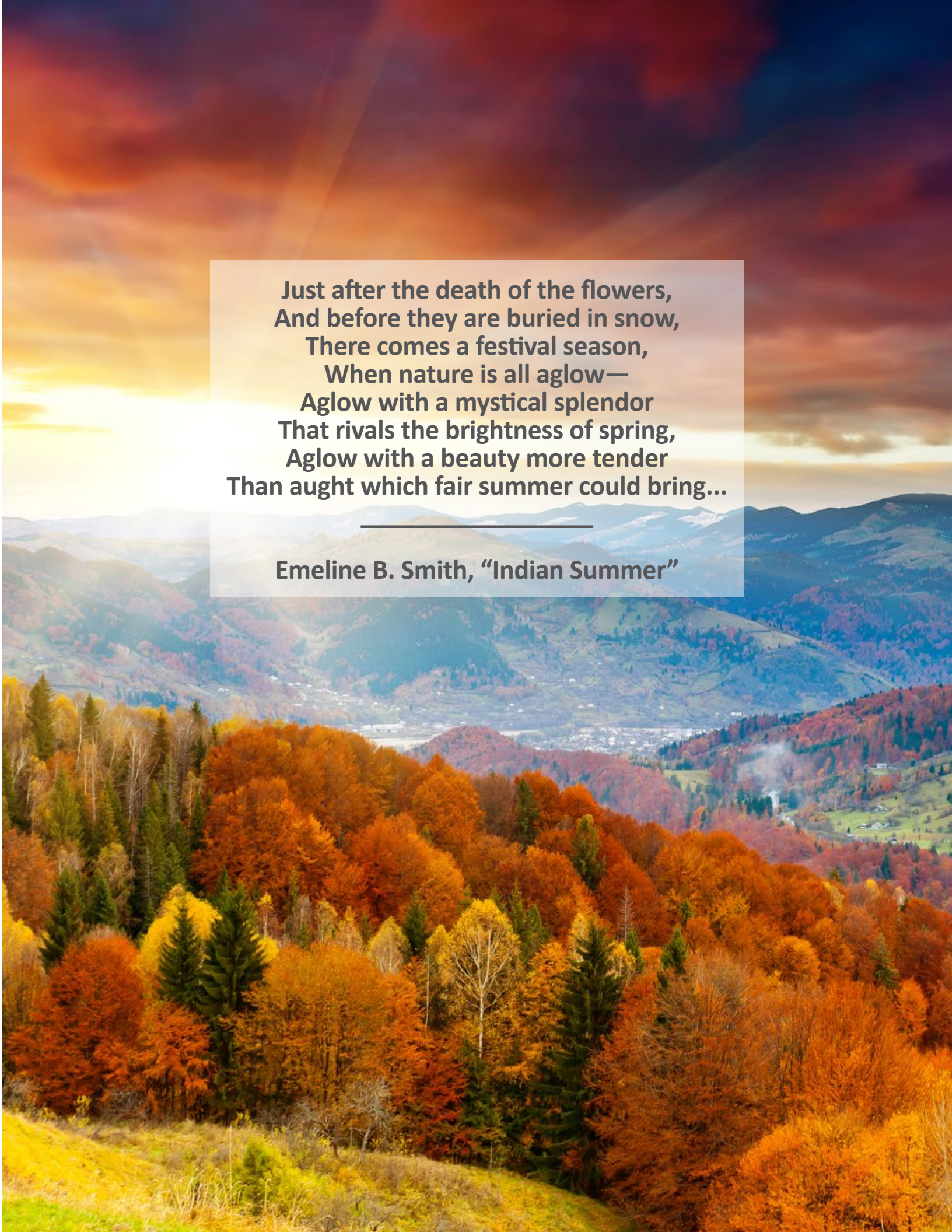


## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Shankland currently resides in Las Vegas, NV where he teaches massage therapy, and practices various complementary disciplines. See: [www.peace.massagetherapy.com](http://www.peace.massagetherapy.com) for more information.







Just after the death of the flowers,  
And before they are buried in snow,  
There comes a festival season,  
When nature is all aglow—  
Aglow with a mystical splendor  
That rivals the brightness of spring,  
Aglow with a beauty more tender  
Than aught which fair summer could bring...

---

Emeline B. Smith, "Indian Summer"



# THE HEARTS OF THE CHILDREN

BY PAT TURNER

**T**hanksgiving is a time to reflect on what is really important. It's not about the food, football, or the mess to clean up after dinner. It is something more, much more.

I was a teacher for twenty-four years. Eight years at each of three different schools. It seems like I have a burnout rate when I've been at any one school for eight years. However, I broke that pattern when I worked fourteen years as a substitute teacher in both Wenatchee and East Wenatchee, Washington elementary schools, general education K-5th including PE, music, and classroom.

As a substitute teacher, I encountered new students almost every day. For those who have read my previous articles in this magazine, you know I lost my leg in 1965 before my teaching career started. Young children are very curious so you can imagine the explaining I had to do. The following examples are what I call snippets from those years.

Sunnyslope Kindergarten - The day before Thanksgiving vacation I had a class that was a social and busy group. One girl in particular was always doing something, just not what was instructed. After school, the para-educator took the students outside





to meet their parents. She brought this little girl back to the classroom because her mother wasn't there to pick her up. The little girl was standing by the classroom door while I was cleaning up. She watched me for a bit, then walked over to me and asked if it was ok for her to pray that my leg would get better!

**Lincoln Elementary School, Severe Class** While lining up for lunch, Andres, a Downs Syndrome boy, made the sign for broken, while touching my stump. I signed, "Yes, broken." He signed, "Hurt?" I signed, "Yes." He kissed his fingers, touched my stump, and gave me a big hug.

**Sunnyslope 5th Grade** After my encouragement talk a girl asked me "What was the hardest thing about losing your leg?" I thought for a moment, took a couple of deep breaths and said, "Seeing my dad cry." Even though it had been over 37 years, I had tears in my eyes. That question brought up unexpected emotion.

**Columbia, 4th grade-** About an hour after school started a student (Chad) came to where I was standing, got right in my face and said, "I don't like you." I asked, "And why is that?" "I just don't like you," he said. To which I replied, "Your teacher is home sick today and I think you would want to help her by helping me, then when she comes back she won't have to worry about how her students acted today." He said, "I just don't like you, because you're a sub." I said, "Well I'm here to help you and your teacher. I'm sorry you feel that way." The rest of the day was a challenge with him.

I went back to the school about four weeks later and stopped to talk to the teacher about Chad's behavior. She

told me he was at Children's Hospital being treated for bone cancer in his leg. That meant when we had our first encounter, he had just found out his medical condition. Wow, that took me back. I couldn't get him off my mind. I got the address where the family was staying in Seattle during his initial treatments and sent a "Thinking of You" card. I included a note about how sorry I was that he was going through this and told him I was thinking about him and praying.

A couple of months later, my husband, Joe, and I were having dinner at a restaurant when a lady came to our table and asked, "Are you Mrs. Turner?" She was Chad's mother. We talked about him and what was going on. I felt totally comfortable with her and finally said, "I have to tell you a story about Chad." She said she already knew what had happened between Chad and me. When he received my card he told her that he wasn't very nice to me and didn't understand why I was being nice to him now!

The diseased bone was removed and replaced with a cadaver knee and femur. He was supposed to have been able to return to school around Christmas time. Unfortunately, that didn't happen because the cadaver parts were rejected and he needed another transplant. The second one worked and I saw him a number of years later. He had been attending culinary school and has a bright future. Now we light up when we see each other and are friends. He confessed that he still is angry about missing his youth. I reminded him WE are survivors.

We all have encountered hardship no matter the age. Every challenge

prepares us for something in the future. The excitement is in not knowing what that might be.

As I went through my "school encounters" file, it quickly became apparent the lives I've touched. One student wrote a note to me that said, "Thank you, Mrs. Turner. I rote this letter for you because you are kind, trustful, and fatful." I pray they will always encounter teachers who have those same characteristics, as well as offering them understanding and encouragement. I am thankful for having been a teacher and for every encounter I experienced, challenging or rewarding. Thanksgiving really is about something more! For me, it is about the hearts of children.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pat Turner lives in East Wenatchee, Washington with her husband, Joe. She received her B.A. in education from Central Washington University and Fifth Year from the University of California Sacramento. Placerville, CA was her first teaching assignment then finished her career in the Wenatchee area. Her travels include New Zealand, Tahiti, Mexico, and Hawaii. Pat enjoys working out at the gym, riding tandem bike with Joe, painting, writing, and hand crafts.





# LYNETTE CHAPPELL

## AN INTERVIEW

BY JUDI MOREO

**W**ithin the dynamic polarity of the constellation that is known as Siegfried & Roy, there exists a third point of light, one that is powerful, radiant, and essential in maintaining the balance and harmony between these two extraordinary stars. Her name is Lynette Chappell.

Lynette is an actress who can dance, a manager with compassion, and a confidant who will take your secret to the grave. She is a Guinness Book of World Records record holder who has performed in thousands of shows on three continents. Her attitude, agility, grace, and ingenuity have kept her at the top of her game for over forty years.

When I first met Lynette, she was preparing a speech for an international convention that was to be held at the Wynn Hotel. I was impressed to find out she was not only beautiful and talented, but clever and witty, disciplined and determined. As I got to know her better, I realized she is a creative force who can coordinate everything and anybody. She makes magic happen as she can transform a beer garden into a magical wonderland and a boring dinner party into an exciting event.

She is a rare combination of brains, beauty, knowledge, worldliness, and fun. She has transformed herself from an entertainer on a Las Vegas stage into a highly successful, passionate, and respected businesswoman. I can assure you, it didn't come easy. Lynette is a real woman who handles difficulties and challenges with grace...and she perseveres. I always enjoy my times with her and I know you will enjoy this interview as much I did. So, here goes!

### Where were you born?

I was born in Mombasa, Kenya. My father was a mining engineer, and much of my childhood was spent moving from place to place, including Ghana, Nigeria, and finally Rhodesia, which is now Zimbabwe. I grew up during a time when that country was riddled with strife. I have a younger sister who was born in a nursing home overlooking the Victoria Falls just as the sun came up, so that's the reason my parents called her Dawn – both she and the view are truly beautiful.

### How did you become a dancer?

Because my home was so isolated, I sought out dance to fill my days, and was classically trained from the age of

three. At seventeen, I was fortunate enough to win a scholarship to the prestigious *London Royal Ballet School*. Destiny embraced my life a few months later as major fighting broke out in my homeland. Returning to Zimbabwe would have been extraordinarily dangerous. While studying in London, I was fortunate enough to have attracted the attention of the world-renowned Madame Blue Bell who, hearing of my plight, offered me a sixteen-month contract in Las Vegas to appear in the *Lido de Paris* show at the Stardust Hotel and Casino. I was terrified to travel so far away. At the same time, I feared for my life if I returned home. I decided to accept the offer.

### Las Vegas is so different than any other place in the world. Was it surprising to you?

I remember stepping off the plane in Las Vegas and seeing the spectacle of the city for the first time. I had been in London only a few months, and never out of my home town before that. All of a sudden, I was being driven down the Strip. It was a tremendous shock. I wasn't even old enough to go into the casinos. After my initial apprehension and jitters, I began to embrace both the stage and the city. Back then, I could



never have imagined that I would still be in this town these many decades later. Nor could I have imagined that destiny would intervene again—this time it was two magicians called Siegfried and Roy.

**Tell us about that. How did you come to know Siegfried and Roy?**

I first saw these amazing performers in 1968 at a rehearsal for the Lido show. The entire cast was spellbound by their performance. I was in awe. They worked with a cheetah and a leopard from South Africa and I immediately knew that they were incredibly special. After the rehearsal, we connected through the leopard and became fast friends.

A few years later, I was offered a position as a principle dancer at the MGM Grand's *Hallelujah Hollywood* mega-review. At that same time, Siegfried & Roy opened in the show as its star attraction. Never before had a magic act achieved such status. Little did I know that when they returned to the Lido, Siegfried would be cramming me

into a "Thin Sawing" illusion built for an assistant who was 5'2" tall. I'm 5'8", but we somehow made it work. By 1978, I began to play an even greater role in S&R's act. They had wanted to expand their performance from twelve minutes to thirty minutes, which meant adding more illusions and people.

No matter who ended up performing any given magic illusion in the show or on a television special, I was the one who tested it and worked out all the bugs. More often than not, with my fair share of bruises, as well. During one of the rehearsals, S&R, who can be very intense and focused, were so busy discussing a new twist on the presentation of their *Wheel* illusion that they went to lunch—still deciding what to do—and left me locked in the prop. I couldn't get out, so I was still there when they returned a couple of hours later. It was all part of working with them.

And yet, in spite of everything, throughout my entire career, I only missed three shows, and that was due

to a fractured back. I've been levitated, sawed in half, and made to vanish. In fact, I think I hold the world record for being levitated and sawed in half more than any other person

S&R constantly worked to develop and evolve the show, and their tremendous discipline made me more disciplined. They're like a comet and a rainbow all in one—streaking across the sky in a radiant glow of non-stop competitiveness with themselves, and with one another. It's part of what makes them great. They're also genuinely nice, magnanimous, compassionate people, and amazingly humble men. I'd follow them through fire without hesitation, and frequently did—with no fire extinguisher in sight.

**You still work with Siegfried and Roy today in a far bigger capacity?**

As S&R's show grew in size and scope, so did my role—both on and off the stage. From lead assistant to featured performer, I often played both beauty and beast—on and off stage. Part of my job was to keep the cast sharp, the props immaculately maintained, the show always looking fresh, and the animals passionately cared for.

The Mirage show was our biggest achievement, and up until that time the most complex show ever staged in Las Vegas. The cast was enormous, and it was often technically a nightmare. All of the illusions, the complicated mechanics, the tremendous staging, and lighting pushed the limits of the technology of that day. You didn't just come in, go into make-up for a half an hour, go onstage and do the show, and then go home. It was an investment, a lifestyle from the moment you woke up in the morning until you went to bed at night—or in the early morning



hours as was generally the case. Looking glamorous onstage happened only a few hours a night. There was always another eight to ten hours—often more—that led up to and followed our onstage performances.

### **But then something terrible happened?**

Yes. Even with all of the stress, we settled into the routine of the show. We knew what tomorrow would bring—generally—and my life, for the most part, was orderly. Then something happened that no one could have predicted. Roy came within seconds of dying during one of the performances. I was upstairs in my dressing room waiting for my cue to go on. Instead, I heard screams of horror and came flying down the stairs to see what was going on. It was at that moment that all my training, all my discipline was put to the test. The only thing that mattered was Roy.



For those who have come close to losing a loved one, you know the agony, the pain, the sheer horror of doing everything you can, and yet knowing that *everything* may not be enough... of wondering if you are doing the right thing without really knowing what the right thing is. The minutes turn into hours, and the hours turn into days. You wait, you pray, you fight back the tears, and you do your best to stay strong. You struggle with the endless question, “Why?” Why did this happen?

But there are no answers. There is no relief except to have faith. Then you hear more bad news—Roy will never walk or talk again. An individual who you love, who is your family, ripped from his very being, and you listen to the doctors tell you that he will never be well again. It’s during that time that faith becomes your closest friend and hope dominates your every thought. My thoughts could only be that “the doctors don’t know Roy.” Today, I’m happy to say that they were wrong. Roy does walk—and rarely stops talking. Roy Horn is considered a medical miracle. But the real miracle is the lesson he teaches us every day—to savor each moment.

### **All of your lives were turned upside down by this. How did you go on?**

For Siegfried, myself, and so many others, life as we had known it for over four decades, simply stopped that night in October. And gradually, like Roy, each of us had to struggle to begin anew. Tragedies either rip families apart, or bring them closer together. My role was, just as it had always been, to hold our family together. Remaining strong was perhaps the greatest illusion I’ve ever performed. I say “illusion” because many times that’s all it was. Like the make-up I wore onstage, being strong

was often a façade, one I put on for the show. And, no matter how bad I felt, that show must go on.

Each of us play a role, and now I realize that mine really didn’t change—I still make sure that everything runs smoothly, that the animals are all passionately cared for, and that my two heroes, Siegfried and Roy, have everything they need. My “stage” may be different, but it is every bit as challenging—and rewarding.

### **What do you do in your free time?**

With the Mirage show having been closed for all these years, one would think I would have more free time. Not so. My days are filled with, among other things, philanthropic work, including: Opportunity Village, Shade Tree, Boys & Girls Club, Ruvo Brain Center, and Friends for Las Vegas Police K9s—a charity that raises awareness for the plight of retired police dogs, and helps pay for the upkeep and medical bills of these K9 heroes when they are no longer able to perform their duties. These incredible animals are fiercely loyal and have dedicated their lives to making us safer. They deserve a retirement pension so their owners can continue to take care of them. They risk their lives and occasionally die in the line of duty. It is the least we can do for them.

### **What is the SARMOTI Foundation?**

We have begun a global campaign for Conservation and Preservation beginning in our own backyard, and reaching out worldwide. The SARMOTI Foundation is dedicated to protect, conserve and preserve endangered and threatened animals globally, with particular focus on the big cats: tigers, lions, cheetahs, panthers and leopards.



The Foundation's programs, events and products entertain, educate and motivate the public to take direct action to prevent the extinction of big cats and elephants in our lifetime. The Foundation supports other individuals and organizations who share their mission through publicity, promotion, scholarships and grants.

### **What are some of the other roles you play?**

I also continue to oversee and manage Siegfried & Roy's busy schedules, as well as the S&R business office. We continue to get hundreds of requests for autographs, appearances, and interviews from across the globe. On any given day, I function as their confidant, protocol guide, companion, friend, oversee the daily activities of The Secret Garden at the Mirage, and my favorite role as the surrogate mother to all of the new "strays" who seem to

find their way into the S&R household. From llamas to abandoned kittens, cranes, swans, stray dogs, and newborn cubs, my job is to watch over their care and medical needs. Without question, the most difficult part is when we lose one of our animals. Most of them live very long lives, but even so, it's always traumatic when one passes on. They are so much a part of our family. There isn't anything we won't do for their safety and comfort.

### **What is The Secret Garden?**

The Secret Garden is a tropical paradise located at the back of the Mirage Hotel exhibiting some of Siegfried and Roy's endangered feline species for the public to see and enjoy before they become extinct in the world. We especially want children to have an opportunity to see these big cats because it is possible that our future generations will never see them, only read about them and see pictures in books. There are white lions, tigers, panthers, and golden tigers. It is open 7 days a week, year around. And, we have an even more magical event coming up as we will be introducing the newest members of our family. The conservation legacy will continue.

### **Have you ever felt overwhelmed by the magnitude of this magical world?**

My life has been a magnificent roller-coaster ride. Thrilling, extraordinary, terrifying, full of twists and turns, and, in spite of it all, beyond anything I could have ever imagined. In all these years, I never thought about where I was going, only that I was so blessed to be where I was at that moment. Yes, I have made sacrifices, but they were not conscious and I regret none of them. I have no awareness of absence in my life, only

gratitude for the extraordinary gifts I have been given because of my relationship with these two profoundly unique men, and for a career on stage with them.

When you are fortunate enough to find people who truly believe in you, you, in turn, must believe in them. Maybe they know something you don't, and they just may take you over the rainbow to a life beyond your wildest dreams.

### **What have you learned from this?**

If I have learned anything, it is that even the most terrifying moments pass. Which is why we must savor the glorious ones, for they too will pass; and if we allow them, will rise again in a new form. Some people dare to dream. Others dare to live their dreams. I do both. And that is a rainbow that never fades.

### **Are you available for speaking engagements?**

Yes, I speak about conservation and preservation.

**I've heard you speak at several international conventions held here in Las Vegas, and your programs were outstanding. Your work to prevent the extinction of big cats and elephants is truly remarkable, not to mention all of the other charities and organizations you support. Thank you for being who you are, doing all that you do, and for sharing your story with us.**

To book Lynette for speaking engagements, contact [lynettechappell@aol.com](mailto:lynettechappell@aol.com) or Turning Point International (702) 896-2228.





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# FORGE MEANING

BY ANDREA CHESTNUT

The concept behind Thanksgiving ceremony celebrations, held with a massive zeal in every nook and corner of the United States is similar to the August Moon Festival in China, Tet Trung Thu in Vietnam, Kwanzaa in Africa, Pongal in India and Chusok in Korea. The list is endless. The only difference in the festivals is date, rituals and customs but the reason behind it remains the same, to thank God for a huge fruitful harvest.

**I**n **China:** The Chinese celebrate August Moon festival on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month of their calendar. Chinese believe that the moon is roundest and brightest on this day. Below the heavenly moonlight, lovers speak out their heart to each other. It is also known as Women's Festival. Conventionally, women are considered similes to warm and compassionate virtues and have the gift of fertility, just like Mother Earth. Unlike the famous pumpkin pie, the Chinese delicacy is moon-cake. Friends and relatives convey their regard to each other by gifting moon-cake.

**In Rome:** The Roman harvest festival known as Cerelia is celebrated in honor of the deity Ceres (Goddess of Corn.) Their festival commences on October 4th and it is a custom to give the first produced fruits, grains and animals to the Goddess. Music, parades and sports extend the glee of the ceremony.

**In Brazil:** The Brazilian Thanksgiving

is quite contemporary compared to American Thanksgiving. When the Ambassador of Brazil visited the United States at the invitation of National Cathedral of Washington, D.C., he was enamored by the concept and brought it to his homeland. In southern Brazil, it is an expression of gratitude to the Almighty for an enormous harvest. Though acclaimed for its Carnival celebrations, Brazil can't be undermined in other festivities.

**In Korea:** Their celebration falls on the 15th of August, which is known as Chu-Sok (meaning "fall Evening.") It begins on the night of the 14th and continues for three days. Koreans make a unique dish for the occasion which consists of rice, beans, sesame seeds and chestnuts called Songpyon. Before having food, the family gathers beneath the moonlight in remembrance of their ancestors and forefathers. The children wear long dresses and dance in a circle in order to please the ancestors and receive their blessing.



**In the United States:** Thanksgiving signals get ready, on your mark, get set... GO! There is so much to get done and sales to hit before all the good stuff is purchased by someone else. Thoughts and words that are shared range from, "Do we have to go there again for Thanksgiving? I am so tired of always being the one to do all work." to "I am so excited to see everyone again. What a wonderful time of the year."

Forging a new meaning out of what has always been is not always welcomed. For some, it is more comfortable to continue in the discord of the familiar rather than to consider change. Scientific research has shown that when offering a change, there is a chemical reaction in the brain that creates a fight or flight experience in some people. Every day, researchers are learning more about the chemicals





that the neurons in the human brain use to communicate with each other. They now know that all feelings and emotions that people experience are produced through chemical changes in the brain. The “rush” of happiness that a person feels at getting a new job, winning the lottery, or reuniting with a loved one occurs through complex chemical processes. So do the emotions of sadness, grief, and stress. When the brain tells the body to do something, such as be calm or run, this also sets a chemical process in motion. These chemical communicators or neurotransmitters are the “words” that make up the language of the brain and the entire nervous system.

The billions of tiny neurons in the brain communicate with each other across small spaces called synapses. When

one neuron is charged into action, it releases its chemical messenger, which then moves across the synapse to the next neuron, where it is accepted by a special receiving area, called a receptor, on the surface of the neuron. The chemical will be accepted only by receptors that recognize it, in a kind of “lock and key” system, that is, certain keys work only in certain locks. Once attached to a receptor site on another neuron, different neurotransmitters either trigger “go” signals that prompt the neuron to pass certain messages on to other cells or produce “stop” signals that prevent certain messages from being forwarded.

So, what chance do we have of forging new meaning for our holidays? In many ways, it can be simple. You make one choice at a time. Meditation can help.

It is a time that belongs only to you. It is that moment in time when you give yourself a chance to decide how you will respond to that off handed comment that your family member might say to you. It is not what happens that is creating your experience. It is how you are thinking about and interrupting with emotion what is happening that sends all those neurotransmitters into scramble mode. Our experiences (our thoughts) are given meaning when accompanied by emotion. Change your mind and change your world. Forge a new meaning for your Holidays and celebrate Thanksgiving in a new way.

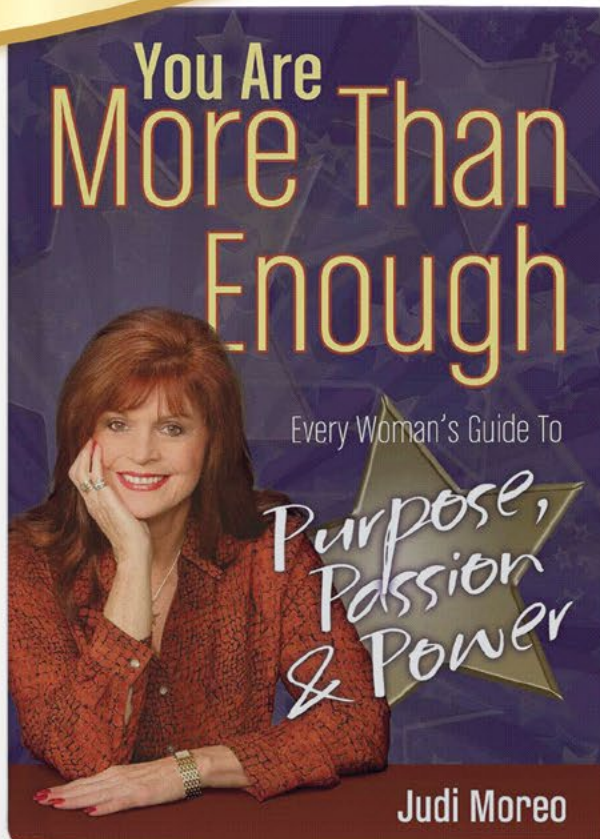


### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrea Chestnut is an inspiring author, speaker and owner of Chestnut Unlimited, a performance improvement company offering training, consulting and coaching. Specializing in small to medium size businesses, helping owners learn and apply the tools to manage what matters most to them. You can contact Andrea at 702-218-1858.



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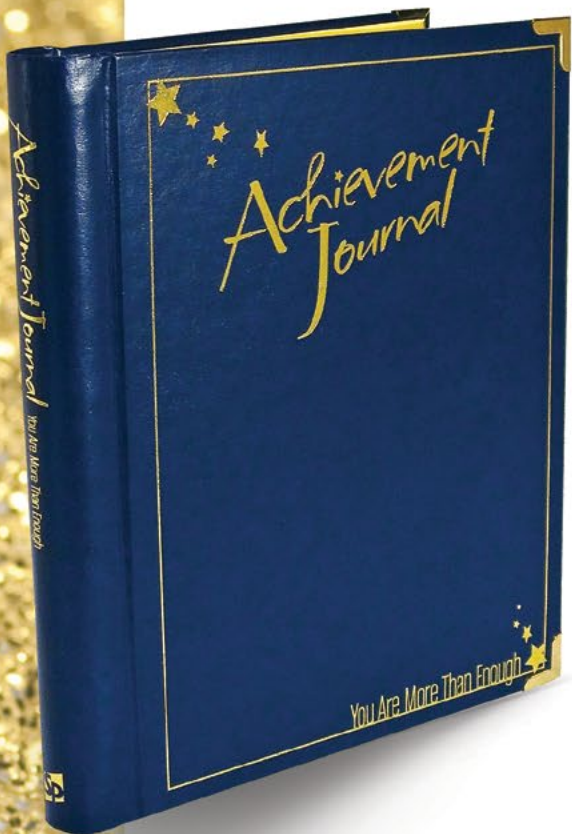
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President, Ventures in Excellence, Inc.



# FAST & FABULOUS HOLIDAY MAKEUP TIPS

BY SHANA KAI



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shana Kai has been in the beauty industry for 32 years. She is a Licensed Master Esthetician, Licensed Instructor, Certified Professional Makeup Artist, Certified Eyelash Extension Instructor, Owner of an accredited cosmetology academy, Melange Boutique and Studio, and Inspired Beauty Salon.

**W**hen it comes to the holidays, let's face it, there never seems to be enough time. Between working and rushing to get ready for the annual parties, it's easy to become overwhelmed. Luckily, there are some fast and easy tricks to making you party-ready in minutes.

### 1. Establish a fresh look in seconds with concealer and powder

Apply a small amount of concealer under eyes and gently blend. Next, with a brush lightly dust powder over your entire face including your neck. These two simple steps brighten up your skin for that "I just did my makeup look."

### 2. Create evening eyes

Eyeliner is a fast and easy way to turn tired eyes into sexy eyes. Start by tracing your top lash lines from the inside to just outside the outer corners of your eyes. For a more dramatic look, you can easily apply a single flare false eyelash in with your outer lashes. This can be done quickly and the results are stunning.

### 3. Color your cheeks pretty

Regardless of the time of year, having color on your cheeks is a sign of health and well being. Even if you are running on empty, a little color on your cheeks will brighten up any face. Apply a small amount of blush to your brush and smile in the mirror. This gives you a quick guideline as to where you should be applying your blush. Bronzer can also be applied if you desire a

more luminous look.

### 4. Dare to be bold when it comes to your lip color

Color on your lips enhances your overall holiday look. Not only does it complete your fast and fabulous makeup application, it can magically whiten up your pearly whites. Bold lips make a statement of confidence and frame your beautiful smile as you make your grand entrance.

With these quick and easy tips, you will not only look beautiful at your events, you will have saved time getting ready which gives you more time to mingle with friends and family making memories that last a lifetime.







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“

Sweet taters,” as we jokingly call them in the South, are a Christmas staple. Icy weather is NOT! My “Sweet Tater Casserole” (see my recipe on the next page) and a cornucopia of other holiday fare was prepped and ready to bake, then, BOOM! A transformer exploded from overload on that frigid Christmas Eve in ‘94.

No lights in the house, no glimmering 10-foot Christmas tree, no heat, no electricity for cooking, no TV to watch Chevy Chase’s “Christmas Vacation” (our quirky holiday tradition.)

My joy imploded. The magic was ruined, I thought, and this momma with hungry teenage boys was depressed with a capital “D.”

Nineteen ninety-four was years before I began my journey of learning to live in the moment. My sons were already there emotionally and wasted no time turning a disaster into the most fun Christmas Eve we’ve ever experienced as a family.

It’s debatable just what William Wadsworth meant in his classic poem “The Rainbow” when he wrote “The Child is Father of the Man.” My high school English teacher’s interpretation was that as we grow older, your child becomes your parent either as a caregiver or teacher. My sons filled both roles that fateful stormy eve.

Whatever one’s interpretation of Wadsworth’s poem, my children certainly became the parental influence that night. They taught me an invaluable lesson—enjoy the moment and make the best of an unfortunate situation.

I’ve been a perfectionist in the past when it comes to holidays—decorating

# THE BOYS WHO SAVED CHRISTMAS: A ‘SWEET TATER’ ENDING

BY BECKY GRAVA DAVIS



multiple trees, prepping tons of food, cleaning the house, attending church on Christmas Eve—all had to be done to my specs. That perfection was to the detriment of my joy and I often played the martyr to the hilt! In fact, I dreaded the holidays because of all the work!

The storm of '94 was a blessing in disguise.

Two teenage boys went into overdrive, assembled a makeshift kitchen using camping gear and the grill on the back deck, stoked the wood-burning stove and rigged it to hold my “tater” casserole, sealed the doors in the kitchen, repositioned the dining table next to the fire, lit every candle in the household emergency kit, and challenged our holiday crew to ante up matches and toothpicks for Penny Poker.

Our family and a few extra houseguests bundled up around the table playing cards, laughing and talking well past midnight while a Christmas turkey slowly roasted on the grill, cornbread dressing baked on the camp stove, and a sweet potato confection bubbled on the wood-burning stove.

Christmas Eve of 1994—a magical night that is forever seared into memory, a Christmas Eve celebration that can never be replicated. But, most of all, an invaluable lesson learned by this momma of two teenage boys—“When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” (Or, should I say, “Make ‘Sweet Tater Casserole!’”) Enjoy!

### Becky's “Sweet Tater” Casserole (Serves 8)

(This healthier version features reduced sugar and fat with non-GMO ingredients and my tips.)

#### Casserole Ingredients:

- 3 – cups baked, peeled, and mashed sweet potatoes (I bake the potatoes for a richer, more concentrated taste.)
- 1/2 – cup reduced sugar mixture:
  - 1/4 cup Xylitol (It's a low-glycemic, natural sweetener. I like NOW brand.)
  - 1/4 cup organic coconut palm sugar (It resembles brown sugar.)
- 1/2 – teaspoon Himalayan sea salt
- 2 – large organic eggs (Vital Farms is one of my favorite brands.)
- 2 – tablespoons organic butter (I use Organic Valley Pasture Butter.)
- 1/2 – cup organic milk (2-percent works great.)
- 1/2 – teaspoon organic vanilla

#### Topping Ingredients (Optional, but so darn good!):

- 3/4 – cup organic coconut palm sugar
- 1/3 – cup organic coconut flour
- 2 – tablespoons organic butter
- 1 – cup coarsely chopped pecans or walnuts

#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix potatoes, sugar mixture, salt, eggs, butter, milk and vanilla in that order.
3. Pour into a lightly buttered 2-quart casserole dish.
4. Combine the coconut sugar and flour; add the butter and mix all together with a fork or use your fingers.
5. Add nuts and mix.
6. Sprinkle topping over the sweet potato mixture.
7. Bake for approximately 35 minutes.




#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Becky Grava Davis is a full-time college professor and pursues her passion for holistic healing by practicing part-time as a certified integrative health coach and Five Tibetan Rites yoga instructor. She is a published author of several health articles for both print and online publications.

Becky may be reached at:  
beckygravadavis@gmail.com





**“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”**

---

**John F. Kennedy**

**I** used to like working on holidays... There was something liberating being at the fire station versus home. Maybe it was the lack of traditions and the lowering of expectations that found me there. Those were usually slower days, especially Thanksgiving and Christmas, and we weren't expected to do our usual workload of non-firefighting duties.

With the burdens lifted, we came to the table with open hearts and minds and broke bread as friends. Sometimes, our families would come, enjoy dinner and visit. The day was quiet, relaxing, and enjoyable.

While I love family times and traditions, I have gotten frustrated with them as well. Because that is "the way we have always done it" doesn't mean it can't look different. For the first few years of my career (when I had to work a lot of holidays) I got a lot of grief from family that I didn't make it to this or that. While they understood the job responsibility and obligations, they weren't happy. It took a few years for us to carve out that it wasn't the 'holiday' that made the day special, it was the coming together and celebrating, and, that didn't have to occur on any particular day.

For the first few years of my kids' lives, they didn't know when Christmas day was, so we would celebrate it on the day we had off closest to the actual day. As they got into school and became more aware of dates, they found this really worked to their advantage.

They did Christmas at home and then the real Christmas with their grandparents. So, they got two days of Christmas! My point is we adapted and our tradition became what worked for us and not what was expected.

# RETHINKING HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

BY GINA GELDBACH-HALL







Over the years, we have had fun with it and now my mate and I celebrate birthday month because one day isn't nearly enough! We make the holiday work for us instead of bending to the pressure of tradition.

Don't get down on yourself if the holidays don't look like they 'should.' Sometimes new tradition allows for a completely new experience. Multiple Christmas', Thanksgivings, etc. doesn't have to be a problem. In fact, why not spread out the joy?

The true tragedy of the season is when it's spent in drama because you couldn't be in two places at one time. Rethink your traditions and update them to fit your lifestyle and job. Maybe it's Christmas in January because you can't get off work in December. Have a turkey dinner in October and head out for

dessert trick-or-treating. It's not the day that is special... You, and the people you love around you are the reason for any season and no day can define that for you.

Start a new tradition that works for everyone and take the drama out of holidays once and for all!

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gina Geldbach-Hall is an inspirational speaker, author, life coach, and facilitator with 25 years of emergency services experience from EMT and firefighter to battalion chief. Her book, *Firegal... Rising from the Ashes*, is available on Amazon.

She continues to inspire leadership and service helping others to ignite the flame of empowerment within their lives and work. She is available for coaching and speaking engagements. Visit her website at [FiregalWisdom.com](http://FiregalWisdom.com) for more information.





# HOLIDAY DINNER

BY SUZANNE HAWLEY

T'was a holiday evening and all through the house  
No persons were stirring, not even my spouse.  
The turkey was stuffed. The pies were all done.  
Deviled eggs sat on platters, tasty rows one by one.

The children were cuddling all sweet in their beds  
While visions of holidays danced in their heads.  
Daddy in his jammies and I in my gown,  
I looked out the window at this quiet little town.

When all of a sudden there arose such a clatter.  
I turned from the window to see what was the matter.  
I rushed to the kitchen and flipped on the light,  
And there 'fore my eyes was a terrible sight.

The moon shone through curtains to my new kitchen floor,  
I'd cleaned up the bedrooms, the bathrooms and more.  
But what to my tired old eyes should appear,  
But that dumb Siamese cat that my daughter held dear.

With his little blue collar just matching his eyes  
And his feet in my cobbler and fresh apple pies.  
More rapid than rabbits that Siamese cat ran  
Knocking over my China and brand new glass pan.



“Now darn it you stupid, worthless old cat,  
I’ve had it with you. Take this and take that!  
Get off of that counter or you’ll go to the pound!”  
And with that, the dumb cat, jumped down to the ground.

As sure as the rain in the springtime will fall,  
I knew I was going to sit down and bawl.  
Then up the long stairway that Siamese cat leapt  
While pieces of cobbler and apple pie dripped.

And then in an instant I knew what to do  
And around that disaster filled kitchen I flew.  
I picked up the broom that I’d swung at the cat  
And started to clean up all this and all that.

I picked up the pieces of China now gone  
And firmly decided “This show must go on!”  
I bundled it up in a big garbage sack  
And placed it in the trash out at the back.

My eyes how they burned from the crying I’d done,  
My cheeks were all spotted, my nose started to run.  
My sad little mouth was drawn down in a frown  
Tonight, I’m the unluckiest woman in town.

So, gritting my teeth and finishing the floor  
I dumped bits of china and glasses galore  
I looked at the pies and tried hard not to cry  
When I had cleaned all the messes I heard myself sigh.

I am capable of fixing this cat made disarray,  
I won’t let him ruin this great holiday.  
So I went through the kitchen to see what remained,  
A smile crossed my face and the anger, it waned.

I spoke not a word, just went straight to the pantry  
After all, we’re not kings; hey, we’re not even gentry.  
I opened a box and picked up the pace,  
Nobody would mind, at least not at my place.

The pie, they would eat, even with print of cat feet  
And my great home cooked dinners, they just can’t be beat.  
So, due to our Siamese cat and his caper  
Holiday dinner this year will be eaten on paper!

# GIVING THE GIFT OF LOVE

BY SHANA KAI

**It's the most wonderful time of the year according to Bing Crosby. But is it really? Or have you had moments when all of the excitement and preparation have whisked you away into a whirlwind of what I call the Christmas crazies.**

**S**o often, by the time Christmas actually gets here we're so exhausted we can hardly enjoy all the wonderful festivities.

If you don't believe me, just look back at some of your past Christmas photos and you'll find the one person who experienced the Christmas crazies. She's the one with the bags under her eyes, disheveled hair and has that look of concern as to whether or not she turned the oven off after removing her beautiful clove infused ham..

If you have ever been in charge of any event during the holidays, there's a part of this you can relate to. Over the years of party planning and celebrating the holidays, there are several things that I've come to realize. When it really comes right down to it, my friends and family don't remember much about the daunting details.

They don't remember the year that I spent 12 long hours going up and down ladders decorating two very large fluffy Christmas trees. Each tree had its own unique theme. They looked like they belonged in New York's Rockefeller Center. Ok, maybe not quite New York status, but even to this day they have been my most beautiful trees. They also don't remember the time I raced

all over town like a crazy woman to four different grocery stores frantically trying to find a particular ingredient so I could create a new gourmet dish for our Christmas dinner. After failing at Mission Impossible, I relented to simply going back to the old stand-by recipe we had been having for years.

There was also a time when I was one of those moms who spent hours late in the night writing out our family Christmas letter. Each year I stuffed over 150 envelopes with the cards, darling photos and my creative letter. After I put my four children to bed, did the prep work for their next day's homeschooling assignments, confirmed my appointments with clients for that next day and made sure my house was tidy, I sat down and began writing the masterpiece letter. It contained all the wonderful accomplishments of my darling children. It was as if each one was a prodigy in his or her own right. I was the doting mother who wanted all to know how crazy in love I was with my four earth angels. As I'm sitting here remembering these moments, I can only recall one particular story out of the many letters written.

My son, Dalton, was about five years old at the time and loved playing with his little wooden pop gun. One day

after playing in the back yard, he came running in all out of breath proclaiming that he had just shot a really big buffalo. He proceeded to tell me that he had made a tepee out of the buffalo skin and ate all the chicken from the buffalo. Yes, he said chicken. I even confirmed by asking him "Are you sure it was chicken?" to which he replied, "Yes mom, chicken!" I quickly turned my head so he wouldn't see me giggle because he was so excited and proud to tell me his big hunting story. Needless to say, I shared this whale of a tale as part of his accolades in our Christmas letter that year. At the moment, I can't recall any other stories specifically and I wrote them! Through the years, there were many written in the wee hours of the night and somewhere in my closet, there is a box with copies of these forgotten letters.

I've come to realize that when the holidays roll around each year, I have a choice to make. I can either be the frazzled woman in the photo that is barely able to enjoy the beauty of the holiday or the woman who makes a conscious decision to embrace a more simple approach. What I mean by this is... your friends and family are not going to remember anything about the holidays other than how you made them feel. I'll say that again. What people will remember is how you made them feel.

Ask yourself these questions. Was I there to greet them at the door with a big smile expressing how excited I was to have them with us? How much laughter did we share together? What stories did we tell around the dinner table recalling past memories? Have I told them lately how grateful I am that they are in my life?

Be specific when sharing how you feel about someone remembering that each





person brings something different and special into your life. People everywhere are searching for validation, acceptance, and love.

Why don't you choose this holiday season to invest your time into the things that matter the most. It's not the elaborate Rockefeller Christmas tree gracing the entrance to your home or the gourmet pheasant chestnut encrusted dish you almost killed yourselves and anyone else that got in the way of you and your grocery cart for. Nor, is it the masterpiece letter that even you years later can't recall. It's the emotions evoked by the love expressed to all with whom we are blessed to share the holidays. It's the gut wrenching laughter shared that has you searching for a tissue because you've laughed until you've cried. It is in those tender moments when you simply look around

the dinner table and realize that you have been blessed beyond measure with such precious family and friends.

Most of all, you have slowed down long enough to be present in the moment and enjoy the fruits of your labor. In the end, your friends and family will not remember all the material gifts you gave them. More than likely years down the road, those gifts will have been sold at a yard sale or carted off to the local goodwill and completely forgotten about. What they will forever remember is how you made them feel while in your presence.

Make the choice this holiday season to shower the people you love with love. Thank you, James Taylor, for these powerful words to live by!



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shana Kai is an Inspirational speaker, solo artist, certified Life Coach and the author of *Jewels for the Journey*. As a former Mrs. California, Shana continues to encourage people to dream BIG and recognize that we each have within us the potential to accomplish amazing things.

Contact Shana at [caqueensg@gmail.com](mailto:caqueensg@gmail.com) or call 509-741-0670



# THE DRAWING

BY CARLEEN ELLIOTT



he task of buying or making gifts every year for everyone in our large family became overwhelming, so 35 years ago, we all agreed that after opening presents each year, the adults would each draw one name on Christmas Day for who they would give a gift the following year

The rules were: No. 1, the name each person drew was not to be revealed until the following Christmas; No. 2, the gift had to be handmade; No. 3, a non-

family member has to marry into the family to be in "The Drawing," and No. 4; the earliest a child may choose to be in the adult drawing is age 16.

The yearly routine which began that first year and continues today is to start with the oldest person. That person guesses who drew his or her name. If the guess isn't correct, he or she has to give a dime to the person whose name was guessed. Then, the next person to the left does the same and this continues until someone makes the correct guess of who has his or her

name. When a correct guess is made, the person who made the gift brings it to the center table of the room for the recipient to open while we all watch and take pictures. This procedure continues around the circle until everyone has made the correct guess-- costing several dimes for some and few or occasionally none for others.

Making the gift and deciding what to make is always quite a task for each of us and often very challenging depending on whose name we have drawn. For some people, it is easier to think what



to make than for others. We all have the whole year to get a gift made. However, most procrastinate until two or three weeks before Christmas, some until the day before and others finish up Christmas Day. We have all surprised ourselves with the gifts we have made as well as been amazed at many of the gifts others have made.

We look forward to the fun of participating in this tradition every year, even with the stress and anxiety we put on ourselves deciding what we're going to make. The younger children look forward to when they are old enough to be in "The Drawing".

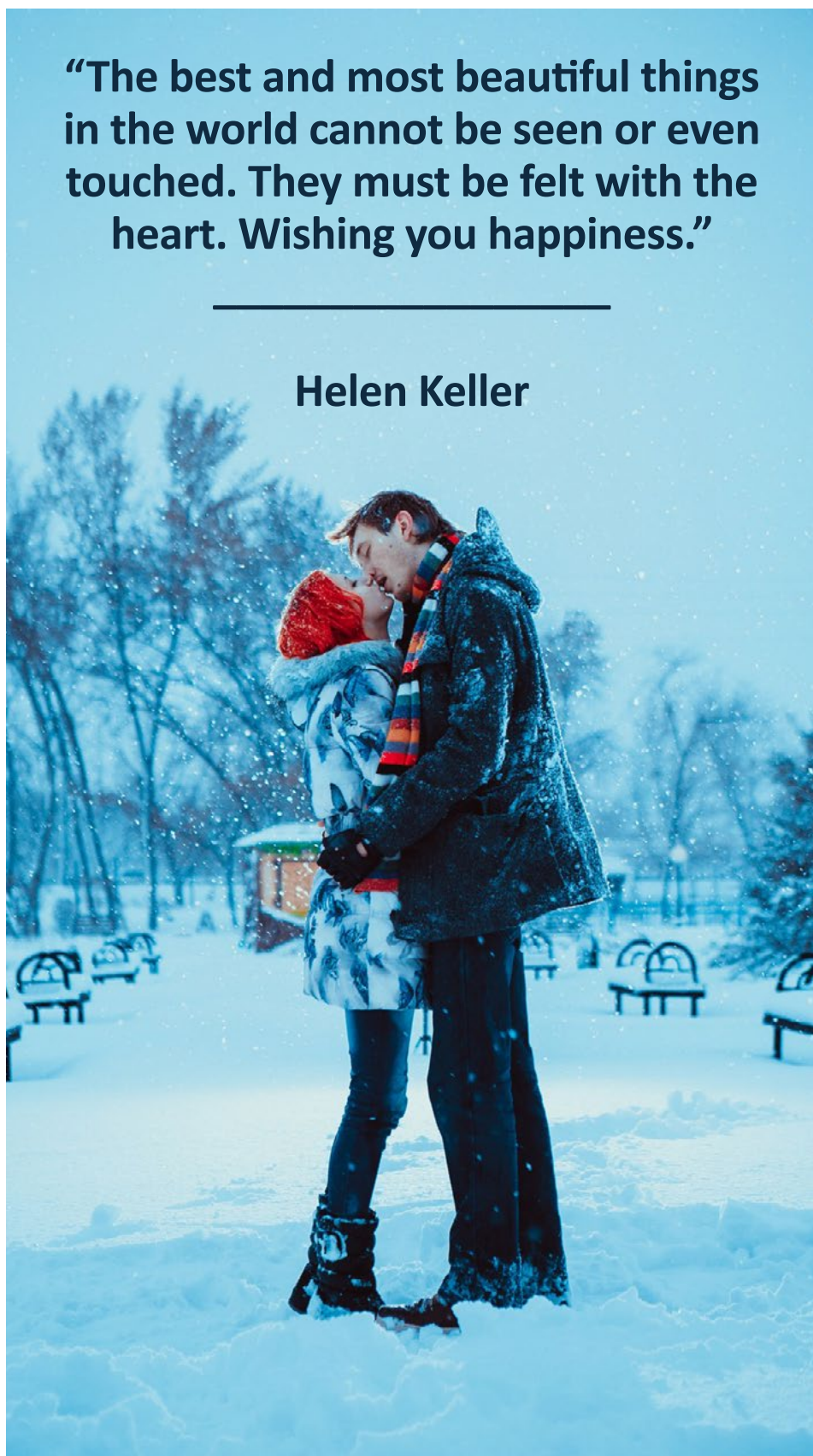


### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carleen Elliott is a retired accounting assistant, mother of four grown children and grandmother to five. She fulfilled an accomplishment at age 63 getting her AA degree from Wenatchee Valley College. Carleen volunteers, works in her yard, likes to thrift store shop, enjoys her grandchildren and road trips. She is currently working on writing her memoirs for her children, grandchildren and extended family. Carleen's home is in Wenatchee, WA.

**“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart. Wishing you happiness.”**

**Helen Keller**



# THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

BY DELORES RAMSEY MCLAUGHLIN

Imagine, waking up on Christmas morning eager, excited and anticipating opening the gifts under the Christmas tree with your children. As you lay in bed, the two children run into your bedroom jumping up and down in front of you asking, "Is it time, Mommy? Can I open my gifts now?" Before the word "yes" is out of your mouth, the children immediately begin tearing open the red, green, blue, silver and gold wrapping paper with boxes of presents. You are delighted about the satisfaction that each present brings to your children.

On the other hand, imagine, being the parents of a baby born in a stable. His only shelter is that stable, his cradle was a stall, his bed a manger made out of hay. No Christmas tree, just stars from the beautiful sky was the light for them to see. Mary and Joseph with love in their eyes gazed upon the baby, the heavenly child called Jesus Christ.

What is sharing and how does it change the spirit of Christmas? Most people believe that sharing gifts is the spirit of Christmas; however sharing your time and self to benefit the lives of others is the better meaning. Both stories above exemplify leaving a legacy of sharing love for the benefit of others. What stands out most is a legacy that can't be held, only felt.

I will never forget James and the legacy for sharing that he left. The day I met

James, he was my patient in the hospital. I thought James was my healthiest patient but in reality he was the sickest. James had been told by the cardiologist that he only had six months to live. Even though his prognosis was undesirable, he gave the most of himself to others. James would walk down the hospital hall and when he saw other patients having a difficult time walking or not feeling well, he would say to them, "You can do it. Hang in there. Look at me." James

would conclude his remarks by saying, "I am a dying man and I am enjoying what time I have left." James would have a twinkle in his eyes and release a hearty laugh. Right away James and I had a great connection and we became more than patient and nurse. We became friends.

James said, "No one knows the pain I feel unless they have experienced it. I have no fear in dying. The good Lord knows what he is doing."

I learned several lessons by being a friend of James. The first lesson I learned was there is a spirit of Christmas. Receiving what a person is willing to share through loving you is worth more than any tangible gift. Second,





laugh and enjoy life regardless of your circumstances. Third, be honest about what you are feeling and don't be afraid to share those feelings. The sharing is a gift to those who listen. Lastly, leave a legacy of how to love others omitting what you can receive in return.

James called me on Christmas day and sung me a message over the phone. It went like this:

*I wanna wish you a Merry Christmas  
I wanna wish you a Merry Christmas  
I wanna wish you a Merry Christmas  
From the bottom of my heart!!!*

As I listened, I realized how hard it was for him to breathe and it was even more difficult for him to sing. James died in his recliner chair later that evening. He left his spirit and legacy of Christmas in my heart forever by giving of himself to benefit others.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Delores Ramsey McLaughlin is a motivational speaker who inspires audiences from corporate to faith based. She has a gift of making the most serious topics become less intimidating and more accepting. The founder & executive director of "All Out Communication" and "Freedom-N-Christ Ministries," she teaches effective leadership skills, conflict management, strategies to successfully pursue your dreams and how to bridge gaps between cultural and religious differences.

Delores may be contacted at: Post Box 8205, Phoenix, Arizona 85066 or [nthaeyez@cox.net](mailto:nthaeyez@cox.net)



**“Every piece of the universe,  
even the tiniest little snow  
crystal, matters somehow. I  
have a place in the pattern,  
and so do you.”**

---

**T.A. Barron**







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Marlene Livingston Curry is available for lectures and workshops based on her book *Resilient Survivor*.

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# THE CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS TREE

BY RIDGELY GOLDSBORO

I

magine life as a tiny pine.

Your filament roots push tenderly into the soil. You ease out of your core, seek the moisture and nutrients needed to survive, on instinct, like the baby seeks the mother's breast. Slowly, gingerly, despite the rocks, worms and other varmits, you take hold. The trunk forms. The stock strengthens. You begin to burst forth, greet the sun, reach for more.

The foliage scratches the air. You drink in the carbon dioxide, grow to where you sway in the breeze, watch the silly humans do their dance, wonder about your fate. Will you outlast them? Will they chop you down? Will you become a flitting, seasonal fancy that disappears at the turn of a new leaf—not yours, of course—and returns so quickly to the compost heap or the trash dump or the once-a-year bonfire that gives an extra special piney scent to the roasting marshmallows?

Wait. You're not the perfect pine. You don't fit. Your branches sway out like palm trees that fall lazily in quiet semi-circles, no rigid order, no structure on which to hang popcorn or icicles or balls that can't fall without splintering the floor...

You're a Norfolk pine, a different pine, a slow-growing, slug-like, when-I-





get-around-to-it-pine that sprouts a branch haphazardly, without direction, getting off track and top heavy in this direction or that. What is YOUR fate? Ahhh. The human folly kicks in. Why do we need a Christmas tree when we have you? Who cares about what the kids say? Why should we listen when they mock you, our loyal, long-term friend? Do they really think we like the sap on our fingers and the needles under our nails—the stand that never works and the ugly apron that serves no purpose other than to hide our poor workmanship in holding your recently hacked brother upright?

Welcome to a second chance, a space to be all that you can be and then more, the tinsel that dresses you, the fairies and leprechauns that play among

your droopiest limbs, the mandatory decorations from generations gone by, the favorite ornaments—an entire pageantry that you now star in as the center piece.

Wait again. What about the mockery from the younglings? *“This is not right. We need a real tree. You can’t do this. That is plain wrong.”*

Ahh again, to the benefits of old age and treachery, victors over youth and vitality, at least on an odd December moon...if they only knew that we don’t want to go to a slapped together temporary dirt parking lot, haggle over price, spend our hard-earned shekels for a short-lived, got-to-soon-part-with needle spreader that makes an endless mess and causes the cat to

vomit in the corner...

What about the noble Norfolk pine, our friend, the daily partner that greets the day at our side, yearning for the same sun rays that make us smile? What if we just called you the Charlie Brown tree, an identity indisputable with your droopy, unorganized branches and star that can’t stand straight, barely together, like Lucy pulling the football as Charlie tries to kick?

Live a little longer, another year, another laugh from the old folk who dodged the annual tree-on-the-car-roof and smiled over eggnog.

Welcome back again this year, Charlie Brown.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

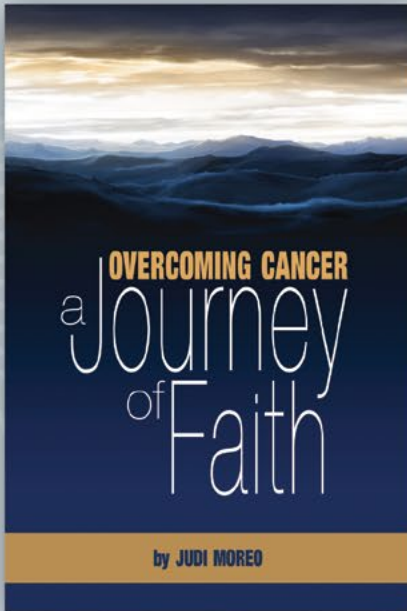
Ridgely Goldsborough, a.k.a. The WHY Guy, is the author of *The WHY Engine* and co-founder of the WHY Movement. You can learn more about it at [www.KnowYourWHY.com](http://www.KnowYourWHY.com)

Ridgely may be contacted via [ridgelyg@gmail.com](mailto:ridgelyg@gmail.com)  
(850) 291-6575



Award-winning author Judi Moreo knows what it is to travel the journey of cancer and shares that experience in this book.

## Overcoming Cancer: A Journey of Faith



Through her personal story, inspiring quotes and practical suggestions, Judi shows us that cancer and fear are messages to us to make lifestyle changes. This supportive book can help the newly diagnosed cancer patient ask better questions, understand there are alternative and integrated treatments that can work and, most of all, maintain hope.

Even though traveling the cancer road was a rocky and difficult journey, it was also rewarding. The path through cancer requires enormous discipline, work, and change; yet it is filled with excitement, experiences and discoveries that can bring us to a new and better place if we are open to possibilities and focus forward.

"This book may help save your life or that of a loved one. Judi Moreo "gets it." She understands that the question is not "what kind of treatment do I undergo?" but rather "how do I heal myself?" Her personal experience with cancer taught her to recognize that recovery from chronic illness is often a recovery from an unhealthy life in many respects. With humor, grace and courage, she addresses the physical as well as the mental, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs for recovery in an easily accessible, practical way. Whether you are looking for help to reclaim your health from cancer or any other illness, let Judi be your guide."

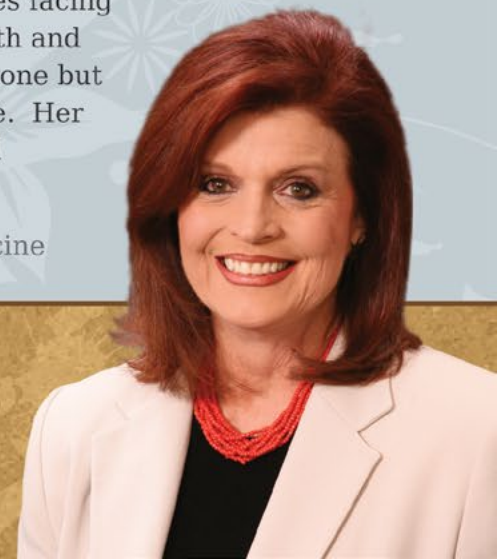
- James Sensnig, N.D., Founding President, American Association of Naturopathic Physicians; Former Dean, National College of Naturopathic Medicine; Founding Dean, College of Naturopathic Medicine, University of Bridgeport, Connecticut; cancer survivor

"This book is a must for those facing cancer and for those who have loved ones facing this fear-filled disease. Judi writes from the heart -- telling her story with truth and emotion. She highlights her course of action, not forcing her opinions on anyone but truly providing options to conventional cancer care that are sound and doable. Her recommendations for nutrition therapy and exercise are quite impressive and fact-based."

- Julie Freeman, MA, RD, LD, Licensed Nutritionist, Integrative Medicine

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# A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHRISTMAS LIST

BY LAUREN MCLAUGHLIN

**I** listened with great interest as my student told the class how she changed from a grumpy, reluctant Christmas shopper, to an eager, happy one:

“About five years ago, as a favor to my husband, I was wrapping a Christmas present for someone in his office. To be entirely truthful, I didn’t really like the person who was receiving the present. I had shopped for it only because he asked me and as I began to cut the paper, my thoughts went to absolutely every reason why I didn’t like this woman; how much I resented the time he spent with her on the job, why her attitude toward me wasn’t as respectful as I thought it should be, and some bits of gossip I’d heard about her in the past. As my stream of negative thoughts picked up speed, I realized I was almost slamming the bow on the top of the package.

Whoa, Donner and Blitzen! I felt literally breathless and appalled at my own behavior. What had I wrapped inside this package along with the gift in the form of negative energy? If she knew what I knew about what I had been thinking, she’d be afraid to open it.

I never had enjoyed Christmas shopping, even for people I liked. I never knew

what to buy or how much money to spend or why I even did it, except that people who don’t give Christmas presents are considered Grinchy, or Scroogy or cheap, aren’t they? I didn’t want to be any of those things, so I had dutifully shopped for as long as I could remember.

But this year, given my negative feelings as I wrapped my first Christmas gift of the season, I decided to try a different approach. I thought, just maybe, if I changed my attitude about Christmas shopping, the whole Christmas experience would improve.

The first thing I did was make a list of the people I planned to shop for, but instead of a linear list, I put each name on the top of its own page in a small notebook. Then I took time to really think about the person for whom I would be shopping.

And finally, I asked myself some important questions:

- Why is this person even on my shopping list? Choice or duty?
- What are some things they like to do? Do they have hobbies, or collections, or passions?
- Do we share some happy past experiences that I might build on?
- How have I decided how much money to spend on them, and why?

- And maybe, most importantly, What good thoughts can I hold about them as I shop for them, as I wrap their packages, and as I present their gifts?

The answers were revealing. I discovered I had people on my gift list that I didn’t like and really didn’t want to shop for – so I stopped doing it. I took them off my shopping list. When a gift isn’t given freely, it becomes a tax.

And the amount of money I had decided to spend was a big revelation also, because the people I was most fond of were clearly not going to be impressed by a big price tag. They would rather I gave them a gift that started from a place in my heart.

Finally, if I couldn’t really hold a pretty solid number of positive thoughts about someone, I took him or her off my list as well. Shockingly, my list shrunk from about 30 to 14, and instead of dreading the job of Christmas shopping, I began to really look forward to it.

I made some calls and asked some questions. I even had lunch with a few of the people on my list to make sure I was in tune with their present life’s interests. Bright ideas about what they might like began to come to me quite easily. But the most fun, was sharing

what I was learning with my children as we discussed their Christmas shopping lists.

My son's teacher, he said, could never find her glasses. She even offered a reward for any student who figured out a way that she could keep track of them. So I Googled eye-glass accessories and we found a charming frog for her desk, designed so that her glasses perched right on its nose. My son has now moved ahead three grades, but whenever I meet her in the hall, she mentions her glasses-holding frog every time.

My daughter said that her Grandfather (my Father) complained that his neck hurt when he watched television. We found a buckwheat-filled neck pillow that made Grampa's TV watching time a lot more enjoyable.

For their Aunt Connie, they told me that when she took them to the art museum, she saw a necklace she really loved in the gift shop. She asked them if by chance they knew how to get word to Santa that

she'd love to find it under her Christmas tree on Sunday morning. That sounded like a real hint to me. I checked it out – a bit pricey for me alone – but when I told our other sister about it, she agreed it would be the perfect Christmas present from both of us. Connie put it on that Christmas day and has never taken it off since."

That's how my student ended her little talk originally, but her classmates followed up with lots of questions, including one asking if she was still shopping that way today.

"Now, I do research all year long", she said "I carry my notebook with me to make note of what my friends and family members are doing that could lead to gift-giving later on. And the best suggestion I can make to you, if you want to try changing the way you shop, is that whenever you are in doubt about what to buy just talk it over with the children in the family. They simply have the best ideas, ever."



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lauren McLaughlin is a speaker, teacher, writer, retreat facilitator and author of "Go to ELF! – Connecting With The Eternal Life Force," a book that offers the reader an opportunity for both entertainment and self-realization. An ordained Unity minister, Lauren lives in Clearwater, FL with her husband John and their cat, ELFER.





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# SANTA APPROVED METHODS TO ELIMINATE HOLIDAY STRESS

BY AMBER DE LA GARZA

**D**o you cringe each year when you first hear holiday music playing in the department stores? It can be like a sparkly red and green flashing alarm going off in your brain saying Oh no! It's that time again – *time for holiday parties, shopping for presents, house guests, traveling, decorating...*

The holiday season is supposed to bring cheer and happiness but for many people, it is synonymous with stress and chaos. With the deadline of Christmahanukwanzakah quickly

approaching, the to-dos multiply exponentially and might leave you fearing you will never have enough time to get everything done. It's no wonder already busy people have come to dread the scent of pine cones and chiming of sleigh bells.

Stress and chaos often come from the feeling of having too much to do combined with the uncertainty of getting it all done in time. Can you relate? I used to have an ideal of what activities our family needed to do, what the house needed to look like, how large our holiday meal needed to be,

and how perfect the gifts for our family and friends needed to be. What I never planned on, was how high my stress would be! I finally determined the root cause of my stress, eliminated it, and no longer dread the holidays. Sound nice?

All I had to do was stop using the word that instantaneously put the weight of the universe on my shoulders so freely. *Need. Needing* to complete all of those projects meant putting an incredible amount of unnecessary pressure on myself. I didn't need to do all those tasks, just the ones of utmost priority. I



rarely use the word “need” during the holiday season now and instead use the phrase “would like” more often, allowing ample wiggle room. Stress eliminated.

Last year during the holiday season I was working on a few demanding projects in my business so I decided to cut back and only do the things I “would like” to do. I made candy every December for as long as I can remember but last year I decided not to. Shopping for the ingredients, spending days making the sugary goodness, cleaning up the mess, and delivering the candy all over town, again for days, was just too time consuming and not a high priority so I eliminated *Candy* from my task list last year and it felt so good!

The holidays bring many, many more tasks to your daily lives. The increased workload with unsurpassable deadlines is not unlike many large projects at work and in your business. Here are two tips you can implement today to make the holiday season or any sizable work project less stressful and chaotic.

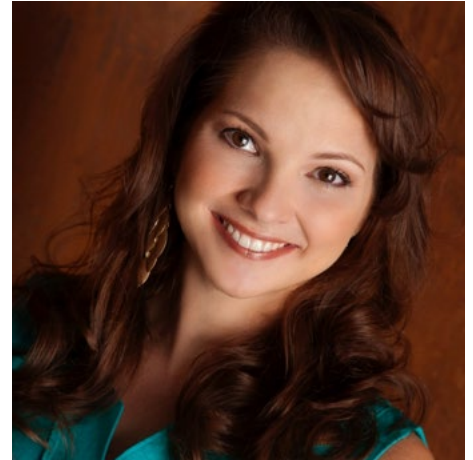
### 1. Make a List and Check it Twice

Santa Claus creates a list every year, for naughty and nice children, and so should you. Creating a task list forces you to get all of your to-dos out of your head and enables you to decide which tasks need to be done. The others can wait. Take a complete inventory of your tasks by creating a list, prioritizing tasks, and realistically planning when you are going to complete them. I recommend making two columns as Santa Claus does, but instead of *Naughty* and *Nice*, title them *Need To Do* and *Would Like To Do*.

### 2. Eliminate

Delete or Delegate! As the story goes, Santa has three main priorities – making a list of naughty and nice children, checking it twice, and delivering gifts (or coal) to children. Everything else is delegated to the elves! This is an important lesson we can all learn. Deleting items from your own task list that can easily be completed by someone else is essential to freeing up time to spend on your most important activities. This reigns true in your personal and professional life. Productivity is not about getting it all done! It’s about investing your best time into your best activities so that you can achieve your goals and vision of success.

Whether you are preparing for the holidays or a project at work, making a task list, prioritizing, delegating, and eliminating are strategies that work! Focusing on only what you need to do will result in less stress, less chaos, and a holiday season you can actually enjoy with your loved ones. If you would like more time maximizing tips, visit [TimeMaximizers.com](http://TimeMaximizers.com) for a free Time Maximizer Resource.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amber De La Garza, is The Productivity Specialist. With her guidance, professionals, business owners, and corporations maximize their success by improving their productivity and efficiency. Amber provides her clients with precisely what they need – the best in personalized training and consulting – to tackle their challenges with productivity, meet their maximum potential, and accomplish their goals. Join our Productivity Community to access Productivity Resources that will maximize your success! => [TimeMaximizers.com](http://TimeMaximizers.com)

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# THE ART OF THE MANTLE

BY S. L. Gore



Over the years I've developed a creative expression I call mantle art. It started with a cute little fake fireplace I bought for two hundred dollars. No sooner was it set up than I fell in

love with the possibilities for holiday decorations—and not just Christmas. I use every excuse to decorate and celebrate. Be it Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year, Easter, St Patrick's Day, 4th of July, or Halloween. I dig out treasures from my decorating chest. Gathered



over the years, no object is expensive, but all are precious.

Any given year, the theme of the Christmas mantle is based entirely on my mood December 1st. I might have a taste for the dramatic, as shown in the photo below of Golden Mantle. Last year, I craved peace and created White Christmas (see photo at left). Confession: I've set up and then taken down a complete tableau to replace it with another, just because the ambience didn't suit.



Regardless of the mood, candles play an essential part. Years of living in Copenhagen trained me well in the ultimate atmospheric magic of candlelight. Depending on whether my theme is warm or cool, I choose brass or crystal candlesticks. Varying heights and shapes create visual interest. Buy your candles at IKEA, if you can. Otherwise, look for Danish or German stearin wax for best non-drip, long-burning. Candle wreaths always add a certain pizzazz; I have dozens. Some are gold, some holly, some antique fruits. If you're careful



and don't let them catch fire while you enjoy a nightcap of port wine, they'll last forever.

Along with lit candles, mini-lights strung around the painting and woven among the angels and glitz are what give the fireplace that special nighttime glamour. I went into a panic last year because my favorite lights burned out and all I could find in the stores was LED. The harsh, cold glare just doesn't mix with candlelight. Amazon.com saved my life with marvelous warm white Italian micro LEDs set on thin wires that twist into any shape, virtually disappearing. Compare the difference in the photos of Golden Mantle and White Christmas.



My all-time holiday go-to is a green glazed Mikasa bowl filled with white flowers. White works for me because I start at Thanksgiving and keep them right through January. *Note: Red is banished from my house the day after Christmas and not allowed back until Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day!* You can see the photo above of an arrangement with white moth orchid, some waxy green grapes (symbolizing the plentitude of Thanksgiving) accented with a twist of

gold Christmas "holly" and a few sprigs of gold curlicues. The following year, the green bowl became the centerpiece of the White Christmas mantle.

Between Christmas and New Year, I remove the garish Christmas garnish and go for a fanciful New Year's Eve look that retains elements of the Yuletide season (see photo below).

E-cards incorporating my mantle—or dining table, or dressed-up statue—immortalize each holiday and allow me to share on social media this crazy passion I have with over-the-top holiday decoration. Visit my blog [slgore.com](http://slgore.com) for more ideas.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born with wanderlust, forever living in a fantasy world, S.L. Gore escaped the prairies of Kansas and followed the yellow brick road on an odyssey that took her around the world. Love of history, languages, mysticism, food, shopping and romance helped create The Red Mirror Book Series. Her *Sex and the Zen of Shopping* is a self-help book for the spirit and how-to for the practical. Joyously married, she and her Viking husband live in Coastal California.

GoreNovels@gmail.com  
www.SLGore.com





CHOICES MAGAZINE  
AUTUMN ISSUE 2015

# A FINAL NOTE FROM JUDI MOREO

We have come to the end of another year. Did you live it with intention? Did you achieve what you wanted to achieve? Did you go where you wanted to go? If not, why not? It is time to re-evaluate. Time is going by. A new year is about to begin. Will next year be the same as this year or can you make it better by living with intention and setting your goals? Are there any pending crises that you can identify and avert?

Rather than waiting, dreaming, and accepting whatever comes your way, get busy. Make a plan. Determine your starting point and then set a destination. Where do you want to be by the end of next year? Explore the possibilities and imagine you are

already there. Focus on the positive aspects of your life--- what is good now and how you can make it even better? Once you have determined what you want, say affirmations daily. Affirmations are powerful, positive statements that you would like to believe about yourself. They are commands you give to your subconscious mind to remind yourself of who you really are and who you are becoming. Your subconscious will work only in the direction you point it. Therefore, you must point it in the direction you want to go.

It is important for you to identify the benefits you will derive from attaining your goals. Make a list of the benefits. Focus on your rewards. Why should

you be motivated? What positive consequences will you enjoy when you put your plan in motion? Visualize the rewards clearly and vividly. Make it a clear picture that you will do almost anything to be a part of. Feel how you are going to feel when it all comes true. You can create the life you want to live. The ability to control your experiences and have them result in happiness, prosperity, and success lies in your own mind and in the choices you make.

Choose wisely! And, have a wonderful New Year.

You are more than enough,

*Judi*