

The spirit of giving is the true spirit of the holiday

By BRYAN GOLDEN
Special to the Herald

Among other things, the holidays are a time of giving and receiving gifts. The question most often asked of people is, "what did you get?" Much less frequently asked is, "what did you give?" Invariably, the inquiries concern material gifts. Purchasing a gift can certainly be thoughtful and a wonderful gesture, especially when it's backed up by your actions.

However, the most valuable presents are those that aren't sold in stores. When you give your love, your time, help someone in need, aid another in solving a problem or overcoming an obstacle, you give something priceless.

The true spirit of the holidays is giving. When you give, you receive. You can get anything in life you want by helping others get what they want. But only if you

give without expecting anything in return. The impact of giving isn't limited to just the holiday season, it's something that has value all year.

The power of giving is often underestimated. When you give unconditionally, you don't just impact the recipient; you start a chain reaction. By brightening the life of one person you also affect all those who they then touch.

No gesture of giving or kindness is too small. Holding the door open at a store, helping someone carry groceries to their car, letting another car in front of you, saying please and thank you, and saying hello to a stranger you pass on the sidewalk, are some of the many things you can do daily.

For family and friends, your time is one of the most precious gifts you can offer. Are you there for others when they need you? Do you offer

a hand without being asked? Do you help out when asked?

Too often, people get caught up in their own desires, thus losing sight of the needs of others. A person who tries to get through life by looking out for himself or herself first is invariably frustrated. Often this person views life as a competition to determine who can accumulate more.

On the other hand, those who are concerned for the wellbeing of others are happier, more content, and more satisfied. By giving without expecting, they in turn receive the things they need.

Giving is a simple concept that works every time it is applied. There will be people who don't appreciate what you do, but it doesn't matter. You are giving without anticipating anything in return. Besides, there will be many more who are thankful for your efforts.

If you don't treat others well, buying a gift won't compensate for your behavior. The recipient might like what you give them but it won't make up for your actions. You can't bribe someone to forgive the way you treat them with a present.

The best gift you can receive is the joy of making someone else happy. Being unselfish is a wonderful way to live. When you give with no ulterior motives, your actions are seen as genuine. Should you expect something in return, your behavior is always suspect. We all know people who do nice things only when they want something in return.

Make giving a daily routine. Don't start and end with the holiday season. Every day is a good day to do something nice. When people feel good due to your actions, you can't help but feel happy yourself. And that is priceless. The

most significant action you can take is having a positive impact on the lives of others.

Editor's Note: Bryan is the author of "Dare to Live Without

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Tidings of Comfort & Joy

To our many best friends everywhere, we send our best wishes for a

Merry Christmas

We've loved every minute of serving you!

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Try this festive appertizer to satisfy guests



The Christmas holidays are a food lover's paradise. Even though the turkey, ham and side dishes are the crowning achievements on many local tables, hungry guests often need something to tide them over until the piece de resistance is ready. In such situations, bite-sized appetizers that are tasty yet not too filling can fit the bill.

Mini Cheese Ball Bites

INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces light cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 3 tablespoons drained, chopped pimentos
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- Pinch kosher salt
- Pinch freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup crushed pecans
- 1/4 cup chopped chives
- 12 pretzel sticks

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, stir together the cream cheese, cheddar, pimentos, garlic powder, paprika, salt, and pepper until well combined. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

Place the crushed pecans and chives in a small bowl. Set aside. Roll the cheese mixture into twelve 1-inch balls. Evenly coat each ball with the pecan-chive mixture. Press a pretzel stick into the top of each cheese ball just before serving. Serve at room temperature or chilled.



The Greatest Gift of All

On this holy night so long ago, our Savior, Prince of Peace was born, bringing His light and love to shine upon all the world for all time. For this, and our many blessings, we are deeply grateful and wish all our neighbors a truly miraculous holiday season.

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MERRY Christmas

Here's hoping the season is gifted with all the best blessings, including health, happiness, friendship, love, peace and prosperity. Having the support of folks like you brings us joy all year, and we appreciate your trust in us.

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