

## The Joy of Giving — to yourself, to others, to the world

My message today is not about Christmas presents. There is no “Ho, Ho, Ho” to be found in this article. Instead there is a profound message about true giving. This article echoes a theme discussed in many of my previous articles: the path to happiness is living in states of positive vibration rather than negative vibrations such as fear and anger.

The greatest, most wonderful and sublime state is the state of unconditional love. This is agape or spiritual loving kindness, not eros or romantic love. We aspire to experience this type of love as often as possible, although in our earthly lives we are not able to remain in this pure state. Spiritualists describe angels and other heavenly beings as residing permanently in the beauty of unconditional love. Religious leaders of all denominations have called us to this state. Christianity (1 Corinthians 13:13) tells us “So now faith and hope and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love.” It is fascinating to me that different translations of this Corinthians verse use the words love and charity interchangeably. Love for ourselves and others translates into the joy of giving which can also be called charity.

We sometimes forget that unconditional love and charity include love of ourselves as well as others. Christian religious heritage commands us (Mark 21:31) “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as



### Advice Line

by Dr. Betty Phillips

thyself.” Buddha teaches that you must love yourself before extending that love toward others. “You, yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.” We are all members of one humanity and in that sense must honor and give to ourselves as we give to others. When we deprive ourselves we become depleted and resentful, finding ourselves in a state of negative vibration, unable to experience positive joy within our shared worlds.

A related principle is the fact that the power of love and giving must be heart-based, not negotiated only through the mind. The spiritual heart is the source and repository of love and joy. The mind by itself is not capable of feeling emotions. You can teach your heart to resonate with love and joy. It’s been scientifically proved through the Institute of Heartmath by breathing in and out through your heart center, visualizing a cherished love object, then feeling the love radiating from your heart throughout your body and out to others around you.

You can learn to transmute anger and negativity into love as the alchemist transmuted base materials into gold. As humans we are not capable of avoiding negative feelings. If we remain in these states we cannot experience love or joy, and our mind will continue to torment us with negative thoughts and resentments. To transmute means to turn the negative energy of the emotion into a positive higher state. For example, anger at the politicians who allow homelessness and starvation can be transmuted into the joy of giving food to the needy.

The last principle I want to mention here is to remember the origin of our humanity in the natural world. There is a rhythm of life and compassion for living things within the natural world. We can feel pure joy as we interact with nature and its plants, animals and other human beings. So let’s remember to turn off our electronic and other distractions which pull us away from our original nature of empathy and compassion.

As we aspire to live our lives within these principles we will find ourselves experiencing the pure joy of giving to ourselves and others. Let’s aspire to this on a daily basis, not just during the Christmas season. Giving does not have to be a present, nor money, although these are appreciated when appropriate. Giving can be time and energy and loving kindness, not just volunteering

your time in an agency. You can give to yourself with a warm bath, and you can give to your children when you read them a story at bedtime. Giving can be loving thoughts, prayers and meditations. With all the heartache and chaos in this world, giving can be prayers for peace and ending wars. Giving can be signing petitions. I find myself on a number of petition lists lately, helping diverse causes from removing toxins in our foods to saving our whales and dolphins. Giving can be joining with others to improve the life conditions of other people or animals in this world. I find myself admiring the joy of giving I see in causes mentioned on the Chatlist such as organizations to help special needs children or to build fences to free dogs from chains. Let me know if you want to sponsor needy individuals for therapy sessions; I’m developing a program to accept contributions.

January will arrive after Christmas with the opportunity for New Years Resolutions. We don’t have to wait for January; we can start today, living in our hearts and in a state of unconditional love and joy.

*Need Advice? Send Dr. Betty Phillips questions about individual, relationship, marriage or family issues to BettyPhillips@BellSouth.net or 466 Eagle Point Road, Pittsboro 27312. Questions can be anonymous. Betty looks forward to hearing from you!*

## BULLIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

question asked if the student tried to stop the bullying and help the victim. Results went from 13 percent answering yes to 23 percent. However, all results are not going in the right direction. In 2009 a new question was added to the survey asking students if they told their parents if they had been bullied. “We were

really discouraged to see that the answer went from 48 percent yes to 31 percent,” Greger-Holt said. “We try to get across to parents that if your child is being bullied, they are not going to tell you. We want young people to realize that nothing can change unless somebody gets told so someone can take some action.”

Bullies are often very savvy, hiding their actions from adults. “The effects of bullying are devastating,” said Perlow.

“Kids may drop out or move schools because they don’t feel safe going to their school or they stay in school and have physical symptoms. My daughter was having headaches, nausea, depression, and anxiety.”

Besides the monthly meetings where there are discussions and often speakers, and the bi-monthly newsletters that are intended to reach every parent of all Chatham County students, Perlow said the task force created a Recommendation and Action Steps document with a timeline. This plan went to all Chatham County schools in November of 2011. The plan was shaped by five community meetings the task force held in the spring of 2011 where participants explored different aspects of bullying, such as cyber-bullying, and offered solutions.

“We had 100 people participate in these five meetings. I had one kid come up to me and say, “I tried to commit suicide

last year and this is the first time I feel hopeful. Another kid said, “I feel happy.” That was major,” Perlow said.

The survey responses, Recommendation and Action Steps, newsletters and upcoming events of the Chatham County Bully Prevention Task Force can be found at [www.chatham.k12.nc.us](http://www.chatham.k12.nc.us) under the parent heading on the blue bar.

Other counties are now asking Perlow to speak about the task force, and someone has suggested it should be used as a model for a national program.

“We took a pretty ugly situation and made major lemonade out of lemons. Jordan now doesn’t doubt that she can do anything because she played a major role. She feels like she has learned you need to say what you need to say and try your best to say it in a way people can hear it and never give up. She is doing great,” Perlow said.

*Deborah R. Meyer is a Chatham writer.*

# I Mean Clean!

WE MAKE YOUR HOUSE

## Sparkle!



- Prompt and reliable
- Clean your home or business
- Licensed & insured
- Green products available
- Experts at organization; we haul off your trash, recyclables, stuff, and junk
- References and estimates are no problem!
- No job too big or too small

Sarah Pankow (919) 542-1770  
pugsrule1015@gmail.com • [www.imeanclean.com](http://www.imeanclean.com)



## Tired of Waiting?

Most prescriptions filled within 10 minutes.

### PITTSBORO DISCOUNT DRUGS

628 East St, Pittsboro • M–F: 8:30 am to 6:30 pm • Sat: 9 am to 1 pm • 542-7283  
Closed Sunday • Hablamos Español • FREE DELIVERY! Call for select delivery areas.

Many schools have become places with no time or space for those who march to the beat of their own drum...

We like the music better over here.

Jordan Lake School of the Arts

where imagination is everything

1434 Farrington Road, Apex  
(919) 387-9440 • [www.jordanlakesa.com](http://www.jordanlakesa.com)

NEED MORE INCOME FOR YOUR RETIREMENT?

Work from home advertising for an Inc. 500 company.  
Find out more today!

[www.so-worth-it.com/retire](http://www.so-worth-it.com/retire)  
 Kathy Simmers  
 919-612-0009

So Worth It

BALANCE + FREEDOM + PEACE OF MIND

SHOP CHATHAM!