

# The Wellness Family

Dr. Leahy Keeps You Informed

## The meaning of Giving

Sometimes it seems with all the hustle and bustle of the holiday season that we forget the purpose: that it's about family and fellowship. We get so wrapped up in, well, the wrapping, that we forget there's more to it than giving and receiving gifts.

While we get lost in the shopping, decorating, cooking, cleaning and the stress of it all, we overlook the truth that there's so much to be grateful for, there are so many that have so much less than we do. It's no coincidence that the suicide rate increases during this time of year and it's avoidable – with a little giving.

### **What is Giving?**

The definition of the word "giving" is simply to freely transfer the possession of something to someone; and it doesn't have to be physical, but can be emotional too.

In a society where we are so technologically advanced and time has become almost a commodity, it's important to slow down and remember to teach our children, by example, the simple joy of giving.

### **Giving a Compliment**

Starting off small, let's consider how much time it takes to just stop and find something positive to say to someone when we encounter them. Giving a compliment is one of the best ways to encourage someone and show them that you care this holiday season.

Tell them they have a nice smile or say, "That color looks great on you." Say something that will give them a little boost for the day and let them know that someone is really noticing them.

### **Giving to Your Community**

This will definitely be more time consuming, but also more satisfying for you and your children. Many communities have parks and recreational areas that have been left in disrepair because of budget cuts. Consider taking some paint and garden equipment and help restore that area. Painting fences, raking leaves, pulling weeds and picking up trash can any area a brand new look.

Planting trees has become a new way to give back to our community and future generations. Go to your local

nursery and buy one seedling that is indigenous to your area, then contact your local city hall for locations that have been designated for tree planting. Remember, many cities have underground electrical, phone, water and sewage pipes that must be avoided when finding a home for your seedling.

If possible, consider starting a community garden and invite your neighbors to plant produce and help tend the garden. Make sure to pick fruits and vegetables that are going to do well in your area and have a talk with your neighbors about how to grow a pesticide and chemical free garden.



*"Giving gifts that cost nothing more than your money will never mean quite as much as giving that costs your time."*

Organizing a recycling drive can also be very beneficial. Many cities require that newspapers be bundled and bound for recycling which means that many aren't recycled. Offering your neighbors a recycling service can be a great way to give back to the community, proceeds can be donated to your local "clean up" service for purchasing necessary materials to paint over graffiti or beautify your city.

### **Giving to the Homeless**

While you may not see them in your community, sadly, every city has its fair share of homeless, and this time of year is when they need our help the most. They're cold and hungry and, while we're comfortably visiting with our families and friends, many of them are alone.

Giving to the homeless can be as simple as gathering some old blankets or quilts from your home and giving them to a local homeless shelter. Purchasing canned goods or emptying the cupboards is another beneficial gesture of good will. However, if you really want to make a difference, help the homeless who aren't going to a shelter but are trying to survive on their own.

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Find used backpacks (either from your own kids or the children of friends) and put together a few "Backpacks for the Homeless". Some items that would be appreciated include a pair of clean socks, toothbrush and toothpaste, hairbrush, shampoo, a blanket or jacket and a rain poncho. For the men, consider throwing in a comb and razor. For the women, consider providing some feminine supplies. For many homeless, the worst part of the holiday season is the feeling that nobody cares. Show them that this isn't the case for them.

Another idea is to prepare a dozen or so sack lunches and distribute them. Be sure to put a bottle of water in each lunch and try to avoid soft drinks or juice. On a really cold day you might consider setting up a coffee service in an area of your community that you know is frequented by the homeless. Starbucks sells coffee-on-the-go that can be used. You might not be able to provide for everyone but at least a few people will be warmed from the inside out and by more than just the coffee.

#### **Giving to the Children**

Probably the most heartbreaking are the children in need of your giving. Many times the children of homeless families are required to stay in a separate facility from their parents. In these cases, it's not so much your money or gifts they need so much as they need your time and attention.

Offer to go and read a story to a group of little ones and handout candy canes or some other small treat. Giving of yourself is going to be the most appreciated by this group, but if this just isn't feasible then there are plenty of other things you can do.

Have a family yard sale and donate the proceeds to your local children's shelter. You can also buy a gift

and take it (unwrapped) to the shelter. If you know that your shelter has an exceptionally large number of children then consider talking to your friends with children and make it a "giving project". If everyone were to purchase one gift and then pass on the idea to their friends, every child can receive something special for the holidays. Remember that it should be taken unwrapped so that those running the shelter can make sure that the right gifts are matched to the right child.

#### **Giving to the Elderly**

It's probably fair to assume that you have at least one elderly neighbor on your block. Many times these people are the most lonely and appreciative of your time and attention. One great project is to have your little ones make an arts and craft project to give to your neighbor. If they don't have children or grandchildren, this could be a very heartwarming gift.

You might also consider baking a dish or preparing a warm meal and taking it to an elderly neighbor with the recipe. Be sure to do more than just drop off the item; spend a few minutes visiting with them as well. It's more than just the giving of an item, but the giving of yourself that is appreciated.

If you have a lot of time to spare, consider offering to help your neighbor decorate their home for the holidays. This can include putting up Christmas Lights or unpacking the Menorah. Many homes are left undecorated simply because they don't have the energy or the strength to do the job themselves. This giving of your time may be more valuable than you realize.

#### **In Summary**

Giving gifts that cost nothing more than your money will never mean quite as much as giving that costs you time. In today's society, we've begun to recognize that money is expendable, time is much more valuable.

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*Dear Patient,*

*Dr. Leahy is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.*

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