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The Mystery Called Love

Phil Nuernberger, Ph.D.

The Holiday season is a time of family and friends, love and joy, kindness and charity – all the good things that constitute the finest of human qualities. Whether we call it Chanukah, Christmas, or Kwanza, it only matters that we celebrate these human qualities. For in the final analysis, what counts is our capacity to experience love and joyfulness. It is a time when we recognize that our profits, our achievements, and our gains are all directed to the same end, to achieve happiness, joy and love.

In a profound way, these spiritual holidays remain a great mystery. Even the hardest human being can be suddenly touched. The heart opens, love flows out, and we are changed – for a moment, for a day, for a lifetime. We only need to open our hearts and there it is. Each moment a miracle of the spirit.

It doesn't always happen. Life can be overwhelming with hardships. There is brutality, starvation, homelessness, greed – the tragedy of humanity is always too apparent. But in the midst of it all, there comes that moment, a time when the spiritual core of our humanity opens itself, and we experience the birth of the Son, the power of the Spirit, the compassion of the Father/Mother.

In this experience we are no longer Christian, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist or Hindu. These distinctions dissolve under the power of love, and we unite in our common spiritual humanity.

It is at this moment we experience the mystery called love. This mystical experience clears our vision and we see

the divinity within our co-workers, our neighbors, even our “enemies.” No longer caught by our fears, beliefs, and desires, we become free from our petty limitations. When we experience the power of love, at that moment we truly celebrate the Holiday Season.

This experience doesn't have to be an accident. It is the natural consequence of selflessness, of putting others before ourselves. The great gift of the Holiday Season is that we can forget about ourselves. We give gifts, we give happiness, we give food, we give charity – WE GIVE! This ability to give selflessly is the heart of love.

We don't always feel this love. During the Holidays, the stress can be intense. For many, the contrast between what is supposed to be and what actually is, often leads to depression, frustration and loneliness. For these people, the Holiday Season is anything but joyful. It is a time of deepening crisis, brought on by the terrible discrepancy between the reality and the expectations of the Season.

But even under the stress of the Season, we can create experiences of joyfulness and fulfillment. It isn't hard at all. All we need do is reach out and touch someone, even if you may never see them again. Give a gift of love to someone who desperately needs to experience the mystery. It may be a warm meal, an extra \$50 to a single mother, an invitation to dinner to a forgotten friend. Don't do it for charity,

but simply to experience selflessness. Doing so will turn this Holiday Season into a truly mystical experience.

We at Strategic Intelligence Skills wish you and yours the most joyous of Holidays and a New Year filled with the mystery of Love.

Two Bears

(A poem by the Sufi poet Hafiz.)

Once
After a hard day's forage
Two bears sat together in silence
On a beautiful vista
Watching the sun go down
And feeling deeply grateful
For life.

Though, after a while
A thought-provoking conversation
began
Which turned to the topic of
Fame.

The one bear said,
“did you hear about Rustam?
He has become famous
And travels from city to city
In a golden cage;

He performs to hundreds of people
Who laugh and applaud
His carnival
Stunts.”

The other bear thought for
A few seconds.

Then started
Weeping.

WE WISH YOU A VERY JOYFUL AND PEACEFUL HOLIDAY