THE GIFT OF GIVING

The holiday season is a special time that you may want to focus on giving back. Below are a few ideas of ways to celebrate the Gift of Giving.

Did you know that giving helps people in your community? Whether you decide to make a monetary donation or volunteer your time, giving helps people in your community. Why not donate a toy to a local charity that allows a less fortunate child to experience the joy of Christmas? Or volunteer at a food bank where you can help a family get the supplies they need to enjoy the holidays with food on their table.

Did you know that being charitable makes you happier? When we give of our time or our possessions we feel good and according to scientists, that is because we are hardwired to enjoy helping others. In a recent study published by the American Psychological Association, it was determined that people who give to others are significantly happier than when they receive gifts. Other studies have confirmed this, stating that giving promotes social connection and trust. The act of giving releases endorphins, activating the pleasure center of your brain.

Did you know that being charitable is also good for your health? Donating our time or resources to others is also a way to live a longer and healthier life. Research has shown that giving to charity promotes both physical and mental health. Specifically, blood pressure, body mass index, and LDL cholesterol were lower in volunteers than in non-volunteers. These benefits lower your risk of heart disease and strokes. Studies have shown that giving can boost your physical and mental health.

Helping others is contagious. Catch the bug! Seeing others do good inspires others to do the same. As a whole, we change our behaviors and make decisions based on what we see around us. When we see someone else using their time or resources to help others, we want to do the same. Biologically, we know that it will make us happier, and socially, we know that it will help others and bring us all closer together. One person leading the way encourages us all to make the world a happier place.

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