

## December 2005: Lighting the Way for the Holidays

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### Publisher's Pen: Lighting the Way for the Holidays

"Give light and people will find the way."

Ella Baker.

Headed down the dark tunnel of stress? Don't go there. Stop, turn around, and shift your focus to the light at the beginning of the tunnel. We have to remind ourselves even more so, in light of these times, to be joyful.

How do we accomplish this during the busy holiday season? The answer may be to follow the strategies of people who stay joyful most of the time. After observing and interviewing joyful people over the past ten years, Salle Merrill Redfield says that she noticed they share strategies that enable them to navigate life with a positive attitude.

Through experience, they have come to the realization that opportunities as well as emotions cycle through ups and downs. During hard times this awareness gives them the faith that "this too shall pass." Because they recognize the preciousness of the good times, rarely do they worry obsessively or lament on the past. Instead, they keep their focus on moving through life with a sense of joy and wonder.

Some of the valuable and time-tested strategies of joyful people are that they don't buy into the belief that things won't get better. They seek support from counselors, family members, friends, and books. By doing this, they see the options available, such as working hard to change a situation, or accepting the facts and moving on with their lives.

They also take time out to pursue a healthy distraction to shift their focus and lighten the load. Telling a joke to a friend, going for a walk, playing with the pets, seeing a movie, window shopping, participating in charity work are things that can pull us out of the tunnel so that we gain a fresh perspective. Finally, they have dreams and they focus on creating a better future.

In the midst of a stressful day, or a stressful situation, may we remember to take a step back into the light, setting an example for our children.

Smiles,

Elaine

Empowering Parents and Teachers:

Here are five ways to light the way for the holidays, using the word, "light" in different contexts. Can you find more?

- See others "in light of" a Higher Power (in a nonjudgmental way). Go ahead, play God. Write down good things about someone who bugs you.

- Make "light" of the things that go wrong. In other words, don't sweat it. It will pass. Write about what has gone wrong lately. What will you think of it 10 years from now?

- "Shed light" on matters of importance. What is important to you?

- Watch someone's face "light up" when...(fill in the blank)

- "Let your light shine." What does this old adage mean to you?

There are more ways to use the word light in context. Give yourself a bonus for thinking of just one more. Then take a break and do something nice for yourself.

Empowering K.I.D.S. (Kids In Daily Situations):

Send light waves to others this season. Here's how:

Use sincere praise.

Laugh at others jokes.

Be respectful and caring.

Accept others for who they are.

Defend what you know is right.

Give a second chance, then a third chance to someone who has offended you.

Talk to someone you don't normally talk to.

Shovel snow for someone.

Notice the little things others do for you and thank them.

Be your own best friend.

Celebrate life!

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