

HAPPY HEART AND MIND

Meaningful Celebrations

Gift Giving from Heart and not Pocket

ZenGirl -Preeti Bhatt

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Have a great and happy Holidays and meaningful celebration from heart.

Zengirl

<http://www.happyheartandmind.com>

Gifts from heart during Holidays

By: [ZenGirl](#)



Christmas is around the corner and many of us share or exchange gifts with friends and family around this time. Many times, these well meant gifts from people, after a few days or weeks, goes unused in some corner of our house and life. How should we give gifts that can be well liked and used by the receiver? Often time, it is possible to do with little thinking on our part. We will discuss a few types of traditional and not-so traditional gifts to give and receive.

1. Give gift of time

Giving gift of time is cost free, but very helpful. For example, give time for babysitting to someone who has small kids, so they can nap, go out or do something they like. You can take your elderly neighbor shopping, who may not be driving well. You can visit someone who is sick, deliver food, help someone with cleaning up their house, garage, mow their lawn etc., possibilities are endless. Make sure you know some tasks that may require longer time, volunteer and offer what you truly can, otherwise you and receiver both will resent it.

Sometimes, just listening others and being there in their time of need is more appreciated than any store bought gifts.

2. Gift of experience

Zenguy used to fly small plane, it has been a while since he has given up this expensive hobby. However, he has taken me and other friends, relatives on city flying tours and it has been wonderful for all of those who received it. You do not have to fly a plane, you can someone to a Museum they always want to go or subject they wanted to know more about. Cooking together also works, I cook meal with R, who makes mess of kitchen but it is an experience he will remember being part of. Watching stars, going camping, learning and doing something together will remain in our mind, long after, compared to silly plastic toys or gadgets.

3. Homemade gifts

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Simply made handbags, cookies in jar, soups in jar, handmade sweater or blanket, quilt has much more meaning to recipient. Here are some suggestions for home made gifts ideas from web.

[Gifts and Crafts from a jar](#)

[50 home made gift ideas from the web](#)

[Free crafts and gifts made by you](#)

4. Other suggestions

- a. Give cash instead of gift cards, as some of the gift cards charges hidden access fees and expires as month's rolls by.
- b. If you buy store bought gifts, take gift receipt to recipient, so they can exchange freely without being guilty.
- c. Ask them what they truly need or want before buying something you "think" they want.
- d. Give partial or all money towards big items they want/need to buy.
- e. If you have large family, draw up names so everyone needs to buy one or two gifts only, instead of 22.
- f. Consider giving to others less fortunate people than you, charitable donation does not need to wait for Christmas time, and can be done throughout the year.

[Gift Free Christmas](#)

[How to celebrate Christmas without money](#)

[No Christmas gift this year](#) has unique ways to letting your friends and family know about no gifts and suggesting alternatives instead. Check it out.

Remember, giving gifts from heart is more important than any expensive item. If we cannot pay it with cash, or have money to pay when credit card arrives, we should not purchase it. You can celebrate Christmas without money or gifts and still have great time with family and friends.

How do you celebrate holidays with friends and family? What is your best Holiday memory?

8 ways to live a happy and content life

“There is no end of craving. Hence contentment alone is the best way to happiness. Therefore, acquire contentment.”

by Swami Sivanand

Have you seen someone who have it all, such as luxury cars, nice 2 story house, seemingly happy marriage, obedient kids and great job? Have you been to friend's house to find a nice professional kitchen, professional pots and pot rack, and plenty of cookbooks around? Have you felt jealous?

Don't be. Maybe those people might be truly happy and rich and may be your friend could be great culinary expert. Or just maybe they are aspiring to be rich, being chef or happy, a reality could be far different. How do we know? Because, everyone has faked his or her life at one time or another time. If you have not, that is great achievement and you can skip this post. For rest of us there is still hope.

I am much more Zen and in calm mind compared to 5 years ago, but I also go through phases where I want to have someone else's life for change. For example, I want to be in clean house that you see in magazines, I want kids to sleep through the night, and be well behaved ALL the time, I want Zenguy to be making lot of money and be rich, so I do not worry sick about kids future and help others at the same time. I guess it is normal for human to desire things, but if we let it gets to us, we will live unhappy and sad lives. How to be our authentic self and be content with it? These are a few ways I am happy with who I am and simplicity path that I have chosen to walk on, or at least try to live it.

1. Stop watching TV, Stop reading consumer magazines. Watching some TV shows where thin women, men and their slick houses can cause a few of us, inferiority complex. You may never know, that those houses on magazine may have designer and interior decorator that have planned and organized everything in the house and cleaned up mess before taking pictures or video shoot. Maybe those people in the magazine including men have groomed and put on make up to make them look great. If you had these services, you would look great and so will your house, right? May be some of the people might be truly beautiful, rich and organized but most of us aren't. So if you compare yourself, compare with majority!

2. Stop watching or reading advertisements in magazines, TV, newspapers and billboards. Ads can make you feel like you are the only ONE who is a loser in the world, who does not have that X product. You are cool if buy X product and you are loser if you do not. Do not buy that, you are not your material possessions.

3. Do not compare yourself with Jones. One reason not to compare is they might have look of richness but in reality, they might be so deep in debt, up keeping appearances. Be wealthy, not just act and spend like wealthy.

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4. **Think of what you HAVE, not on what you do not.** I know someone who is super wealthy and makes 40K per month, (no, not a type-error : a month), yet I do not want to be him, you know why? He is middle of getting divorce and his 2 kids and wife are miserable, they may have money and everything money can buy but not happiness. I rather be happy and content than rich.

5. **Be thankful.** Things can be worse, for example, when Zenguy got traffic ticket for using cell phone while sitting at the traffic, but he could have gotten a ticket for speeding or worse he could have been in an accident. Be thankful for what you have, before resenting situation.

6. **Volunteer and help others.** We in America, hardly see poor people around, so whenever I volunteer at second harvest or food pantry or homeless shelter, I actually get to see “real” people and many of them are smart, working hard folks and it makes me more compassionate and appreciate my current life much more.

7. **Find your true personal values and virtues.** Many of us do not take time truly to know what truly makes us happy, we tend to follow money trail, but I know money does not make person happy. I know this because I was miserable making 6 figure salary once upon a time and now I am happier (mostly) being at home. While I have days when money bugs catches me, most of the days I am happier being home with my kids.

8. **Find your true assets, your knowledge, people around you such as family and friends.** If you have money, it can be lost in stock market, or bad investment. If you have car, house, boats, it can be stolen and broken in to. No one can take what you know and wisdom you have achieved, (at least not so easy). You can always rise from poverty, to gain what you have lost. True friends and close family members can always be there in time of your need, which is much more important.

Are you living a pretend life? Was this article and tips useful to you or someone you know? Do you have more to share? I would love to hear from you. Please share with your friends and loved ones, if you liked it.

Live more, be more.

White Friday: No shopping day



Black Friday is one of the busiest and most commercial shopping days in the USA, shopping frenzy is unbelievable. Some of our friends and relatives are big in to shopping Black Friday and has so many strategies to get best deals. There are many websites that promote “leaked” deals and how to get best shopping deals and how to stay safe while you are out there. If you are looking for tips to make a best shopping experience, you will not find it here.

All these tips and wisdom are lost on me. I am too lazy to wake up 4 AM to shop and too frugal to buy things that we do not need. I wrote about how about holidays were hectic in past [Stress free Thanksgiving](#) and how we are changing it to be more enjoyable by doing less and buying less and doing more things for inner joy instead.

So, as a part of enjoying holidays more, we are having a what I call, a **White Friday** on November 27, 2009, meaning, we are getting up late, staying in, and not going anywhere near shopping malls or stores.

Actually, we avoid all terms of shopping (other than groceries, and gas filling) from November 20th until January 15th. Why so long? Because, stores are busy with people buying Christmas gifts for themselves and others until December 24th and then going again in store to return/exchange gifts they received and did not like, from December 26th-January 10ish. Staying in long lines to purchase and return items nor getting pushed and shoved while shopping is not my idea of enjoyable holidays, although that is exactly what I have done in past. Not anymore.

About a few years ago, we decided to simplify our shopping and holidays, and it sure has made my life stress free and yet more meaningful. I am not the first to do this, nor alone in this way of thinking. Matter of fact there is a huge following on [Buy Nothing Day](#), which has been getting successful here in US and a few other countries by avoiding shopping on Black Friday.

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Here is what Thanksgiving means to me;

Thanksgiving: Giving heartfelt thank you to everyone and everything that keeps me alive;

- a) People you know, and who has helped you (your inner circle)
- b) People you do not know and has helped you (your city, country)
- c) People you know and who has helped others (your city, country)
- d) People you do not know and has helped others (other countries)
- e) People you know, who has not helped anyone but surviving life (your and other countries)
- g) Animals/plants/insects/fish/bees who indirectly help us with food, life and love.
- h) I am also thankful for clean drinking water, air and land that our planet has, for us to live on.

It may sound idealistic, but if you really think of it, there are so many reasons for us to be thankful and blessed without any store bought gifts. You cannot put a price on that. And shopping may provide instant joy for a few people, but it does not bring long lasting joy of being content.

What are you thankful for? How do you celebrate Holidays?

Stress Free Thanksgiving Party

By [ZenGirl](#)

In past, my holidays during thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings were hectic, stressful and hurried. I did not enjoy it as much as I should have. I was so busy trying to impress my friends and family to top previous year's recipes, new decorations, giving creative goodies bags to kids and adults all alike, just because I thought that what made happy holidays. How wrong I was.

Now our thanksgiving party has become smaller, more meaningful and lot more enjoyable. Here are a few changes that made it possible and maybe you can too.

1. Do not accept every invitation, be selective, who you invite or whose party to go to. If you get no invitation, plan one yourself or enjoy alone time volunteering many thanksgiving food charity.
2. If you are hosting, plan a simple a menu or plan a potluck. Make sure, everyone gets different food, so you do not end up with 6 pumpkin pies and no main course.
3. Do simple decoration and entertainment plan. Simple pumpkin, or colorful foliage leaves can make a great center piece.
4. Have everyone say 2 things (at least) they are thankful for at the dinner table.
5. Buy and do prep work before the party, delegate some work to others.
6. Use nice plates and glass. If you must use paper plates, use biodegradable. It is better for environment.
7. Have a few people pitch in to clear up table, do the dishes while a few adults can

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entertain/play games with kids in other area. Do that for other host too. Work gets done faster and host also gets to enjoy without pile of dishes waiting for them.

8. If you must give goodies bag to every guest, make it home made, simple that will be used.

9. Everyone can do craft and take it go home. For example, everyone can paint a small wood frame and put thanksgiving picture (later) to display.

10. Make sure there is dedicated camera person, so you will have memories to share. Make sure camera person in a few pictures themselves too.

11. If you have extra food, share it with neighbors who are alone (or invite them), share it to homeless people or people who are unemployed, or at shelter.

12. Write your own reasons for being thankful in colorful construction paper, make a nice leaf cutout and put it all those leaves on rope and display throughout Holiday season.

13. If you cannot be with family or friends, enjoy with your spouse or kid(s), if you are single, you can still celebrate with friends and other family members. (See #1 above)

14. If someone has made your life helpful, please say thank you to them in person, handwriting letter, or call them to say thank you.

15. Be thankful and kind to others whom you do not know, but are helpful by working on thanksgiving day such as some gas station, police, hospital people, day labor folks, homeless people, air port employees etc.

16. Make a simple tradition to do with your family that is not materialistic but meaningful. Repeat every year with family without pressure to top it.

17. Do not try to impress your loved ones, they are already your friends and family. They will love you, even if your house is bit messy, your recipe is not better than last year.

18. Just relax and enjoy.

What are your stress free holiday party tips? How do you enjoy the thanksgiving?

Check out related articles:

[Being enlightened](#)

[How to reuse Halloween Candies](#)

[Stress Free Thanksgiving Party](#)

Re-connect with community around you

Have you ever watched “It is wonderful life”, 1946 movie with James Stewart and Donna Reed? Many of us watch it during Christmas holidays as a holiday tradition. Why am I talking about a holiday movie in February time?

What I love about the movie, is not only uplifting and inspiring story, but also a sense of community in the movie, where everyone knew each other by name and were friends. I would like to live where everyone knows us, and we know them and are friendly with each other too. Our older generation used to know people around them such as neighbors and other everyday folks they met during the course of the day.

Now days, we have lost that connection with people, a sense of community is hardly there. Many of us live in Apartments, Condo or house for months or years, yet we do not know many of our neighbors! I mean really know them as friends not just by face or car they drive only. We no longer know people we deal with often such our bankers, bakers, gas station workers, mail man as they keep changing jobs often and due to lack of time on our part. And not many knows “**real**” us either, as we seemed to busier than ever.

We go to work, office, business, school, college or work at home, busy making money and paying bills, running errands, yet hardly we take time out to connect with people whom we meet. Take an example of us, Zenguy and I have lived in same place for many years yet we both used to work crazy hours till late evening. We used to eat out or crash in front of the TV eating takeout food, we did not have energy for people who lived around us. Now, that I am home and we have 2 little ones, we are just beginning to know some of our neighbors truly. However, there are still some neighbors who are busy working long hours or as soon as they come home, they close garage doors, so no one gets to know them.

R loves to say hello to our mail man and garbage man, he genuinely is interested in them and want to know their truck and how do they deliver mails or how the garbage truck picks up the big trash cans. If they are rushing, R still likes to wave at them and smile. And thanks to him, I am also getting to know people and helpers around me.

Sometimes when we go to grocery store, we say hello to people in line with us, chatting up with cashier as well. Once Zenguy saw one couple ahead of us in checkout line, and gave them our extra coupon that he saw they were buying, so they can save few bucks. They were surprised and very thankful. Little P was restless and crying so I wanted to rush home, like I used to, but that act of Zenguy made me not only proud of him but reminded me to connect with others, even though we may or may not see them again.

While, we may not be friends with neighbors like in movie “It is a wonderful life”, but we are improving and getting better. We have made friendship with single old woman in her late 60s and have shared some meals with her, we were there when her mom passed away and she in turns shares her stories with us, and helps us when we least expecting it.

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There is always a first step to every journey and these are our conscious choices to smile and say hello to everyone we meet such as neighbors, grocery cashiers, Bankers, farmer market sellers, garbage truck driver, mail man and even those who solicited selling things at our door. It does not cost us anything to smile and be friendly and in return we get good energy that uplifts us.

Do you know people around you? Are you always rushing from one place to another? If so, slow down a little and get to know your community around you, slowly. It may do wonders for you.

Celebrating meaningful Birthdays



I am into simple and minimalist living, but it sure is a bit more complicated when you have small kids and are surrounded by many consumerist minded family and friends. Zenguy and I have stopped making a big deal out of our birthdays since kids came along, we still celebrate our birthdays, doing things that each of us really want that, we cannot simply go and buy. For example, I like some alone time, meaning I should be able to take shower without kids knocking on door, writing, reading a book, blog or magazine while sipping hot tea, things that matter most to me. For Zenguy, his passion is nature, music and food. On his special days, either, I cook his favorite food, or sometimes we go out to eat his favorite restaurant and go to easy outdoor hiking or listen to classical music at home.

Kids birthdays are little bigger deals and celebrated with a few friends and family, R is old enough to ask for what he wants to eat, and what he wants as gifts, little P is too young, he is simply happy to be crawling around or play with empty boxes with his brother and us.

Last weekend we had a birthday celebration party for kids, as little P has turned one, and R had turned 5 a few weeks before. We asked everyone to just come, have fun and give blessings to kids, and no gifts. Zenguy and I both believe that R and P have way too many toys and do not

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need more stuff. However, at the actual party, everyone came with some type of toys, clothes, and books for gifts. What else could I have done to convince everyone not to bring gifts? Or we as a society, do not know how to stop consumerism even when asked not to buy. I can understand the peer pressure to bring something and not come empty handed, even I would feel the same way many times. However, I would call the host and ask, what do they really want or need and do that and if they still insisted and I felt it was genuine, I would try to honor their wish of no gifts.

Our well meaning friends did not budge so we got so many gifts that we do not need or want. We are going to donate most of these gifts that we got and keep a couple of toys that kids might like, that is the best solution I found that keeps our friends and family happy and us happy too.

I am not against gifts or buying things we may need or want, however, I am against buying so much, more than we could ever use. Once we went to Christmas party where a 7 year old got about 52 gifts, I saw the kid's eyes light up while opening the first gift, and the second, after the 10th, he was tired, bored and did not care for all the well meant gifts that people gave. I remember growing up with one or two toys, and they were special to me and I remember a doll that I carried everywhere. Now days, R and P have too many toys, despite our wish to be simple, grandparents, friends and other relatives keep buying stuff for both the kids, thinking we are depriving both our kids by our minimalist approach. My mom who grew up simply, also likes to spoil kids by buying things. There is a thin balance between your values and other people's emotions.

Some of the gifts that were given to us in past, were not needed, wanted or even useful. One of our friend knows I like cooking, so they gave set of cooking stuff, which included some egg and meat cooking utensils, which were very nice to someone who ate meat or eggs, they were utterly useless to us as lifelong vegetarians.

While I do not know how to stop others from giving and recycling their unwanted gifts to others; I think most of us will be lot happier if we got useful things as a gifts, such as;

- Hand written coupon for watching kids for an hour or two
- Cooked meal, Running an errand for them
- Lawn mowing (when you are sick or have new baby)
- Experience gifts such as yearly membership to favorite museum
- Teaching something you are expert at and they want to learn/know
- Just one-on-one time : Uninterrupted, talking and listening
- CD compilation of favorite songs, recorded story telling for kids
- Book or journal sharing special memory with them

How about you? What do you really want for your birthday that is meaningful and special to you? How do you celebrate? How do you deal with grandparents, relatives or close friends not honoring your wish so all of us can be happy? Finding a balance is sometime tough, but we have to keep working at it until we are living the life we want to.

Photo source: www.webweaver.nu/clipart

Surviving without money possible?

By [ZenGirl](#)



Daniel Suelo

Can you survive without any money at all? It seems impossible for most of us, we need money or credit of sort to survive. There is at least one person called Daniel Suelo that we know, who is doing it in America. I am sure, there are many more that are poor and forced to live on little, but not many who would want to do it voluntarily. How so, you may ask? He does not have a job, house, car, TV, much possession or debt. Check out his incredible story [here](#).

Interesting thing about this modern day Sadhu is, that he is being doing it since 2000, for past 9 years. He literally lives in a cave, near small town Moab, in Utah. He shares his small cave with insects and other small animals, as he says, it is their place too. They mostly do not harm him and he does not disturb them.

Here is what article has to say about him;

“HE WASN’T ALWAYS THIS WAY. SUELO graduated from the University of Colorado with a degree in anthropology, he thought about becoming a doctor, he held jobs, he had cash and a bank account. In 1987, after several years as an assistant lab technician in Colorado hospitals, he joined the Peace Corps and was posted to an Ecuadoran village high in the Andes. He was charged with monitoring the health of tribes people in the area, teaching first aid and nutrition, and handing out medicine where needed; his proudest achievement was delivering three babies. The tribe had been getting richer for a decade, and during the two years he was there he watched as the villagers began to adopt the economics of modernity. They sold the food from their fields—quinoa, potatoes, corn, lentils—for cash, which they used to purchase things they didn’t need, as Suelo describes it. They bought soda and white flour and refined sugar and noodles and big bags of MSG to flavor the starchy meals. They bought TVs. The more they spent, says Suelo, the more their health declined. He could measure the deterioration on his charts. “It looked,” he says, “like money was impoverishing them.”

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Daniel has also lived with Buddhists in Thailand and with Sadhus in India. He could have lived in India among Sadhus and not be so different, but he wanted to try out living here in America, as he claims most materialistic place and see if he can do it.

“I wanted to be a sadhu,” Suelo says. “But what good would it do for me to be a sadhu in India? A true test of faith would be to return to one of the most materialistic, money-worshipping nations on earth and be a sadhu there. To be a vagabond in America, a bum, and make an art of it—the idea enchanted me.”

From the look of way things are going for him this past nine years, I think he can and doing it for so long. He claims he has never gone to bed hungry or any wild animals have troubled him. His cave barely fits one, and will not hold another person or more things. However, he is happy and content. He goes down to Moeb, town walking and uses Library and meets with people.

Daniel has interesting thing in about Gold too;

As he prepares a cooking fire, Suelo tells me that years ago he had a neighbor in the canyon, an alcoholic who lived in a cave bigger than his. The old man would pan for gold in the stream and net enough cash each month to buy the beer that kept him drunk. Suelo considers the riches of our own forage. “What if we saw gold for what it is?” he says meditatively. “Gold is pretty but virtually useless. Somebody decided it has worth, and everybody accepted this decision. The natives in the Americas thought Europeans were insane because of their lust for such a useless yellow substance.”

He is 48, and does not care about 401k or retirement, health issues and dying. Here is what he has to say:

“I’ll do what creatures have been doing for millions of years for retirement,” he says. “Why is it sad that I die in the canyon and not in the geriatric ward well-insured? I have great faith in the power of natural selection. And one day, I will be selected out.”

I admire his guts and lifestyle. It is not for us right now with small kids, but he inspires me to reduce my materialistic ways while still living in house, car, TV and other things that comes with debt. It sure would minimize our impact in environment and world.

Apparently, he blogs, about once a month from nearest library on free blog site. Check out his following websites;

[Zero Currency](#)
[Suelo’s Primary website](#)

Did you like the story? Do you think you can live like that or reduce your consumption and maybe debt with it too?

Image source: Denver Post.com

12 ways to help your unemployed friends and family



There are lot of people right now without a job throughout the USA and other parts of world. California where we live is one of the place that was hit hard in form of unemployment and foreclosures. According to the LA times, California's unemployment rate is in the double digits, in some regions it is as high as 12%. [Click here for the LA times article](#). It is tough and scary with no prospects of the economy improving anytime soon and foreclosures seem to be rising rapidly. As if, this was not bad enough, many necessary goods are getting expensive during this recession, I wrote about it earlier, please check out, [Irony of Recession](#). Being kind and compassionate with your unemployed friends may help a lot, even if it is hard for you to relate to them. You can help in many ways even if you cannot help financially. So, let's look at a few ways to help them.

I have been in both sides of world, making 6 figure income once upon a time and being unemployed and at home with kids now. Being on rich and poor sides, now I understand both sides a little better. There are many hard working and motivated people, who are without a job for months, or worse lot longer. We know a few of them in our lives and I am sure you do too. How do you help? What do you say and how to be supportive without hurting your relationship in long term.

1. First and foremost it is important to listen to them, and be there for them, if they want to talk. Call them periodically.
2. Offer leads and project ideas to them, do not keep asking if they got a job yet. When they get it, they will be sure to share the good news.
3. You can give/drop off cooked meals, groceries sometimes.

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4. Sometimes, instead of just asking them for help ideas, just do it. Many times, most people do not like to bother anyone with their issues nor can think in this situation what to ask for.
5. Babysit kids at your place or take them out. Money troubles can be often hard on couple, so it may give them time to talk out issues and kids may like the change/outing to be welcoming.
6. If you must help with money, make sure it is money you do not need in near future, as unemployment effects linger on for a long time even after one gets a job. Usually unpaid money can bring resentful feelings among close friends and family or avoid giving money in on most cases. Relationships are more important than any money that may cause issue.
7. Just because they seem fine and do not talk about issues, do not assume they are doing fine. Many people are not comfortable talking about money or personal problems to even family members.
8. Gift in form of basic necessities is always good such as shelter (if situation arises, and they lose a house/rental), Food/water, basic clothing needs, medicine and basic kids education.
9. Occasional outing to restaurant, museum for kids can bring relief, as they must not be doing any activities that cost money living on little entertainment.
10. Be supportive, do not criticize if you do not see aggressiveness in pursuing a job/project. It might be that someone is working hard behind scenes and he/she may seem to have a laid back attitude on the surface, which might not be the case.
11. Do not ignore them, thinking they may need some time alone. Do not feel bad, if they are not calling you sometimes, as sometimes private life can be much harder and draining to leave time for social calls, although most people will keep basic sanity outwards usually.
12. You can be supportive in many ways by just being there. You do not have to spend money or give money to them. Some of our best memories of friends and family' help is being there with no money involved.

Here are some related articles in addition that may give you some ideas on how to help your unemployed friends or family members.

[10 ways improve yourself while broke](#)

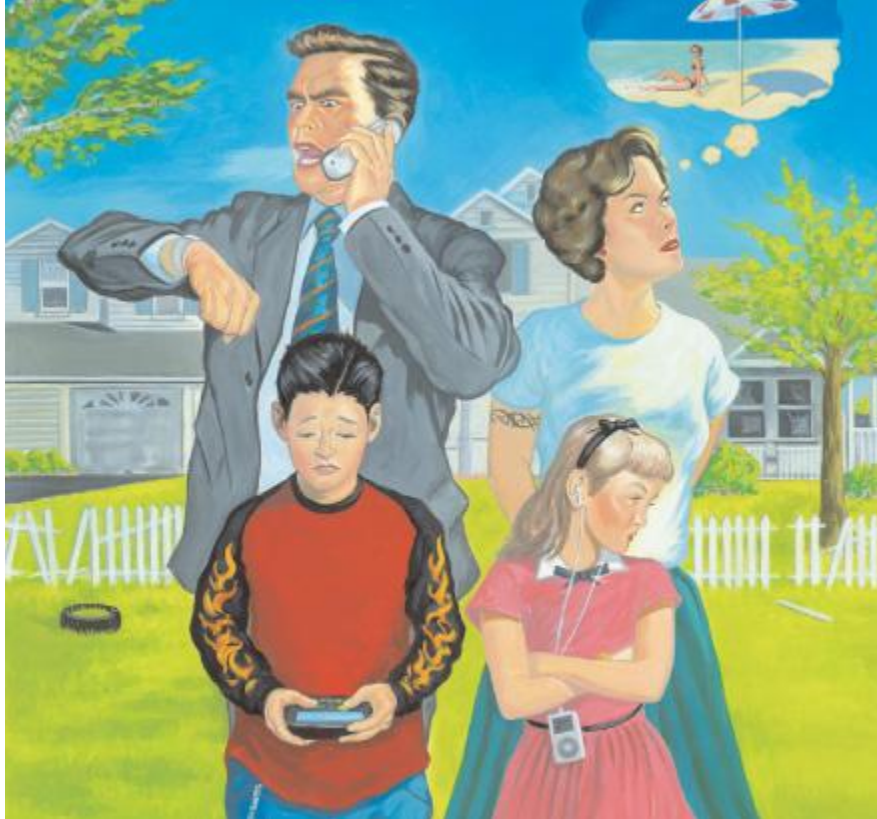
How can you help unemployed today

Zengirl

Image source: standupforamerica.files.wordpress.com

Are we honest with family and friends?

By [ZenGirl](#)



Are we honest when it comes to talking to our close friends and family? Do we have time to talk issues that are close to us and listen to honesty from others?

I believe, most of us like to connect, but often time we are too busy with our daily lives. Moreover, many times, we are not honest when talking about money and other personal issues, our dreams, our fears with family and close friends. Sometimes, we hide the truth from loved ones, thinking it will hurt them or why worry them by telling anything. Why do we do that? It actually hurts family more, when we try to hide something, no matter how good the intentions might be.

I think, the first and foremost reason probably is time that we do not get to “really” know people who are close to us. We all are busy, with kids, daily chores, friends, social obligations, work (outside and home), TV, entertainment and internet, games etc keep some of us very busy and we hardly get time to talk to our loved ones. Sometimes it is harder to really talk to each other, even when we are living together, so calling or meeting your family who lives far away is harder for many of us. For example, my parents live on the east coast, which puts physical distance but occasionally emotional distance as well.

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How many of us, really know about each other, hopes, dreams, money or other problems or issues, any hurt or happy feelings?? Do we know what others like, dislike? And if you think you do, do you do something about it or do you avoid confrontation? Most of us, leave things as is, when talking subject is uncomfortable, hoping that avoiding such topic means it will go away. It does not, it brings more walls and issues between families and eventual hurts feelings by including them. I have seen many relatives, friends breaking relationships as resentments have gone way above the normal threshold. Sometimes, just simple talking through the issues might do the trick, as long as both parties are willing to listen and keep open mind.

Are we honest with ourselves and others? For example, I am much more open and frank about our money and health issues, while Zenguy tends to be more private and does not want to share so much. Not because, he does not want to share but because he does not want to trouble anyone about his problems. Most time, what we all want is someone to listen and understand without a judging us.

It is sad but true, that when we need more understanding, we will get the least. Sometimes we are keeping the relationship on surface without going deep, thinking it will be too personal or people may not like it. But if we care about any relationship, we must invest our valuable time in it, and not take relationship as an obligation, because you have to, but because you want to. Just like you cannot clap with one hand, this effort has to be made by both parties, one can start, but cannot continue efforts without effort from both sides.

Yes, we all are busy, believe me, with 2 kids, cooking, cleaning and other things, I am very busy, I am lucky to even get time to eat, take shower or take a nap, but why do I make an attempt to write here? Because it is important for me to blog, so I take time to write even in the middle of the night. We can sure do this for people: People who we care for, like family and friends. If we care about each other we need to make time for each other and be honest in our talking. Why are we afraid to do that?

There is no such thing as being too busy. If something is truly important you, you will make time for it.

Go ahead and make a call to someone you have been thinking of but putting it off. Take time to listen to others and talk your heart out. I know many of us will benefit from this exercise. What are you waiting for?

Zengirl

Image source: UCLA Magazine