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**Reflections After Christmas About Health & Prosperity in the New Year**

**By Susan Dunn**

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**EQ Coach**

Another Christmas come and gone. What a workout for the emotions!

I'm the EQ Coach, it's true, but that doesn't mean I know all there is to know about emotional management - it's a lifelong proposition; and it doesn't mean my emotions don't give me a ride for their money - remember, 2 of our 3 brains don't take orders.

I study emotional intelligence all the time, both intellectually and in interaction with my clients who are working on theirs, and through the wonderful people who take my seminars and workshops. We learn together, and I'm oh so glad for what I've learned about emotional awareness and management. I reminded myself many times of the tenets of emotional intelligence during Christmas, and it was very helpful.

**Resilience**

This Christmas was especially joyful for me, and also very heart-rending. I'm preparing my house to sell. No big deal, you say? As we say in the field, it isn't what's happening, it's what it means to you. This is the home I raised my children in as a busy single parent. It's also the lifelong home of my son who died, at 21, in 1999. For months I couldn't touch his room, as happens to many parents who lose their children. My coach, bless her, told me to move up to Dallas to be near my surviving son. How could I? His smell was still in his room. New painting and carpeting have removed this last earthly reminder of him, though I suppose it was long gone, and I packed up the things of his I've kept, preparing for the move. There are lots of memories in this house.

**Intentionality**

At the same time, my older son and his family are coming from Dallas to spend this Christmas me - our last in this house. I asked myself many times what my intentions were, to remind myself. I had a

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choice. I could either give into the sorrow completely, or I could stuff it down and slap on a happy face. What would an emotionally intelligent person do? She would experience all the emotions as they come and go, feeling the pain, feeling the joy, and celebrating Christmas.

My intention was to enjoy the last Christmas in this home, with happiness in the way Dr. Seligman, the guru of Optimism, means it. There is happiness from pleasure, goodness and meaning, he says, and only one of these necessarily involves what we call "positive emotions." The Life of Pleasure, we're all familiar with - from sugar cookies, to orgasms, to new toys. The Good Life, he says, is getting in touch with your strengths, knowing them and crafting your work, love, friendship, leisure and parenting to use these for flow in your life. The Meaningful Life, on the other hand, involves using these strengths in the service of something you believe is larger than you are.

I also intended to establish a budget and stay within it. This is a very emotionally intelligent thing to do

if you want to enjoy the months after Christmas. If you do, there are no reparations to make!

### Meaningful Life

Intentionality also means focusing on the task at hand and not being distracted. And Learned Optimism means avoiding the downward spiral. The happy, smiley, ebullient cheerful affect, which psychologists call "positive affectivity" is inherited he says, and has a normal distribution. This means about half of us have it, and the rest of us don't. It is not, therefore, associated with anything but what you've been born with. Interesting.

Further, he adds, the amount of pleasure in life you have does not add to life satisfaction.

My intention, then, was to experience this last Christmas in this house to the fullest. This meant I was able to take my granddaughter to the church Christmas pageant. My son who died used to sing with the San Antonio Boys Choir. He had the voice of an angel. One special memory is the year the Choir accompanied the SA Symphony and Houston Ballet, singing the chorus of the Snowflakes at the end of Act I. I drove a carload of the boys down for rehearsals, and amidst the usual young-boy activities, one of the other of them would start singing the haunting melody. It's meant for young boy voices. My granddaughter sang it to me in the car on the way to church. Life is bittersweet; emotions are bittersweet. Later during the church service, her shenanigans kept me distracted and in touch with the moment. I was also able to delight in the children who sang, the children who were alive, so very alive. Life goes on and we go with it. And so do our emotions.

### Reserves

I lecture on emotional intelligence on cruises, and I scheduled one for the first two weeks in December. Cruises are relaxing and rejuvenating to me. It was a good idea. Give this to myself, I said before scheduling it, and I did, and I was glad. I approached Christmas tan and rested. One thing I would do if I had my life to do over, is take a vacation like that every year.

Reserves apply to all areas of life - health, rest, money, friendships. I wrote articles before Christmas

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about expecting chaos and being surprised if things went right. In past year's, I've written to expect something crucial to malfunction - your dishwasher, the garbage disposal, the washing machine, the oven! For some reason I forgot that this year. After all, the year my son arrived home with a trunk full of dirty laundry, the dryer had broken. I knew to count on this sort of thing. So, when I woke up the morning before my houseguests arrived and found no heat, I reminded myself this was to be expected and nothing to get upset over. It didn't quite bust my December budget. Always have reserves!

### Perfectionism

Perfectionism is the enemy of everything good. It puts us in a no-win situation, where others can't please us, and we can't please ourselves. I coach this, and I coach myself on it. As I cruised the grocery aisles choosing items for the Christmas dinner - food, drinks and decorations - I reminded myself that my Christmas meals didn't have to be perfect, they could be "good enough." When this item or that was missing, I reminded myself to be flexible and creative. If not that, then something else.

### Relentlessly & Adamantly Self-forgiving

One thing that's hard for perfectionists, and probably for everyone is that sense of personal failure. Of

course I could say to myself that if I'd shopped sooner, the shelves wouldn't be bare of the desired white sprinkles, Christmas plates, and smaller turkeys, but what would your emotional intelligence coach tell you? To be self-forgiving.

### Flexibility & Creativity

I had to have a red tablecloth ... had to, to make it all work ... the centerpiece, the decorations, the plates. Well, there was no red tablecloth to be had. I could either shop in other stores, when there wasn't time, according to my plan and intentionality. Time to be flexible and creative, I reminded myself. Hadn't I just gone through this with a coaching client. There were other things available in the store, and other things I could use at home. I took it as a challenge to my creativity and put it all together in my head and moved on. Of course it turned out "good enough."

### Social Network

It's a good time of year to have a strong social network! People who know you, the real you. My friend who also lost a child, who knows what it likes. Other people who don't, which is nice, too. And it's nice when you're a coach. My work is meaningful to me, and my clients have wonderful EQs and are just wonderful people. I received many emails, card and phone calls expressing their appreciation. On client in particular with whom I've worked for a year. He was unemployed for 11 months. He finally got a job a week ago, being invited back to a former job where he'd been treated poorly, and it seemed to be exceptionally great for him to receive this affirmation. "They're calling it as Christmas miracle," he said. The staff has welcomed him back with open arms. He called to tell me that 3 things had gotten him through this year - one of them being me, his coach. This gives me great satisfaction.

I also need the strong social network because I work in coaching. It's an emotional and turbulent time

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of year for people, my clients not excluded. It the wonderful circle of life, they on me, and I lean on others. We all support, learn and grow.

### Emotional Intelligence

Seligman refers to hedonic motive, pursuing pleasure, enjoyment and comfort, and eudaimonic motives, pursuing personal growth, development of potential, achieving personal excellence and contributing to the lives of others. "Eudaimonic pursuits [are] significantly correlated with life satisfactions," Seligman says, "whereas hedonic pursuits [are] not."

This week after Christmas, I'm busy putting the final touches on the new emotional intelligence programs and ebooks for the New Year. I'm asking all my ezine subscribers to send in their "life lessons from 2003." It is my intent to make EQ available to even more people in the coming year, and continue the outreach to business to incorporate EQ programs.

It's time for resolutions ... and intentionality is what will make resolutions that work.

As the dust settles after Christmas, and our thoughts turn to the New Year, it's good to ponder what worked last year and what didn't, and to make resolutions to change, grow and learn. Studies show that resilient seniors are individuals who have combined study, work and leisure through all phases of their adults lives. Are you where you want to be?

As we coaches say, "If you keep doing what you've been doing, you'll keep getting what you've been

getting." Emotional intelligence is about flexibility, creativity and resilience in the face of change. Make it one of your resolutions this year to develop your EQ. It covers every aspect of your life and contributes much more to your satisfaction and success than your IQ.

Susan Dunn, The EQ Coach, offers a variety of topnotch coaching opportunities, Internet courses, workshops and ebooks on emotional intelligence and personal development. Visit her on the web at [www.susandunn.cc](http://www.susandunn.cc) and <mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc>.

### **Why Christmas HAD to be Commercialized**

**By Alan Tutt**

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Every year I hear people say over and over again "I don't understand why Christmas had to get so commercialized." Behind this statement is usually an implied suggestion that it's the "evil capitalists"

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that are to blame and that people should focus on other things during the Christmas season.

But is this true? Should we focus on other things around Christmas–time, or is there some value in the commercialization of Christmas?

If you remember the story about when Christ was incarnated in Bethlehem, you'll also remember that gifts were presented to the Christ child soon after His birth. What was the purpose of those gifts?

The gifts given to Christ were a way to signify just how important those 'wise men' considered Christ to be. They felt that this newborn baby would be the greatest of all, and they wanted to express their admiration of His mission on Earth through the giving of gifts.

Isn't that what we do when we give gifts to those around us? Aren't we also expressing just how important these people are to us by the gifts that we give?

Christmas is also one of the few times of the year when we specifically focus on the message that Christ gave the world, and the work that He did while He was here.

All through His ministry on Earth, Christ continually gave of Himself to those who needed Him. He gave the gifts of sight, sanity, health, life, and wisdom. He also received gifts of food, shelter, and clothing.

In our exchange of gifts, we honor the life that Christ lived.

The messages that Christ spoke of during His ministry centered around 2 main principles – faith and love.

We are encouraged to love everyone as we love ourselves, and we are instructed that if we have faith that our prayers will be answered then they will be answered according to our faith.

Faith is sometimes seen as a tricky thing. Either you have it or you don't. Many times, we wonder if there is any way to increase the amount of faith that we have so that our prayers will be more effective in our lives.

Most people tend to pray for one of three things – health, financial abundance, or good relationships. The message of Christ was that we could have anything we wanted if we had enough faith.

In the act of giving gifts, we are generally acting out of love, with the faith that there will be enough financial abundance to fulfill our needs even after the giving of the gifts.

By giving gifts, we open ourselves to the wondrous free flow of Spiritual energy into our souls, which then blesses us in many ways. Yes, we can improve our health and our prosperity by giving gifts.

With so many reasons to be giving gifts, it's really no wonder why Christmas–time became the best reason in the world for gift giving.

May you be blessed by the giving of gifts this year.

Alan Tutt is the creator of the phenomenally popular Keys ToPower Mastery System. Christ taught that anyone can perform the same miracles He did as long as they had enough faith. Learn these secrets to miracle power with the Keys To Power Mastery System. Special offer for December only. ==> <http://www.KeysToPower.com>



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