

Christmas greetings dear family and friends,

For the life of me I can't figure out how it could possibly be December already...or how the time has flown by so quickly... because as is usually the case I hadn't even started putting pen to paper writing my annual Christmas message and this week my internal panic button has begun flashing... You're late! You're late! You're late...**again!!!!**

You might well ask, whatever happened to my good intentions and plan to change this all too familiar behavioural pattern and sadly, the truth is, I honestly don't know...but beating myself up about it certainly isn't going to help!!! Maybe it's because I find I create better when that alarm button starts flashing??? I'll let you be the judge of that as I am trying to take a somewhat different approach with my letter this year...and I'm just going with the flow!

However, the "beating myself up" comment was kind of the segue which allowed my muse to take the reins and get things started...because it has come to my attention that this is something we ALL tend to do!! It seems to be the first thing most of us do whenever we don't achieve the goals we set for ourselves...whether they are BIG or small...daily things on our "to-do" lists or larger life goals we had hoped to make manifest. I think if we're all honest with ourselves and do a mini internal survey on that, we'll discover that small, ugly truth that lies within...we ALL share that tendency to listen to our ego ~ that loud insistent voice in our head that tells us all those negative things about what we haven't done, or what we have messed up and failed to achieve and/or accomplish as opposed to what we initially intended. I know I have repeatedly and desperately searched for the mute button so I could tune that voice out...and something tells me I'm not the only one who's tried!!

I believe that we all tend to become a little more reflective as the holidays approach and the year comes to an end - maybe in part because of those pesky New Year's resolutions that loom on that quickly approaching horizon? However, I also think it's because we are human beings with an inherent trait that makes us want to strive to be ~ **better** ~ but my question to you is "who really sets the bar as to what **better** really means???" In my humble opinion (far too often truth be told) it is that loud and insistent voice in our heads - and if that is the case for you...then I believe you are pretty much pre-programming yourself to fail before you even start!! No matter what height you set the bar...that voice in your head tends to focus on all the negatives of the situation or circumstance you are currently faced with...and I know from personal experience, that thoughts like that only make it harder to make the effort at all!

My next question to you is "how many of us have ever really given serious thought and/or acknowledgement to **all the things we have managed to achieve... and could part of the solution to that nagging question and those inner doubts so many of us share around how we feel about ourselves and our lives, really be that simple?? Could it really be true...** if each of us made a more conscious effort to change our perspective and re-direct our internal focus and thoughts away from the long list our ego creates about the have-nots, and the woulda, coulda, shouldas in our lives and we actually managed to shift it toward giving ourselves an occasional pat on the back and crediting ourselves with what **we did do...** that maybe, just maybe... we could all feel a little happier and better about ourselves and the lives we lead???!"

Why can't it be enough to know you have made or are continuing to make the effort – isn't that what "striving" actually means?? You managed to take the first steps toward attaining that goal...and that's always better than doing nothing at all, isn't it?? Hitting "bumps in the road" of life or the occasional detour from the path we had envisioned for ourselves – it's a tangible reality that inevitably takes on a different face for each of us and I think you'll be happy to note that for once I am **not** going to list them all! That would also only help to prolong the focus on more negativity - which I honestly believe is something we could all do without this year!

Instead, I'd like to make a suggestion for a Christmas present I believe we all **need** to give ourselves this year...and the best thing about it is...it won't cost you a cent, so you can afford it no matter what your personal circumstances are!! Instead of making a list of New Year's resolutions that you might or might not keep next year, or a list of all the gifts you need or want to buy...how about making a list of all the things you experienced or accomplished that **made you feel good** this year?? I know that some of you ask everyone to share something you are grateful for at Thanksgiving gatherings – and I personally love that ritual! I also realize that a few people out there may moan and groan when the idea is first suggested to them, especially if they're uncomfortable voicing these thoughts and feelings with others... but perhaps this suggestion could be an interesting variation to that idea over the Christmas and New Year holidays this season.

To make it a little more fun and put a more positive spin on the idea...why not turn it into a game or an activity you can share with your family and friends this year? I think most of you are already familiar with the game Trivial Pursuit, or one of its many knock-off variations...well this is something I like to think is more in line with a Personal Pursuit ...of "feel good" moments! You can even give people advance notice of your intention to share this game-like experience if you want to so they have a little time and the opportunity to do some soul searching before you get together.

I'll leave the details and categories up to you, but try imitating the various categories and pieces of the pie you need to earn in Trivial Pursuit...and if I can suggest a few, this time the categories should be more personalized...like Relationships (with family, friends and strangers), Hobbies and Interests, Job/Career, Health (think of the pie chart for important things in your life and you'll get the idea)...and then each person must come up with an example of something they did or something that happened in each category that **made them feel good this year!** Maybe you can even utilize the time span between dinner and dessert, for everyone to share at least one moment or story for each category, in order to earn a real piece of pie or holiday treat...instead of watching everyone fade away into that over-stuffed turkey induced stupor??? I think you could be very pleasantly surprised at the observations your list will evoke with others...and it could lead to some very positive and uplifting conversations that just might help you alter your perspective and focus for the days and weeks ahead as you begin the New Year!!

It actually stirred a very positive memory for me about another game that was created and marketed (with my Sin Sister partners several years ago) which achieved a modicum of "retail" success, that had an equally good intention behind it - bringing couples together at social gatherings rather than the typical dividing of the males and females into separate groups doing their own thing!! Who knows...maybe my "sisters" and I need to explore this new avenue for uplifting spirits in a whole new way?? Any takers??? (As you can likely surmise from this last little notation, I am still actively pursuing gainful employment...and I am keeping any and all doors open to whatever possibilities

might arise...but then isn't that something all entrepreneurs tend to do??) Sorry to digress for a moment there!

I have a strong sense that 2010 will continue to bring a few more challenges and changes to all our lives, being as how that IS the way life works – but my inner voice (the quiet, contemplative one this time!) is urging me to focus on all the positives I have to look forward to...and I sincerely hope you will too!! For me, some of the excitement that evokes is looking forward to re-connections with people I love (some of whom will be out here for the Olympics) as well as some very special plans that are still in the making for Bob's 60th in June with his beautiful niece and sister to my soul who also turns 50 then! The rest comes from the anticipation of the endless possibilities and paths we will explore and share with each other along the way...like a full time job for me to enjoy, possibly a new home for us to live in that could make future retirement a whole lot easier to achieve (and the where, when and all that another move might entail), plus the never-ending potential for new connections to be made and enjoyed as well as the interesting things that could happen (if we remain open to them) along the way, all the while maintaining the special connections we have already been gifted with in our lives!! SO it already sounds like 2010 is going to be a pretty phenomenal year to me!!!!

And I do believe I will leave you on that positive note my dear friends and bring another of my lengthy rambling Christmas messages to a close. However...no Christmas message from me would be complete without also extending our heartfelt invitation to you, our dear friends and family...please know that our home remains open to you all...whatever the season or reason...now and always!!

And so...until next we see you...may your holidays be filled with love and laughter, as well as positive thoughts filled with "feel-good" moments and warm memories, both old and new! May your heart lights shine brightly and help another to find their way out of the darkness...and may we wish you all a wonder-filled Christmas Season...just as we ALL deserve!!

Namaste and all our Love!!

Sue, Bob & Meghan