

Christmas 2011

Christmas greetings dear family and friends,

I know that this annual Christmas letter usually starts off with me ranting on (ad nauseum) over how ill-prepared and behind schedule I am for the holidays ~ so my first surprising gift to you (and myself) is telling you that I am slightly **ahead** of schedule this year! Not only are most of the gifts purchased and wrapped already, the tree is up and beautifully decorated and so are the lights and other decorative trimmings inside and out!! **PLUS** I'm actually a few days earlier in sitting down and putting pen to paper for a truly miraculous change... and I can happily say I'm not feeling crazed or frantic about the holidays at all this year... which is truly a gift I can whole-heartedly appreciate and celebrate!!!

Now some of you might be wondering **just how I have managed** to change this indelibly ingrained behaviour of disorganization and last minute chaotic frenzy so you too can make such a positive shift in your own lives... but truthfully speaking, I can't offer any of you a magical formula to follow. All I can tell you is that I have recently made a conscious choice to **take control of my life** (on many levels), and the bonus of making said **choice** has actually helped me open up the floodgates of positivity in both my thoughts and my actions, thus enabling a multitude of blessings to flow freely and abundantly into my life!

I must admit that it took a great deal of time and painful soul-searching on my part... on the heels of losing yet another job **I loved** and while I began another fruitless search for the answer ~ another job ~ or so I thought at the time! Unfortunately, job opportunities for my age group and skill sets seemed so limited, and truth be told, there have been way too many rejections (albeit for very plausible and valid reasons) over the last few years for me to feel overjoyed at the prospect of having to start all over... yet again! That honest observation seemed to be the first **aha moment** for me... **I was just plain tired of this negative repetitive cycle and something HAD to change!** Since changing my current circumstances (being unemployed) and the overwhelming lack of enticing or even interesting or appealing job opps out there was beyond my control, the only thing I felt I could control was my own perspective... and that turned out to be the defining moment when my soul-searching truly began in earnest!

For several years I honestly believed **I was following my passion** and utilizing my creative skill and talents in the decorating and design world I have loved, helping customers and clients create an inviting space to live in. However, despite the enjoyment and satisfaction I derived from doing this for others, for some reason the Universe seemed to be continually closing that door ~ sometimes with a resounding slam ~ in my face! SO, instead of ranting about how unfair it was, I decided that it was time for me to take a closer look at **what life lesson I could take from this!** Instead of focusing on this particular door closing (yet again)... perhaps it was time for me to figure out **what window of opportunity was being opened up for me, that I just couldn't see because I was too busy and focused on looking in the wrong direction!** Strangely enough, that was another **aha moment** for me and it became the starting point for me to make several life-altering changes!!

I guess, as many of you are already aware, I have never been comfortable with being labeled ~ neither as a **victim** nor as a **Survivor** ~ so this was my chance to alter that perspective within myself... something I don't think I was even consciously aware I had allowed myself to believe I had been! Talk about a rude awakening... the result of so many losses in my life over the past several years had **turned me into the person I NEVER intended to be...** and the evidence was clear and glaringly obvious to me!

*I had been allowing my personal fears and insecurities as well as our dramatically altered circumstances determine my choices and my path in life! However, what my subsequent soul-searching allowed me to realize was that some of those choices were partially made out of necessity ~ to earn a paycheque ~ and also partially due to my fear that I had no other options!!! So what does one do when FEAR enters the picture... like many of us out there have done...you stick with the familiar and comfortable and grab the first opportunities that come along... even if they are **not always what's truly best for you...only the best... for now!** Don't get me wrong...I don't regret those choices I made as I was settling into our new life here in B.C.. I met some wonderful people and made some really great new friends along the way and I also **learned a great deal in the process about what I truly enjoyed doing AND what I didn't want** in the way of a career or job as I went along. As the saying goes...the Universe truly only provides what we can handle...and if I might add to that...perhaps it just means **it takes some of us a little longer to recognize the life lessons when they come our way...and we have to repeat the exercise a few times before we truly get it!***

*As many of us know only too well, LIFE also has a way of throwing us the odd curveball when we least expect it! As it happens, it was due to another unexpected personal loss for me ~ my father suddenly passing away in April of this year ~ that I was given some other unanticipated gifts. As difficult and painful as that loss was for me, I was also **given a chance for closure** on some painful personal issues that were long overdue and as a result of Dad's financial bequest to me that I was also **given a little cushion of personal security** that allowed me **the freedom to explore some new options** for my future that I never felt I had available to me before.*

*Another couple of frequently used sayings I believe can be applied to my current circumstances and my newly discovered state of well-being are ~ "**everything happens for a reason**" and "**when the time is right the opportunities will be made clear to you**". Fortunately in my case, both of these recent difficult losses in my life, gave me the gift of time and opportunity to find that clarity I sorely needed to make some exciting changes on this twisting and often times convoluted path called LIFE...and I am most grateful for those gifts of insight and greater awareness!*

*I think many of you may remember my sharing a movie called "The Secret" and the "law of attraction" it teaches us in another of my annual Christmas ramblings a few years ago (2008 to be more exact)? Since I really do try to put into practice most of the lessons I tend to share with others, I worked very diligently on one of the many lessons I learned then and tried to apply it in a more tangible way by creating a very personal "**vision board**" for my future. I even remember **laughing and thinking it was "staged"** when Jack Canfield re-discovered his own vision board many years later and found that nearly all of them had become reality! Well, it now seems that **those "future visions" I lovingly pasted onto my board have come full circle and begun manifesting in my own life**, and I was just too caught up in the challenges I've encountered along the way since that time to even realize it!*

*As it turns out, all those **challenges** were merely temporary diversions until the **time was right**, until I was **finally ready to fulfill a greater purpose and plan I had created for my life** three years ago on that vision board! There are very prominent portions on that board with bold headlines... "**woman with a mission**", "**Adam's Place**", "**break the cycle**" and "**a place of spiritual healing**" to name a few. So, in a few months time (mid-March to be exact) I will be embarking on a new leg of my journey and hopefully, perhaps coming a few steps closer to realizing another major dream on my vision board... because I am going back to school, college actually, to become a Professional (as in legally certified) Counsellor!!!*

Although I am not 100% sure which area of counseling I will choose to practice... my inner self seems to be directing me to work with adolescents and families... because I truly believe that a few of the most challenging life lessons I have learned along the way will help me to more effectively help others with some of the difficult ones they encounter in their own. I'm not sure just where I will be doing that... perhaps it will mean working for one of the organizations that have become very important in my life (like Kids Help Phone or BlueWave) or maybe even hanging out my own shingle on a warm and safe place I create as my own sanctuary for spiritual healing... but I do know I am finally on my way to discovering it... and I couldn't be more excited or thankful for seizing the opportunity I have been gifted with! I would also like to add my extremely heart-felt thanks to a few very special people who are near and dear to me... for the unconditional love, support and encouragement they have given me as I struggled to find my way out of the confusion and re-connect with my visions... because I couldn't have taken this leap of faith and found my new path without you!!!

I am also very excited about the quickly approaching holidays because there are some other new and fantabulous firsts within my family that we will get to share this year! The dynamics of our family gathering have shifted dramatically... with the addition of Meghan's new love, Jeff and his six year old son Matthew, the loss of two of our "adopted daughters" (Laura and Sarah) who won't be with us but are enjoying new and interesting Christmas (and life) adventures elsewhere and a different "adopted daughter" Christie (and possibly our "son from another mother" Brian?) who will be rounding out our numbers and filling the house with all kinds of new and fun, heart-warming memories to capture and enjoy together! We will also be celebrating a special "gift" my brother Terry, the newly infamous author, has created thanks to his perseverance and dedication over the last decade or so... his first publication in a trilogy of books now available world-wide called "Run with the Wolves, Volume I – The Pack"! My brothers and I have decided to give copies of this "soon-to-be" bestseller as a posthumous final Christmas gift from our Dad to the entire family... something I think both he and my Mom would be extremely proud about... and the timing couldn't be more perfect as it also allows us all to honour Mom's anniversary on Dec. 23rd as well as her very special love of this particular holiday and all of us!

And so dear friends and family, I do believe I will end yet another of my lengthy Christmas ramblings on that very positive note along with my thanks for allowing me to share so many of these special messages with all of you over the years as our journey in this life continues to unfold. However... no Christmas message would be complete without also extending our sincere and heartfelt invitation... that you always remember our home remains open to you all... whatever the season or reason... now and always!!

Until next we see you... may your holidays be filled with love, laughter and warm memories, both old and new. May your hearts hold a healing light and positive glow, filled to overflowing with love and heartfelt intentions, along with your passionate feelings, special skills and attributes I believe we would all be well served to search a little more deeply for within... and know that we wish you a wonder-filled Christmas Season... just as we ALL deserve!!

Namaste and all our love!!

Sue, Bob & Meghan