



Update

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From The Desk of Rosanne Mamó

This Holiday Season...

These days it seems that being thankful can be a difficult state of mind to attain. The holiday season is a wonderful opportunity to show our gratitude for one another. We host splendid feasts, attend parties and exchange cards and gifts with family and friends. And yet, appreciation often eludes us. Why? I'd like to offer a few plausible reasons.

The media. The news to which we turn for current events and information is sated with negativity. Divisive elections, unprecedented storms, anti-union sentiment – as well as appalling violence close to home and around the world – monopolize the headlines. These serious and important issues fill our minds with questions; and our quest for clarity often goes unfulfilled. Perhaps there simply are no easy answers; and as educators, we find this quite disturbing. The facilitation of our jobs requires clear-cut understanding and the ability to impart that understanding to others. It's in our blood and our DNA. And it frustrates us when the channels of information we rely on leave us with more questions than answers.

Stress. Many of us are still reeling from the effects of Super Storm Sandy. The wreckage the storm left behind will continue to plague some of our brothers and sisters, families and friends for months to come. Whether one is rebuilding, replacing or relocating, anxiety is an irrefutable part of post Sandy life. It's likely that each of us knows someone devastated by the storm. We have all contributed to the relief efforts through donations of time, provisions, money, or by opening our homes and hearts to those in need. In doing so, we have absorbed some of their stress. When our families, friends and colleagues feel pressure, it is only natural for us to feel it, too. Humans are not the only animals capable of feeling stress, but we are somewhat unique in our ability and desire to ease the stress of our fellow companions.

The Hallmark Phenomenon. I actually have nothing against Hallmark per se, just the frenzied marketing that accompanies this time of year. Before trick-or-treaters collected their Halloween candy, Thanksgiving paraphernalia had hit the aisles of our favorite stores. We all have neighbors who hung their Christmas lights prior to Thanksgiving meals! And the day after Christmas, you will see Valentine's Day cards, chocolate hearts and fake roses filling stores coast to coast.

How can we be thankful *today* when we are too busy preparing for tomorrow's next big event? Perhaps it is cliché to suggest, but finding that elusive sense of gratitude and appreciation could simply be a matter of stopping whatever you're doing and taking a moment to just think about those people, circumstances and things for which we are grateful.

As I write this Update, I am sitting on my couch, laptop literally on my lap. I'm looking around and making a mental list: my husband, my family, my lifelong friends, my silly dogs, my job and colleagues, my home and neighbors....I can keep going, but you get the idea. Try it. Find reasons in your life to be thankful this holiday season and every day thereafter. Let these people and things fill your mind and heart; replace the media, stress and marketing madness with the positive stuff that makes life worth living.

On behalf of the entire SFT Executive Board, I wish you all a holiday season filled with love, joy, peace and scores of reasons to achieve a thankful state of mind.

In Unity,

Ro

HAPPY THOUGHTS

Anna Zurawinsky

The year of 2012 has been filled with much sorrow and devastation which has caused many of us to get down in the dumps, feel demotivated and lose confidence in ourselves; however, in darkness there is usually a glimmer of light which results in a rainbow.

Many of our retirees lost their homes, cars and possessions. They are now living in trailers, shelters and with family and friends. Those who were without a place to live asked for help. we sent an S.O.S. to our tri-state members. The response was overwhelming and heartwarming for our "Sandy" victims. In addition our retirees contributed \$200 and the Retiree Council 18 donated \$3,000.

The happy thought for the holiday, nobody really needs to be lonely or face problems alone, so when you find yourself fading, do realize that your friends are your energy.

Have a great holiday.

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