

Forbes



Kare Anderson, Contributor
I cover ways we connect to accomplish greater things

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How to Make This Holiday Joyful for You And Others

Yes the holiday is rushing towards us and many face it with mixed feelings yet there are small, priceless ways you can foster a festive spirit with others. You can be the wreath that encircles them with genuine warmth.

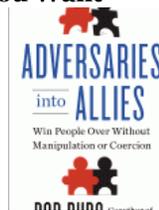


1. The Taylor Swift Touch: Praise Others Vividly, Specifically And In The Presence of Those Who Matter to Them

[Taylor Swift](#) graciously [accepted](#) her CMA Pinnacle award by thanking her country music friends [George Strait](#), [Tim McGraw](#), [Faith Hill](#), [Keith Urban](#) and [Brad Paisley](#) by name. She turned and looked at each one, then specifically, self-deprecatingly said what she had learned from each star. For example Taylor said, “Brad Paisley, who I toured with for nine months. I sat on a speaker by the side of the stage and watched him every single night and he was funny, and I’ll never be that funny.”

2. Be a Go-Giver: Adopt the Convivial Attitude That You Want Others To Have Too

“A two-year old falls down unexpectedly. He isn’t hurt but instinctively knows he wasn’t supposed to fall,” writes [Bob Burg](#) in his idea-packed new [book *Adversaries Into Allies*](#). “He looks at Mom and Dad for an interpretation of what happened. If they laugh as though it’s funny, he’ll probably laugh. If they panic and act upset, he will most likely begin to cry. In either case, Mom and Dad unintentionally set the frame that led to the outcome,” suggests [Burg](#).



We make that framing choice, consciously or not, many times everyday in our interactions with others. For example, the owners of this business positively framed their request by using [unifying humor](#) in the language on their outdoor sign you see to the left.

Since more people traditionally report feeling down

more than up during the Christmas holidays, why not **be a gift this year?** Each time you meet someone in person or virtually, consider that you may be the only angel in their life right now. Set the situation for them to feel cared for, in that moment.

Also you can even “re-set” someone’s upset reaction towards you, as Burg did when driving in a parking lot and inadvertently almost hitting a man. By quickly waving his hand in friendly apology Burg shifted the man’s mood from anger to acceptance of the “waved” apology.

Holiday Hint: In every interaction this holiday, remember that healthy, happy marriages, according to John Gottman, usually have a [“magic” 5:1 ratio](#) of positive to negative interactions. Why not attempt to exceed that standard in all your relationships, beginning this holiday? Practice affirming their positive side and letting negative comments or behaviors slide. Be their soft shoulder.

3. Be Like Them: Brash Friendliness Pushes Us Back Yet Warm Geniality Pulls Us In



A warm smile tends to beget a smile in return. Yet an effusive, over-the-top laugh and wide grin, for example, may cause an introvert or someone who has just gone through a trying time to back into their shell. So bring out the friendly, expressive part of you that’s close to the energy level of the person you are with. Then you are more likely to close the gap of connection rather than widen it.

4. Make Your Welcoming Expression a Comforting Gift: Avoid The “Screen Face”

As we increasingly look down and focus on what’s on our phone, our faces tend to look serious or even dour or dismissive. Unfortunately we often maintain that [“screen face”](#) expression when we look up to engage with others. Since behaviors create moods and moods are [contagious](#) we are setting up an unfriendly “frame” for the rest of the interaction.

Holiday Hint: Adopt the *Golden Golden Rule*. Treat others as they want to be treated



5. Start Now: Be The Gift They Are Happy to Receive

You’ve noticed by now that some people just don’t act right, like you. That’s probably the biggest reason we have friction with others. After repeatedly hitting your head against that hard wall you may be interested in finding a doorway through which you can walk to connect with others without that pain. Burg offers this key insight. While it’s extremely difficult to change what others believe you can often avoid conflict, or turn around a fractious situation and sometimes even sway others **if you are willing to “work within their belief system.”**

He suggests that you view your ego as the horse you ride. If you are in control of your horse you can “accomplish great things.” Conversely, “if the horse is out of control, it can wreak all sorts of havoc, becoming a danger to itself, the rider, and everyone in its path.” Burg cites The Sages of Talmud: “Say little, do much, and greet everyone with a pleasant countenance” then advises that,

“instead of *talking* a good game, actually *play* a good game.”

Perhaps your most nourishing way to prepare for this upcoming holiday is to practice ***being a welcome gift to others*** in the sometimes sad, stressful and joyful times ahead. You’ll find over 200 specific ways in Burg’s idea-packed book.

This article is available online at:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kareanderson/2013/11/09/how-to-make-this-holiday-joyful-for-you-and-others/>