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What Makes the Holiday Season so Special!

-Message from Mr. D

I think that many of us see the holiday season as time of partying, getting presents, having some time off and spending time with family and friends. But we seldom think about what it means, or why we celebrate it in the first place.

For me, Thanksgiving is a time to remember those who have helped us with our lives and got us to where we are. I'm talking about parents, grandparents, friends, neighbors, teachers and mentors who were there for us when we needed them. We should also be thankful for the place we live, Silicon Valley, Ca, USA. There are many billions of people around the world who would love to trade places with you. Be thankful that you were either born here or had the good fortune to move here. We have a beautiful place to live, a great climate and abundance of everything. We sometimes might feel like we don't have much compared to others around us, but compared to the other 6 Billion people on this planet, we are in the top one tenth of one percent. We need to be thankful for our good fortune, remember it and be humbled.

The Christmas season marks the end of one time period and the beginning of a new time, a new possibility. In ancient times, this period was celebrated as the end of the current time period when the days stopped getting shorter (Dec 22nd) and then began getting longer (Dec 25th). In the Christian tradition, this time was recognized as the birth of Jesus, and thus the celebration of "Christmas" began. We need to remember why we gather for these seasonal traditions, and it's not just for the sake of family and friends. We need to reflect on the past year, what we are thankful for, what we wish we might have done differently, and how to right any wrongs we have committed. Charles Dickens expressed this well in his classic "A Christmas Carol". We should enter the new season with a clean conscience and a hopeful spirit. The message of peace and good will to all should be not only proclaimed, but felt in your heart.

Take some time when your exams are done and reflect back on your year, feel good about your accomplishments and forgive yourself for your failings. Also forgive those who have failed you, because it just means you will carry excess baggage into the New Year if you don't. If you can forgive yourself and others, your heart will be free to love in a way that you can hardly imagine. I wish you all a very happy and prosperous new year.

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Mr. D