

# Hello from Ishwari



## December 2013

### Sharing News, Inspiration, Tools, Events, Fun

Ishwari Sollohub, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, (505) 231-1697 [www.ishwari.org](http://www.ishwari.org)

## News

### LICENSURE UPDATE

I am still gathering documentation for my LPCC application, and will soon begin studying for the exam, which will advance me from my current Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) to a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC). I hope to be finished in February.

## A Simple Gift from Me to You

Many years ago, my parents acquired a wonderfully inspirational calendar, created by the Mental Health Association of Oregon in 1978. It consisted of 12 separate pages - one for each month - with a simple positive suggestion for each day. My father constructed a wooden frame to hold the pages, which hung in their kitchen over the years. Every month, they would rotate the page so the current month was displayed. About five years ago, after my mother had died, my father was downsizing in preparation to move into a senior residence. At his request, my siblings and I gathered at our parents' home to divide up most of their worldly goods. One of the things I chose was the framed calendar, which I have had hanging in my office since then. Last December, my father died peacefully at the age of 91. As I honor the one-year anniversary of his passing, I offer you a version which I have adapted. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have.

To download and print a copy, go to

[http://ishwari.org/yahoo\\_site\\_admin/assets/docs/365\\_Acts\\_of\\_Self\\_Care1.340145219.pdf](http://ishwari.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/365_Acts_of_Self_Care1.340145219.pdf)



**365 Days of  
Self-Care**  
(Click on link above)

## Inspiration

**“As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison.”**

**-Nelson Mandela  
(1918-2013)**



**I offer deep gratitude, respect and honor for this fine leader – for all he did, and all he was. May he rest in peace and may his family be blessed in their journey of loss. (IS)**

## Tools

Something that often becomes clear as I work with couples is the importance of monitoring and being intentional about electronic communication – particularly texting. The handout below offers a few helpful ground-rules for couples who are experiencing damaging effects from too much texting.



### Text Caring, not Text Fighting

Have you ever desperately wanted your partner to understand how you feel about something the two of you have going on, so you grab your cell phone and send a text message - quickly keying in raw thoughts and emotions, and then pressing the ‘send’ button without even re-reading your text? Then, while anxiously awaiting a response, you check your phone every few seconds? Once the response from your partner comes through, you quickly become upset and throw a text message right back? The text fight is off and running.

Many couples fall into the habit of communicating through text messaging and may frequently use it as a tool to resolve conflict, but text fighting can be a road to relationship disaster. Texting has some very good uses, and our current society relies heavily on electronics as a form of communication. Even in relationship, there are times when texting can enhance or contribute to a couple’s communication and day-to-day activities. But what happens when texting becomes a form of conflict and hurt to a relationship? The challenge is learning how to use texting in ways that help your relationship, and, more importantly, setting a few rules or guidelines to help keep texting from hurting your relationship.

Here are a few “Do’s and Don’ts” that can help to keep your relationship intact:

- **Do** use text messaging as a way to communicate about logistics and simple, day-to-day issues.
- **Do** send positive thoughts and feelings of love, admiration, encouragement and appreciation. (“XOXO” or “I <3 YOU” are always a pleasure to send or receive.)
- **Do** remember that your partner may not be available at all hours of the day. They may be in a place where they aren’t able to respond quickly. Don’t expect your partner to be available any time you text. This is unrealistic and can actually create problems in the relationship.
- **Do** tell your partner when conflict arises that you will address it when the two of you are able to speak to one another. Speaking face-to-face allows you both to access important nonverbal elements of communication.
- **Don’t** try to resolve conflict via text messaging. If you and your partner have a history of unsuccessful text messaging during conflict, you might even want to avoid using the phone when there is a conflict, instead waiting until you see each other.

- **Don't** bite back. If your partner "bites" in a text message, this doesn't give you the green light to bite back. Try to respond with respect and love. Better yet, use it as an opportunity to say, "I'd like to discuss this when we're together, but not via text."
- **Don't** send angry text messages. This includes any attacking comments, criticism, sarcasm, name calling, foul language, or degrading comments. Doing this creates a written record that is too easily used to track and focus on hurtful statements. This can, in turn, feed into emotionally triggered states on both sides of the conversation.
- **Do** count to ten. Any time you are at all upset with your partner, take a few minutes to think about whether texting is a good idea. Count to ten and then think again. At the very least, re-read your text before sending it, always making sure you are being respectful. It's so much easier to prevent a "text fight" than to recover from one.

## Inspiration



"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

-Marianne Williamson

(NOTE: This quote is sometimes incorrectly attributed to the late Nelson Mandela. Williamson's response: "As honored as I would be had President Mandela quoted my words, indeed he did not. I have no idea where that story came from, but I am gratified that the paragraph has come to mean so much to so many people.")

Regardless of which visionary comes to mind when I read this - Mandela or Williamson - I value it greatly and have shared it with many clients. [IS]

## More Inspiration

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.”  
-Melody Beattie



## Holiday Greetings

Along with much-appreciated snow, December brings a wide range of holiday spirit. From Hanukkah to Winter Solstice to Christmas to Kwanzaa to New Years and others, this month is rich with opportunities for meaningful celebration. One of my favorite bumper stickers is the one above, incorporating so many different religious and cultural symbols.

No matter what you celebrate, it can be challenging to find meaning against the backdrop of rampant commercialism (even Solstice – there are catalogues full of stuff you can buy). It often takes a balancing act to embrace the parts that bring joy and meaning, and at the same time let go of things that feel unnecessarily obligatory or burdensome. For me, it started early this year. I was in a store (Home Depot!) at the end of November, and found myself intrigued by a new type of Christmas lights on display. In spite of a judg-ey inner voice that said - “Really, they’re pushing Christmas already?” - I noticed that my inner child was actually quite entranced and charmed by these brightly-colored lights (called Sugar Plum, no less). I had a quick but gripping little internal struggle with my own snarky arrogance, and reminded myself that that part of me is NOT in charge of Christmas decorations. I then excitedly bought myself a string of Sugar Plums. They now decorate my living room (see photo on the next page), and each time I look at them, I feel a simple and unencumbered childlike happiness.

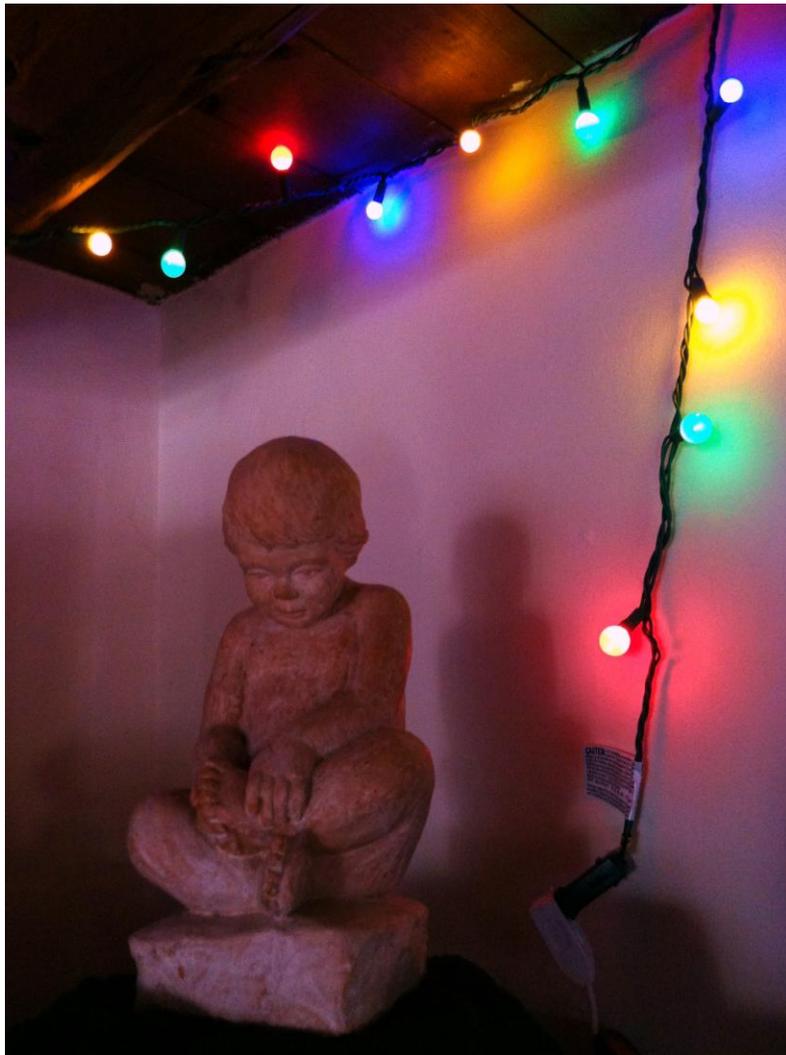
How does my snarky arrogance feel about this? Actually, she’s fine, relieved even, to not have to be so darn vigilant and “politically correct” all the time. It turns out to be very true – Christmas decorations are not her job! Who knew?

The more stressful parts (for me) of holiday traditions are still works in progress – who to give gifts to and who not, what to include in a Christmas letter and/or cards. I hope to learn more each day about how to authentically participate (or not) in these traditions.

More seriously, Last December 20, my father passed away, peacefully, at the age of 91, so I know that this year will include tender feelings about him and my mother, who died several years ago. Also, a close member of my family is currently facing a terminal illness, so my prayers and caring are being lovingly focused there.

At the same time, the crazy-hectic calendar of holiday parties and winter activities is underway. I look forward to pacing myself, and taking my own advice - engaging fully in the things that bring joy and meaning, and letting the “shoulds” fall away. (AND, watching that powerful little inner snark-ster of mine – reminding her over and over again that she can take a break.)

### **SUGAR PLUM LIGHTS**

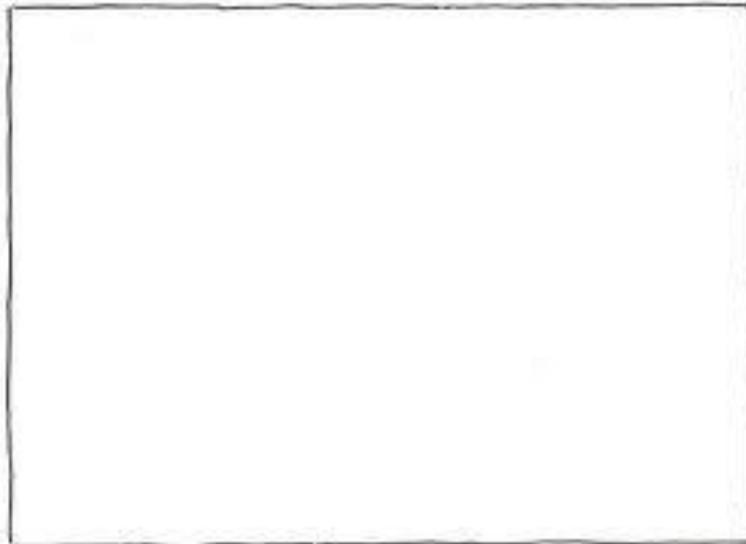


## Fun (Good for a Laugh - or at Least a Smile)



**“The truth will set you free, but first, it will piss you off.”**  
-Gloria Steinem

PLEASE ENJOY THIS CULTURALLY, ETHNICALLY, RELIGIOUSLY,  
AND POLITICALLY CORRECT CARTOON RESPONSIBLY. THANK YOU.



IF YOU COME TO  
A **FORK** IN THE ROAD  
TAKE IT

*Yogi Berra*



If you do not want to receive this communication, please email me at [ishwari@ishwari.org](mailto:ishwari@ishwari.org) with UNSUBSCRIBE as subject.  
I promise, I will not take offense. Thank you.