

Choosing Love Over Suffering

We have problems. BIIIIIG ones. Problems which seem impossible to scale. Gun violence, racism, sexual assault, climate change, bigotry, hate crimes, untreated mental health, tribalism, a culture of judgement and entitlement.

In my years of personal development and professional counseling, I have learned it is impossible to legislate morality or forcibly create peace and love. Healing comes when we become willing to take full responsibility for the circumstances in our lives. In that moment, we suddenly have limitless possibilities leading us to growth. Our lives are the product of millions of choices; things we did, things we didn't do.

What if we focused our attention, choices and actions on being loving? I am not talking about a mushy spineless form of love. Love is persistent and inherently embodies boundaries. If we are blaming others, we are stuck. Blame lies by telling us "you cannot heal unless other people change".

My heart is saddened at the most recent mass shooting in Sutherland Springs, TX. There is no quick fix for the pain our planet is facing. My commitment is to do my part. When I discuss gun laws, mental health or victims' rights; I will do so in a way that is not self-seeking or easily angered. I will not be rude. I will trust, hope and persevere. This is how we will shift a lifetime

of pain and suffering, through true and full personal awakening.

To find out if you are part of the solution or part of the problem, check out the poem below. This is not religion. It's a litmus test for creating change within ourselves in order to allow greater change beyond ourselves.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.







by Dawn Wiggins, Ed.S.

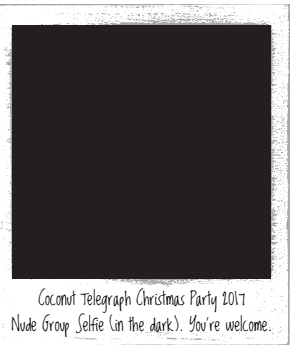
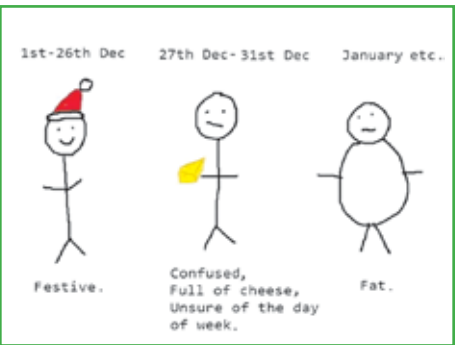
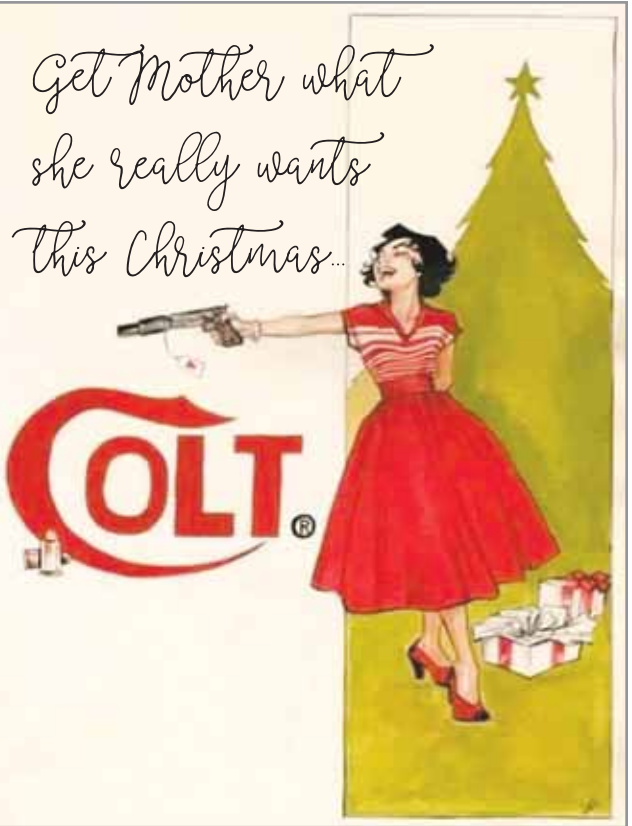


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—1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Christmas: a "Handy" Guide to Portion Sizes

Many people over indulge at Christmas. Simply remember these hand gestures and you will be able to keep your festive consumption at sensible levels.

	WINE In a single sitting you should consume no more glasses than the number of fingers on hand. Include both hands if necessary.		SHERRY TRIFLE Stop when you point aggressively at the Christmas Angel decoration and argue with it about the true meaning of Christmas.
	CHOCOLATE Press thumb / index finger together. Look through the gap and eat whatever you see while wandering round the house.		TURKEY Mr. Finger says you can eat as much turkey as you want because it's been a really, really bad year.
	CHEESE A block that fits between extended thumb and little finger is enough. If not, cut larger block down middle and measure both halves.		MINCE PIES Any even number is ok. Always have a spare box to prevent finishing on an odd number.



The Mangrove Galley by Sandi Mieszczenksi

Here we are in the holiday season and for me that means baking. I love to make holiday treats and share them with family and friends. They make a wonderful gift. Most of my baking involves cookies and what better time of the year to produce some of these awesome treats. Here are two of my favorite recipes. They are both so yummy that I usually double the recipe. As a hint, use parchment paper on the cookie sheets. It makes it easier to remove the cookies. So, try them both and happy holidays to all!

SNICKERDOODLES

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon



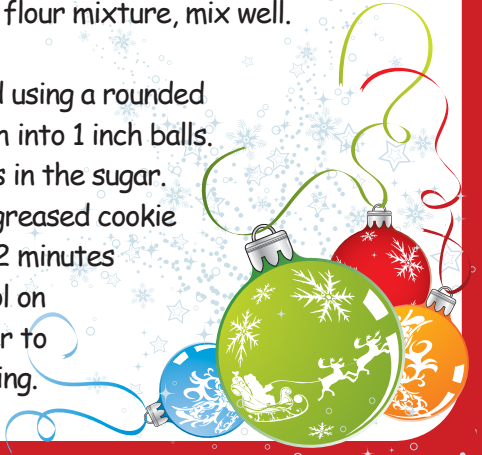
Heat oven to 400°. Thoroughly mix the butter, shortening, sugar, and the eggs. Blend in the flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, and salt. Shape the dough by using a rounded teaspoon into balls. Mix the 2 tablespoons of sugar and the cinnamon in a separate bowl. Roll each ball in the cinnamon mixture. Place 2" apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 8 - 10 min. or until set. Let cookies cool for a few minutes then remove from the cookie sheet cool on a rack to cool further.

MOLASSES CRINKLES

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour | 1/2 cup shortening |
| 2 teaspoons baking soda | 1/2 stick butter, softened |
| 1 teaspoon cinnamon | 1 cup packed dk. brown sugar |
| 3/4 teaspoon ground ginger | 1 large egg |
| 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice | 1/2 cup molasses |
| 1/2 teaspoons ground cloves | 1/3 cup sugar |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt | |

Heat the oven to 375°. Blend the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, allspice, cloves and salt. In a separate large bowl, (using an electric mixer) beat the shortening, butter, and brown sugar for about 3 minutes or until well combined. Add the egg and molasses, beating again until well blended. Add the flour mixture, mix well.

Dampen your hands and using a rounded teaspoon, roll the dough into 1 inch balls. Dip one end of the balls in the sugar. Place 2" apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake for 10 - 12 minutes until golden brown. Cool on the sheet then transfer to a rack for further cooling.



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