

A Month of Giving

End-of-Life University

Week 1: Give Light

Light is an essential component of all of the December holidays and symbolizes, hope, love, life, miracles and healing. Put up holiday lights outdoors or in your windows, light candles and place them on windowsills, make luminaria to decorate your walkway. Also focus on sharing your own internal light with others this month by smiling frequently and shining through your eyes.

Week 2: Act of Kindness

This week do at least one act of kindness for someone else: shovel snow for a neighbor, deliver groceries to a senior, leave a note and a treat for your mailman, send muffins to healthcare workers, put coins in expired parking meters, donate to a shelter or food kitchen—the possibilities are endless and don't have to cost money. Pay attention and notice all the people and places where a little touch of kindness might make a difference this week.

Week 3: Share a Story

One of the most powerful ways to activate the caregiving response in other people is to tell stories. This month invite your friends and family to engage in storytelling with you by asking them questions: When was your favorite (holiday) celebration? What was your most difficult holiday? Have your own stories ready to share in return. Your willingness to be authentic and vulnerable by telling your story is a gift of immeasurable value.

Week 4: Give Away Something You No Longer Need

As the year comes to an end it's a good practice to take a look at all of your possessions and decide which things you want to keep and what you can (and should) part with. Letting go of those things that are no longer useful or meaningful to you will help you make space for something new to enter your life in the new year. When you give away something you don't need, you offer new life to that possession as well, since the owner is likely to love it as much as you once did. Your generosity will benefit both you and the person who receives the item.