

Dreading conflict during the holidays? Let it go

By Nicholas Joyce, The Conversation

Every holiday season, families and friends convene to share affection, kindness and experience. In the ideal holiday atmosphere, one often depicted in commercials and media, such get-togethers are places of warmth, appreciation and general happiness.

If you find yourself in such a family, count yourself lucky and blessed.

If your holiday is marked with stress and difficulty, then you may be part of the rest of America, where the holiday season brings real issues to light in addition to the positive experiences of the season.

In my day-to-day work as a psychologist, specializing in mental health therapy with young adults, the holidays always bring to bear deep-seated issues. For many, family is something they have avoided by moving away for college, and thus coming home for the holidays forces them to engage in what they do not want to do and have successfully avoided for months. For the ill-equipped person, this sets the stage for disaster and even poor health. Long-term stress has been linked to digestive problems, heart disease, sadness and depression. Some studies have shown that people undergoing stress have more viral infections.

Fortunately, we can prepare ourselves for these encounters, go into them with open eyes and perhaps manage them better.

The power of acceptance

I work with people who often say things like “If only my dad

didn't drink too much," "I wish my mom would accept how I choose to live my life," "I need my brother to stop teasing me all the time."

While it is true that these statements reflect deeply held desires and such changes would bring drastic amounts of relief to the person's life, there is also a reason these events have not occurred or changes have been made.

I call this the "rejecting reality" standpoint, and all humans get held back by it. We spend years longing for a reality that is not true. A mom who doesn't care about our weight, a dad who will express his affection toward us, a sibling who doesn't take his own issues out on us. Under the rejecting reality mindset, we enter our homes for the holidays full of hope this time will be different, only to be disappointed for another year.

And what happens when we are hurt? We withdraw or lash out, causing more conflict. Such a cycle may exist in your family dynamics for years if you start to closely examine it.

The alternative, then, is to begin to cultivate what I term the "acceptance mindset." This mindset involves dealing with exactly what is true, what is factual and what is realistic rather than all the things that we wish could be. Such a mindset involves opening ourselves to the pain involved in fully realizing our less-than-ideal lives. It means I will go to holiday dinner knowing full well my brother is going to tease me or my mom is going to comment on my appearance. Entering with this reality makes us less reactive and more capable of choosing what if anything we want to do about this dynamic.

To change or let go

I teach my clients a life skill called the "letting go process." It involves three steps:

- Notice and allow an experience to be there.
- Decide if the experience is useful or not.
- If useful, do something about it. If not, let it go.

Such a process has to be utilized continually during the holidays, when we are often once again confronted with dynamics and personalities we try to escape in our day-to-day lives.

So what does this look like in practice?

Jane is going home for a week to be with her family for the holidays. She is already dreading the trip, and in particular having to interact with her mother, who Jane knows will comment on her weight gain and criticize her for being single.

So, using the letting go system, when Jane arrives and Mom asks her why Jane looks fatter than the last time Mom saw her, Jane:

- Notices her hurt and frustrations with Mom after the comment and adopts the attitude of being OK having these feelings in the moment.
- Considers the usefulness of the feelings.
- Decides on whether to go a “change” route or a “let go” route.

The change route would involve engaging in a behavior to address the experience she is having: namely, Mom’s comments toward her. Jane could take an assertive stance and respond with an “I statement” such as “I feel really upset when you comment on my weight and I would appreciate it if you refrained from doing so for the rest of the time I am home.”

At this point we do not know how Mom will respond, but we focus less on that outcome and instead on the process of what Jane can control. The process here is Jane’s own behavior in response to Mom. Mom may get defensive or angry, but Jane can feel good that she is standing up for herself.

Alternatively, Jane could also choose to go the letting go route. By being able to notice her hurt and frustration in the moment, Jane becomes less reactive and is better able to not engage with Mom in an argument like has happened in the past. Jane is able to respond to Mom in a different way, or possibly not at all, changing the subject entirely.

Jane could simply respond by asking Mom how she is doing or acknowledge that yes, she has gained weight. Jane is able to prevent her reaction from further escalating the possible conflict in the moment. This may seem overly simplistic, but with practice we can better let go of things that used to catch us and trap us into acting in unproductive ways.

Putting it into practice

As you head into your holiday events, take a minute to notice what thoughts, feelings and urges come up for you. This is just information, and all of it can help us prepare a plan.

With this information available to you ahead of time, consider which route you want to go. Do you need to go a change route and address an issue, or do you need to let it go as something out of your control? You will now be more fully able to accomplish whichever route you choose.

And just because something did not go well the first time you did it does not mean it cannot go well the next time. So even if Mom didn't respect your wishes last time, it may be worth it to try it again, even if the reward is just that you can feel good about the process of being assertive for yourself.

New Carson freeway a noisy, unwanted neighbor

By Joe Hart, KRNV-TV

Buffy Ford, her husband and their three horses moved to south Carson City in 2005. The quiet rural neighborhood at East Roland and Ponderosa Street was a perfect fit for their outdoor lifestyle.

They knew the new Carson City freeway was coming. What they didn't know is that the sound wall designed to minimize traffic noise would end right in front of their home.

"The wall stopped, and now there's an open space and we feel that a lot of that noise bounces off the opposing wall and comes in," Ford explained.

Read the whole story

Bears make comeback in Nevada

By Doug Puppel and Nikole Robinson Carroll, Nevada Public Radio

After being declared nearly extinct in Nevada in 1979, black bears have staged a comeback in the state, with a population today numbering in the hundreds.

Fanning out east and south from Lake Tahoe, bears are repopulating the Great Basin ranges that hunting, logging, and encroaching civilization drove them from a century ago.

A study by UNR and the Wildlife Conservation Society credits the bears' return to long-term conservation efforts. Also, modern grazing and forestry practices have allowed for reforestation of historic bear habitats.

Read the whole story

Stolen artwork returned to S. Lake Tahoe gallery



The art has been returned to the gallery.

Photo/Provided

A painting worth more than \$1,000 that was stolen from a South Lake Tahoe gallery has been recovered.

Someone stole the artwork on Dec. 9 from the sidewalk display in front of Pacific Crest Gallery in the Heavenly Village. It had a sales price of \$1,195.

Gallery staff then saw it for sale on Craigslist.

A South Lake Tahoe police detective posed as a possible buyer, negotiating a sales price of \$1,000. Detectives with assistance of El Dorado County District Attorney's Office investigators met the seller at his residence in Sacramento.

The painting was serialized and it was confirmed to be the stolen painting.

The suspect, whose name is being withheld, is cooperating with the investigation. How the suspect came into possession of the painting is still under investigation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Truckee solidifies new trash program

The Truckee Town Council approved a 10-year solid waste and recycling franchise agreement this month with Tahoe Truckee Sierra Disposal that includes a host of new, sustainable services for residential and commercial customers.

The previous agreement was set to expire June 30, 2018.

Truckee residents will be moving to containerized recycling and yard waste services over the next three years. All Truckee residents will receive a 64-gallon wheeled blue cart for recyclables and a 96-gallon green wheeled cart for yard waste. Recycling and yard waste carts will be serviced curb-side on alternating weeks. Residents have the ability to opt out of either of these programs and use alternative service options built into the new agreement.

For recyclables, residents can continue to use blue bags which will be picked up weekly with their mixed waste. There will also be two locations for recycling drop-off during the summer months.

Green bags will not be picked up after June 30, 2018. If residents do not want to use green carts, they may rent a 6-yard dumpster for a week from the expanded dumpster rental services through TTSD. Residents may also drop up to 6 yards of yard waste at Eastern Regional Landfill.

Other notable service changes include two free pick ups of large, bulky items per year and four overage pick ups per year where customers can put out up to 96-gallons of mixed waste including yard waste with advanced notice to TTSD.

All Truckee residents will receive yard waste containers in June 2018 to begin use on July 1. Residents can choose to receive up to three 96-gallon containers or opt out of the program entirely. Glenshire residents will receive recyclables carts in September and begin with the new recycling services starting Oct. 1, 2018. The remaining Truckee neighborhoods excluding Tahoe-Donner will start using blue carts in 2019. Tahoe Donner residents will begin with the new recycling services in 2020. All residents will continue to use their current trash cans for mixed waste.

Commercial customers will receive wildlife-resistant food waste carts that will be serviced up to three times a week. These carts will provide more efficient collection of food waste than the current yellow bag program. Businesses will also receive carts for recyclables.

Reports of human trafficking from Tahoe to El Dorado Hills

By Vicki Gonzalez, KCRA-TV

El Dorado County has completed three human trafficking stings this year – in South Lake Tahoe, Placerville and El Dorado Hills, according to the district attorney's office.

"We have young victims as well as older victims that are at risk so we are targeting all areas of the county," Deputy District Attorney Lisette Suder said. "What we are learning is that this is very prevalent and there are a lot of people that are stuck in routines and being trafficked that don't have ways to get out."

The recent sting rescued a 17-year-old trafficking victim Thursday, as well as produced 14 arrests or citations, in a release sent out by the El Dorado Sheriff's Department.

Read the whole story

No recreational pot at Calif. Tahoe ski towns

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

California ski towns are going to have to wait a little longer for recreational marijuana.

On Jan. 1, adults 21 and over will be allowed to possess up to one ounce of recreational marijuana in California, but most

ski towns in Northern California won't allow sales of retail product yet.

Some of the most popular ski towns in Northern California – South Lake Tahoe, Truckee and Mammoth Lakes included – have moratoriums on recreational marijuana businesses, which means that product won't be available until late spring, at the earliest.

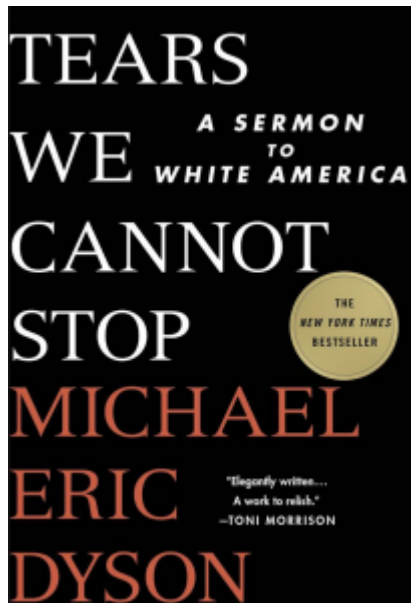
Read the whole story

Book review: A lesson for all white people

By Kathryn Reed

I believe there is white privilege. I'm sure I've benefited in ways I don't even know. That ignorance is part of the problem of white privilege.

So much of the United States is divided by color. It's one of the original us vs. them battles, a battle that still exists today. The Civil War, the Civil Rights Movement, a black president – we are still full of uncivility.



In many ways it seems to be getting worse.

“Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America” by Michael Eric Dyson (St. Martin’s Press, 2017) peels back the niceties of the issue to get to the raw truth. And that can be uncomfortable.

That’s why this book should be read – to see the truth from a black person’s point-of-view, to have to confront your own biases/prejudices, to learn, to think.

Most people just want their opinion, their feelings to be heard. But too many of us don’t want to listen. We think we know. But how can we know if we don’t actually engage with people who are not like us?

This book is a type of engagement, albeit one sided. But maybe that’s what is needed – an uninterrupted lesson from someone who doesn’t resemble the reflection in the mirror.

Lake Tahoe is a pretty homogeneous place where the number of black people is a blip on a demographic chart. All the more reason to read the book to learn.

Dyson delves into the conflicts with law enforcement. But this book is so much more. It’s a history lesson of sorts. White privilege is not a new concept.

“But the truth is that what so often passes for American history is really a record of white priorities or conquests set down as white achievement,” Dyson writes. “You certainly have an insatiable thirst for history, but only if that history justifies whiteness.”

The negative about the book is that it was written as a sermon. And to me, a sermon is like a lecture. And, really, who likes to be lectured to? Still, the message was powerful, enlightening and thought-provoking.

Rise in school bullying in Nev. attributed to awareness, enforcement

By Meghin Delaney, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Reports of bullying in Nevada’s schools nearly doubled during the 2015-16 school year before dipping last year, a byproduct of stronger reporting and better investigations, according to a state official.

The state passed an anti-bullying law during the 2015 legislative session, a few months before the 2015-16 school year began. New measures were added in 2017.

“As schools become aware of the process, they’ll see more bullying,” Christy McGill, the head of the state Department of Education’s safe and respectful learning environment office, said of the increase. “As kids, students and families see that schools are serious about bullying and they’re going to be stopped, the incidents of bullying start to recede.”

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- South Lake Tahoe's SnowGlobe music festival hours will be Dec. 29, 2-11:30pm, Dec. 30, 2-11:30pm, and Dec. 31, 2pm-1am.
- Here are the El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra roadwork schedules from Caltrans for the week.
- South Lake Tahoe now has a vacation home rental page on **Facebook**.
- Multi-platinum artist/musician/producer Charlie Puth is the first act to be booked for the 2018 Lake Tahoe Outdoor Arena at Harveys. He will be in town Aug. 18 at 7pm. Hailee Steinfeld will open for him. Tickets will go on sale **online** to the general public Dec. 22.
- Meet Your Maker, presented by Tahoe Food Hub, will take place on the last Friday of every month starting Dec. 29 and going through March 30. From 2-6pm at the Farm Shop near Alpine Meadows people can meet and connect with two to three of Tahoe Food Hub's farmers and producers while tasting samples and enjoying shop specials.