



*My View*

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## A Christmas Message

To use a cliché, "this is a time for giving." We give and receive gifts from family, friends and co-workers. I love it! I enjoy watching those I care about opening their gifts, and I can't wait to see what books, gift cards and other things I will receive. When I think of "giving" in the context of TIP, my thoughts go immediately to what we give to survivors of tragedy, to first responders and to the community at large. My intention when I began thinking of this Christmas message was to pat us all on the back for sacrificing during the holidays to provide support to survivors of tragedy.

And, of course it is true that TIP volunteers and TIP leaders sacrifice more during the holidays than any other time of year to help others in distress. But a funny thing happened to me on the way to writing this message....I lost interest in writing about how we give to others during the holidays, and I found myself feeling very grateful for what our clients give to us. Here are some of the gifts I believe we receive from our clients....an intimate experience i.e., acceptance into their lives at a very personal time in their lives....a view into their unique customs and rituals....an opportunity to make a difference....a demonstration of the resiliency of human beings...an opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation of our own lives and relationships. The realization of what our clients give to us is summed up in a phrase I frequently hear from TIP volunteers after they return from TIP calls: "It was a privilege being there."

In this simple phrase TIP volunteers are expressing an often overlooked reality... the helping relationship is not a one way street. Rather, there is a reciprocal give and take between TIP volunteers and clients. So, yes let's take time at this time of year to appreciate each other and the fine service we provide to the community and to those in trouble. But let's also pause and appreciate those who've allowed us into their lives at the worst time in their lives, and by doing so have taught us lessons about life and death we could not have learned in any other way. I for one am filled with gratefulness for all the gifts which our clients have given us throughout the year. I wish you all a happy, safe (and grateful) holiday season!

Wayne would like to hear your thoughts.  
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