

LAURA ON LIFE

Gift giving is not an obligation

Gift-giving should not be an obligation. Furthermore, not receiving a gift from someone should not condemn that person to your blacklist.

A gift is simply a gift – something you give to someone because you thought they would like it. You thought of them when you saw or made this gift and knew they had to have it.

If you buy the mail carrier a scarf because you thought to keep his ears warm, this doesn't mean you must give one to the trashman. Of course, if the trashman's ears are equally as important to you as the mail carrier's, you may find yourself knitting mufflers for both of them.

If Mary has been a real peach helping you adjust to a new job and Roy merely made it clear that he wanted your job, you are not obligated to gift them both just because their cubicles abut.

It would be lovely to be able to give a gift to everyone regardless of your feelings about them, because that's what Jesus, "our Reason for the Season," did. However, we will always make excuses for our limited gift giving; a lack of money or time or the thought that even Jesus would probably give Roy a lump of coal.



Laura Snyder

To be perfectly frank, we are not Jesus. We are not perfect. We were not born with that kind of capacity for love and forgiveness. We do not always think of other people. Our hearts are fickle.

However, regardless of how much money or time we have, or how much perfection we lack, everyone we know is deserving of our regard; a gift of ourselves.

I know people who put limitations on their gift-giving. That person is over 18 years old, so... no gift. That person didn't give me a gift last year, so... no gift. That person isn't really part of the family, so... no gift.

A person's place in life should not determine whether or not you give them a gift. Money should not play a part either, but it often does.

To give a gift, one

must either buy one with dollars or make one with time. If you don't have time, you probably have enough money. If you don't have money, you probably have enough time. Time is the one resource that people sometimes forget they have. Consider making something for the people in your life; even if it is a beautifully hand-written note. I love to receive handmade gifts!

Gift giving is not an obligation. It is an expression of love or friendship. It should not be a chore. If it is, you are doing it wrong. It should be something you want to do.

If spending money causes you stress, then

make something or do something for the people you know and even for those you don't know. You've heard it said many times: "It's not the gift, but the thought that counts."

If you have a beautiful voice, sing for them.

If you have a talent for cooking, make lasagna for them.

If you have a green thumb, grow something for them.

If you are good with a hammer, build something for them.

As always, a gift is optional. If, for one reason or another, you did not receive a gift from someone this year, don't be offended. If they forgot about you, it simply

means that you probably haven't done anything for which to be remembered. Next year is another year...

Give of yourself to those people who hold your regard. Don't let money, time, or obligation make it a chore. This is something that should be easy to do.

Most importantly, it is something that should not be reserved merely for the Holiday Season.

Laura Snyder is a nationally syndicated columnist, author & speaker. You can reach Laura at lsnyder@lauraonlife.com Or visit her website www.lauraonlife.com for more info.

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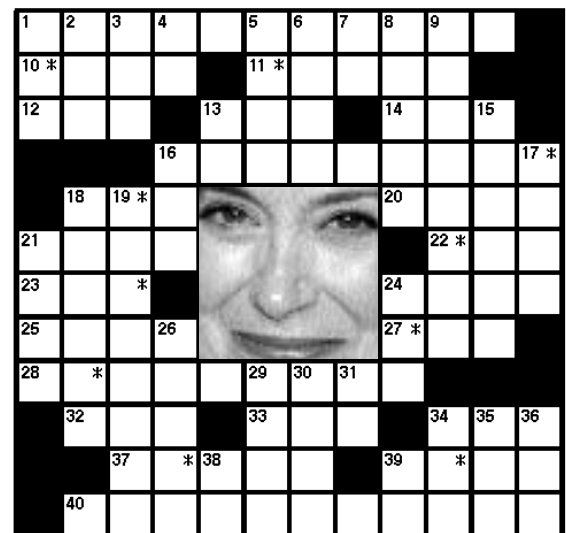
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TV CROSSWORD



The identity of the featured celebrity is found within the answers in the puzzle. In order to take the TV Challenge, unscramble the letters noted with asterisks within the puzzle.

- ACROSS**
- Actor on "The Good Wife" (2)
 - Setting for "The Golden Girls": abbr.
 - "Run __, Run Deep"; 1958 Clark Gable movie
 - Many a time, in poetry
 - Eliot __; role on "The Untouchables"
 - Danny __; "CSI: NY" role
 - "I Survived a __ Game Show"
 - Injure
 - Sandwich type, for short
 - Short-tailed weasel
 - "All in the Family" producer
 - "He's Just Not That __ You"; 2009 movie
 - "That's __ Raven"
 - "Hot __ Time Machine"; 2010 John Cusack film
 - Sphere
 - Whitney and McKinley: abbr.
 - Initials for the star of "Tootsie"
 - Lois' comic strip hubby
- Solution**
- JANE FANTLEY

- DOWN**
- Elly May's pa
 - "__ to Billy Joe"
 - Rudy, to Theo
 - "__ Was a Quiet Man"; '07 Christian Slater film
 - Saint topper
 - Last name for baseball's Felipe, Matty and Jesus
 - Actor Lansing's initials
 - "Guiding __"

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sudoku

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Fill the puzzle so that every row, every column, and every section contain the numbers 1-9 without repeating a number

			9					3
		8		4				6
6		2						9
	7	1	3					
			6				4	
					5	3	8	
	1					8		2
4				5		7		
2					6			

Check today's issue for the solution to the puzzle. INT Book 14 #5

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