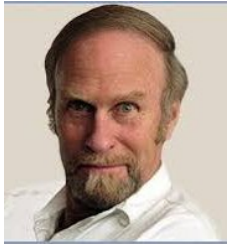


# At This Christmas Hour: Maximize Your Spiritual Self



By Frosty Wooldridge

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Years ago, as a math-science teacher, I rode my bicycle to work each day to Brighten, Colorado. At 22 miles, I pedaled my legs off to make it to work in 80 minutes. A quick shower, dress, open the doors to my classroom, and welcome 33 students, daily. Oh, those sunrises on the eastern plains astounded me...and heading back home, sunsets over the Rocky Mountains and the Flatirons of Boulder, Colorado brought my eyes such beauty and my spirit incredible joy.

My teaching colleague who rode with me always rated the sunrises and sunsets on a 1 to 10 scale. Mostly, we enjoyed 10's on our daily rides. The sky exploded in colors, shapes, clouds and textures.

Later, as a long-haul trucker for United Van Lines hauling furniture, I hung my bike up in the garage rafters. As a trucker, I worked long hours, hard labor and little time for cycling...but I earned a MUCH better living.

As this Christmas moment advances upon our country, I am reminded that "change" remains inevitable. It is the "constant" of the universe or you might refer to it as the Great Spirit's way. However you deem your religious path, my wife Sandi and I wish you a grand journey of the spirit. Also, this is a time of renewal of your soul. Whether it's that tiny child in the manger or your own child you're rearing in

the world, it's all about refurbishing your life-force at Christmas time.

While my bike remained in the rafters, I realized that the "illusion" of perfection could not be sustained. One cannot keep something new forever. You have to take it out of the package or down from the rafters to use it, get it dirty, scratch it up and wear it out.

I'm reminded of the **Velveteen Rabbit** by Margery Williams where the child kept playing with her rabbit until the rabbit became "alive" with use. It's one of those classic stories that urges you to use your life, fulfill your life, discover your destiny, chase after it and, finally, live it. Use your life so that you are alive and you come to the end of your life totally worn out...with a big grin on your face.

So, the question jumps up, "Am I living a life worth remembering?"

It reminds me of a scrooge who hoarded his gold in a hole in the ground of his back yard. He would go dig it up just to look at it, and then, add more gold. One day, a stranger saw him in the act. Later, the thief dug up the gold and escaped.

When the scrooge dug up his gold the next day, he screamed at its disappearance.

He told his neighbor. The friend said, "Well, what did you do with that gold?" The scrooge answered, "Well, nothing...."

So, it begs the question, what are you doing with the gold in your house, your life, your family, your possessions and your friends. Do you only look at your 'gold' to feel rich? Or, do you assemble your gifts and share them with the world?

One of the things I hate during this gift giving season, is shopping. I see parents buying meaningless gifts that their children don't need, don't care about or even play with more

than a few minutes. I'd rather take my friends out dancing, skiing, snowshoeing, and/or on good days, out for a bicycle ride. A walk in the wilds gives your spirit the greatest gift of all. Peace!

Instead of costly gifts, I would rather give treasured moments to those I love. So, in the last part of 2021, give your heart to your friends. Give your laughter. Give your kindness. Share your joy.

Watch **"It's A Wonderful Life"** with Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed for the umpteenth time. That movie is a gift of the soul. It opens every person's heart that watches it for the first time or, in my case, for the 50<sup>th</sup> time.

### **Trust Your Gifts To Your Friends, Family and Loved Ones**

1. Rededicate your life to promoting love, kindness and positive energy to humans and animals in the coming year. Dedicate yourself to help this planet heal itself. Take action to move toward recycling, reuse, no waste and everything more ecological.
2. What about tragedy? There's plenty of tragedy to go around this Christmas. Let's work individually to bring a smile to anyone we pass in the streets with a, "Merry Christmas." Forgive those who have harmed us or insulted us or spoke poorly of us.
3. If you remember Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, at his darkest hour in 1863, he wrote Christmas Bells, a poem still song today. Read the words as he works through the loss of his first wife, and then, his second wife, and then 51,000 soldiers who died at Gettysburg during the Civil War. His soul felt torn, yet he dedicated himself to live with love.
4. In your family, ring the bell of truth. Stand up for decency and honor. Rejuvenate your caring for all of humanity. Christmas is about the larger truth of humanness.

This Christmas 2021, instead of being a spectator, become expansive. Activate yourself toward the good.

On April 24, 1910, President Teddy Roosevelt gave this speech that I have hung up on my office wall: The Man in the Arena.



**“It is not the critic who counts; not the man/woman who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.” –Teddy Roosevelt**

In 2022, let each one of us give a gift of dedication to America, our country, our home, our life. We are all men and women in “The Arena of America.” Let’s each work to make America a better place for all of us.

Merry Christmas to you and yours,

Sandi and Frosty

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