

# December 2018



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## **STRONG BANKS -**

No US bank has failed and required a bailout in the 329 days through Friday 11/09/18, the longest stretch without a US bank failure since 2/02/07 (source: Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation).

## **STAYING PUT -**

Between 2016 and 2017, 6 out of every 7 Americans (86%) lived in the same house or apartment on a year-over-year basis, i.e., they did not move (source: Census Bureau).

Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. It's a time for visiting family and friends. We share gifts with those we care about, reach out to those we might not know as well, and help those in need. Yet, one of the most common laments I hear about Christmas is that it has become such a commercialized holiday.

During the Christmas season we purchase a tree, cards, postage, food, decorations and gifts. Many of us travel during the holiday season costing us additional money for gas, plane tickets or lodging. For those of you who might want to take at least some of the commercialization out of Christmas, I found some suggestions for excellent gifts that cost little to nothing.

### **THE GIFT OF LISTENING...**

But you must REALLY listen. No interrupting, no daydreaming, no planning your response. Just listening - to your children or grandchildren as they excitedly tell you what they hope Santa brings. Listening as your spouse recounts fond memories of Christmases past. To the carolers who tramp around in the cold, aiming to spread just a little holiday cheer.

Listen. You might be surprised at the *value* of what you hear.

### **THE GIFT OF AFFECTION...**

Be generous with appropriate hugs, kisses, pats on the back and holds. Let these small actions demonstrate the love you have for family and friends.

### **THE GIFT OF LAUGHTER...**

Clip cartoons. Share articles and funny stories. Your gift will say, "I love to laugh with you."

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## ON BORROWED

**TIME** - The total of global debt, i.e., both private sector debt and public sector debt, was equal to a record 213% of world GDP in 2009 at the beginning of the global real estate crisis. The total of global debt in 2016 is even higher on a relative basis, equal to 225% of world GDP (source: International Monetary Fund).

## COMPLETE CYCLE

- The jobless rate in the USA was 4.1% in October 1999, then more than doubled over the next decade to reach 10.0% by October 2009, and now has fallen to 3.7% in October 2018. The last time we had an unemployment rate that was lower than 3.7% was in December 1969 (source: Department of Labor).

## THE GIFT OF A WRITTEN NOTE...

It can be a simple "Thanks for the help" note or a full sonnet. A brief, handwritten note may be remembered for a lifetime, and may even change a life.

## THE GIFT OF A COMPLIMENT...

A simple and sincere "You look great in red," "You did a super job," or "That was a wonderful meal" can make someone's holiday.

## THE GIFT OF A FAVOR...

Every day, go out of your way to do something kind.

## THE GIFT OF SOLITUDE...

There are times when we want nothing better than to be left alone. Be sensitive to those times and give the gift of solitude to others.

## THE GIFT OF A CHEERFUL DISPOSITION...

The easiest way to feel good is to extend a kind word to someone. It doesn't cost a thing to say, "Hello" or "Thank You."

-Author Unknown

This Christmas season, I hope we can all give the gifts that are of the most value, will last a lifetime, and won't be tossed aside when they get old or worn out.

These are the gifts that make Christmas truly special.

On behalf of all of us at Petra Financial Solutions, I wish you a happy holiday season and a very merry Christmas.



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