

om for the holidays

If you're on a spiritual path, the pressure of holiday gift giving can seem like an undesirable detour. Yogis' complaints include the "trap" of the office Secret Santa, the crush of holiday parties, the obligation to buy gifts, and

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the social duty to receive more *stuff* graciously. These, when coupled with

the mantra of materialism—"You are what you give"—can make even the most aware, flexible yogi stiffen with resentment.

Yet resentment, while understandable, is a barrier to true generosity. How can you address the holiday *samskara*, or pattern, of resentment and submission? My own "aha!" moment came when my godmother regifted me with organic tea I'd given her six years earlier (there was no mistaking the unusual brand).

Resentment and generosity are contagious, so consciously decide which you'd rather spread. Then release judgment of those in your life who value material gifts as indications of affection. Practice *metta*, or lovingkindness meditation, or chant our mantra of the month (see page 18) to generate empathy.

To prevent resentment from taking root in your body, pursue a more active physical practice of yoga. Breathe out resentment

through pranayama, lion's breath, or 2:1 breathing (exhale for twice the count of your inhale). Commune with nature, which helps heal difficult emotions. Cultivate an intention, or *sankalpa*, to connect with others, and find a mutual bond during the holidays.

Finally, from a place of compassion, you can address the currency of generosity in your family to create new giving rituals and transform how you observe the holidays. Offer empathy, kindness, unconditional acceptance, and truthfulness wherever it's hardest, and you'll find that the energy you spend cultivating a spirit of generosity will be returned in far greater measure. BO FORBES

