

**Lyceum 123, December 11, 2025** – a forum to Think, Discuss, Share, and Learn from one another. Your input is welcomed - Iron sharpens iron.

Neighborhood “The 1826, in Connecticut, a farmer named Josiah Holbrook started a school for ‘the general diffusion of knowledge and raising the moral and intellectual taste’ of Americans. In those days, the opportunities for higher education were limited to those venerable old universities that had long served the upper crust. Holbrook’s vision was to make learning – practical, liberal, and humane – available to working people of all kinds. He named his school the Lyceum, after the garden where Aristotle once taught his students philosophy.... We need to go deeper than the superficial fights that characterize public life. We need to return to the first principles and meet each other there as human beings.”– Nathan Beacom, Plough Magazine, Autumn 2023, p. 9.

-Roger J. Vanden Busch.

We continue with Advent Potpourri of Ethics guidelines, principles, and applications garnished with quotations, and tickled with humorous riddles. If there is no laughter in heaven,” says Martin Luther, the reformer, “I do not want to go there.”

During this Advent, Christmas, and Christmastide as Jesus fills us with his Spirit, blessings, and love, be present by thought, word, and deed to the moment; increase your ethics vocabulary, immerse yourself in quotations of a moral caliber, enhance your pursuit of living the virtuous life, and become acquainted with some shakers and movers of ethics. In addition, be tickled by seasonal riddles along the way.

Roger J. Vanden Busch, Blessings upon you and your loved ones.

**Thursday – December 11** - Focus on the love you can give.

Ethical word – cynicism - A Greek philosophy school of thought that espoused that one arrives at true happiness by renouncing all external desires and extolling the self-sufficiency of the desire to be a good person.

**“In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock.”**  
**– Thomas Jefferson**

How does a snow globe feel?

Answer: A little shaken!

**Friday - December 12** - Find something to be thankful for

Ethical word – emotivism - The view usually associated with logical positivism claiming that ethical statements are mere expressions of emotion and, as such, have no basis in truth or falsehood.

**“Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people.” - Spencer Johnson**

What did Adam say the day before Christmas?

Answer: "It's Christmas, Eve."

**Saturday - December 13** – Count your freckles, moles, age spots, or wrinkles.

Ethical duty - That which ought to be done, either legally or morally.

**“Do not be too moral. You may cheat yourself out of much life so. Aim above morality. Be not simply good; be good for something.” -Henry David Thoreau**

Which one of Santa's reindeer can be seen on Valentine's Day?

Answer: Cupid

**Sunday - December 14**- (Third Sunday of Advent) - Be happy for no reason all – be full of smiles.

Ethical word- ethical egoism - An ethical theory claiming that the pursuit of self-interest is morally correct and rational; see Ayn Rand.

“Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.” -Immanuel Kant

Where do the three wise men go to get their robes tailored?

Answer: Bethle-hem.

**Monday - December 15** – You get another chance each morning.

Ethical word- ethical relativism - The ethical theory that denies the existence of universal moral truths and proposes that right and wrong must be defined based on differences in cultural norms and mores.

“Have the courage to say no. Have the courage to face the truth. Do the right thing because it is right. These are the magic keys to living your life with integrity.” -W. Clement Stone

Why couldn't the teacher find anyone to help her wrap gifts?

Answer: No one was present.

**Tuesday - December 16**- Be honest.

Ethical word – ethical realism - Any view that acknowledges that our knowledge of the real, objective nature of the world is influenced by the mind, on which sensory experience is necessarily dependent.

“Moralties, ethics, laws, customs, beliefs, doctrines - these are of trifling import. All that matters is that the miraculous becomes the norm.” -Henry Miller

What did the snowman do when he got upset?

Answer: He had a meltdown.

**Wednesday - December 17** – Written words are lasting treasures.

Ethical word- hard determinism - All behavior is invariably and without exception determined by causal factors beyond the control and responsibility of any individual, so that, in effect, free will and moral choice do not exist.

**“If ethics are poor at the top, that behavior is copied down through the organization.” - Robert Noyce**

Why is Santa so good at karate?

Answer: Because he has a black belt.

**Thursday - December 18**- Listening is essential.

Ethical word- Cogito ergo sum - “I think, therefore I am.” From Descartes’ “Meditations” referring to his certain, indubitable knowledge of his own existence as a thinking, conscious being.

**“We don't set out to save the world; we set out to wonder how other people are doing and to reflect on how our actions affect other people's hearts.” -Pema Chodron**

Which one of Santa's reindeer is the fastest?

Answer: Dasher

**Friday - December 19** - Be strong for others.

Ethical word- soft determinism - While there is a cause for all action, certain choices can still be made freely as actions that stem from the character or will of the person, thus preserving the notion of moral responsibility.

**“Even the most rational approach to ethics is defenseless if there isn't the will to do what is right.” -Aleksander Solzhenitsyn**

**What laundry detergent do people in the North Pole use?**

**Answer: Yule Tide**

**Saturday - December 20** – Say a prayer.

**Ethical words- bioethics** - The branch of ethics that studies moral problems in medicine and biological technology, for example issues about euthanasia and cloning humans.

**“I consider ethics, as well as religion, as supplements to law in the government of man.” -Thomas Jefferson**

**What do elves learn in school?**

**Answer: The elf-abet!**

**Sunday - December 21** – (Fourth Sunday of Advent) - Care about doing your absolute best.

**Ethical word- amoral** - Devoid of morality; operating completely outside the realm of moral value.

**“Little progress can be made by merely attempting to repress what is evil. Our great hope lies in developing what is good.” -Calvin Coolidge**

**Where does Santa put his suit after Christmas?**

**Answer: In his Claus-et**

**Monday - December 22** - Inner music is a lasting gift – always have a song in your heart.

Ethical word- altruism – An empathic and unselfish concern for the welfare of others, with no other end in mind.

“The simplest and shortest ethical precept is to be served as little as possible . . . and to serve others as much as possible.” - Leo Tolstoy

Why did Jimmy's grades drop after the holidays?

Answer: Because everything was marked down!

**Tuesday - December 23** - Be happy for no reason all – be full of smiles.

Ethical word-” akrasia” (weakness) - Ancient Greek, incontinence, weakness of will; a condition where one knows something is good, desires it, yet still does not embrace it.

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**Wednesday - December 24** - Live in spirals – twists and turns we encounter.

Ethical word- consequentialism - The view that the value of an act should be judged solely based on one act and how it impacts others, that is, the consequences of one's actions. This contrasts with aretaic ethics where the value of an act is determined by the character of a person, where the value is determined by the intentions and motives of the person.

**“The most important persuasion tool you have in your entire arsenal is integrity.” -Zig Ziglar**

**How much did Santa pay for parking his sleigh?**

**Answer: Nothing, it was on the house!**

**More to come on December 25 to January 4 – the Epiphany.**

**Roger J. Vanden Busch**