

# Fuel for Thought

## Being Present... The Best Present



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I thought I'd use the opportunity of our column this week for a little Christmas reflection.

I don't know about you, but over the last year I've been struck by the level of violence reported in the media: the tragedy in Syria, the terrible events in Paris, and closer to home, too many tragic stories of domestic violence and alcohol fuelled violence in the street.

Most of the time we feel helpless to do anything about it. We can't control what happens on the other side of the world, but I reckon there is something we can do that can make a real difference.

Love is the antidote to violence.

Christmas is a time which can be dominated by stuff...the crazy rush to sort out presents, decorations and celebrations. In the rush, we sometimes lose sight of what's important: pausing for a moment to be truly present with each other.

The real 'magic' of Christmas has nothing to do with elves, reindeers or the North Pole. It's taking twenty minutes to sit with your ten year old on the back veranda...giving him your complete, undivided and loving attention; it's having a long chat with your old aunty – and really listening to what she has to say; it's spending a moment with the love of your life: and looking at her like she really is the love of your life.

Well maybe you don't have an old Aunty or a ten year old... but you get the gist. In this busy world, just making the effort to be fully present with someone can be a wonderful gift.

Well that unsolicited advice is my Christmas present for you... for what it's worth.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the Gladstone community for your support for during the year.

On behalf of all of us at QER, I would like to wish you and your family a happy, safe and 'truly present' Christmas and New Year.



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