

Hey Santa.

As with so many childhood friends, it seems that you and I lost touch somewhere along the way. That's not to say I haven't thought of you often; I've followed your work closely in the decades that have passed since last we swapped letters. I've even peeked over the shoulders of my own kids to read the letters that you've sent to them. You've still got that wry sense of humor, and penmanship that's unmistakably magic.

Things have been going well on my end. There's still a bit of ink flowing in the old ballpoint, so I thought it a good time to reconnect. In the spirit of our past correspondence, I've got a little list that I want to share with you; a list of gifts which I believe that you - guru of giving that you are - can surely deliver. I'm not gonna lie Nick, some of these are big asks. Let's just say I've saved up thirty-five years worth of wishes that I want to send to you, because, if ever there was a time to ask, it's now.

To those who struggle with their mental health, I'd ask that you share with them the gift of hope. So few know, and even fewer understand, the struggle that these incredible individuals go through on a daily basis. Lend them that hope, as well as the love, support, and understanding of those around them.

To those who are hungry, I'd ask for the gift of nourishment - not just of the body, but of the heart and soul. In addition to seeing them fed, let them be seen, heard and loved. On those of us who surround them, perhaps you could sprinkle a substantial dash of generosity, a reminder to share the abundance that many of us are fortunate enough to experience.

Being the fellow who exemplifies express courier, perhaps you could send a sameday delivery of resilience and good fortune to our local businesses. These people are doing unbelievable work, oftentimes against nearly insurmountable odds. Their personal sacrifices are little known and rarely shown. They show up every day and give everything they've got. They're the backbone to an economy that needs all the support it can get.

When you're checking that list for the second time, perhaps you could move our frontline workers a little closer to the top. Truck drivers, childcare workers, grocery store staff, nurses and doctors, the list goes on and on and on. The gifts they deserve for the courage they've shown could never match their commitment to getting us through these last couple of years. To them, please deliver the gift of our

gratitude, the opportunity to find rest and rejuvenation this season, and the strength to continue to help hold up our community.

As for those who feed on anger, spread hatred, and revel in a world of divisiveness and hostility, it's obvious that they too really need something. But Santa man, I'll be honest... I don't know what it is. Perhaps they themselves don't know. In such cases, I guess, a safe bet might be to give them the gift of empathy and self-reflection. Maybe wrap it in ribbons of respect and stick a bow of kindness on top. Stuff their stocking with a flashlight of perspective (batteries included) to combat the darkness that all too often tries to consume them.

Lastly Santa, I'd ask that you remember everyone. Yeah, I know what you're thinking - "Easy enough for Lynch to sit back with a glass of 'nog and write a letter on behalf of eight billion people who need gifts..." but really Santa, we ALL truly do need something. We need the things I've noted above. We need a bit of love to share. And we need each other. I know that the majority of those eight billion people don't even believe in you my friend, but I'm not gonna worry about that. The way I see it, as long as you keep believing in us, we may just be okay.

So that's it. Take care of yourself Santa, and remember, you can stop by any time. Like Nan would often say to company, "Shockin' we only sees ya Christmastime." The door's always open, and while I'm not the chattiest fellow, I'm a good hand to listen.

I can only imagine the stories you could tell...

Your friend,

*David James Lynch*

