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T O D A Y

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## Resolution: Compliment BY INGRID KIDD GOLDFARB, PRESIDENT

As I reflect back on 2005, I remember a year marked with calamity in the United States and abroad. Between the tsunami, hurricanes, floods, fires, mudslides, and war, we were all impacted. We have watched with sadness as thousands have lost homes, jobs, and lives. We have given money and offered shelter and support, but it is difficult to see results from our efforts. It has made me more conscious and appreciative of the fragile nature of our everyday lives. More than ever, I cherish the people I interact with every day. I long to make a positive difference in their lives and my own.

January is a time for new beginnings, fresh calendars, and resolutions. Last year I had a single resolution – to organize our garage. I'm happy to report that the effort paid off. The garage isn't perfect, but we've made a huge step in the right direction. I could use more space but probably just need less "stuff."

As I sought for a resolution this year, I wanted something achievable. I wanted a resolution for which I could see results in a short time. I rejected the "I'll lose 20 pounds" or "I'll exercise four days a week." I know I should do these things, but also know from decades of experience that I probably won't make it to February without abandoning these resolutions. Then I fight guilt and feel like I have failed.

I'm not one who believes resolutions have to be big or profound. Two years ago, my husband resolved to change the toilet paper rolls when they were empty (a source of irritation in our household). It was a small task that has now become habit and has had a positive effect. But this resolution was very narrow in its scope. I want to do something that will have a positive effect on others. So here is my resolution for 2006:

*I will give someone a compliment every day.*

Sounds simple...but I know it has a profound effect. Everyone responds well to a sincere compliment. It enhances confidence, pride, and willingness to achieve more. Sometimes, you see a physical response with a higher head or taller posture. Sometimes, you hear it in a brighter voice.

I recently was returning some merchandise and stood in a line behind a man who was trying to return an item without a receipt. It was clear that the item had not come from that store. When he was told he could not receive cash, he became abusive and demanding. The customer service person was a real professional. She was calm; she

listened, offered empathy and made a suggestion as to where he might exchange the item or how he might sell it online. When my turn came, I complimented her on how well she had handled a difficult person. She visibly straightened and said, "Thank you, I hear so many complaints, it's nice to hear a compliment now and then." The result was my transaction was handled efficiently, and she went out of her way to help me find a replacement.

The one rule is the compliment must be sincere. It shouldn't be difficult to find something that you respect or admire in almost everyone, especially those you work closely with every day. I sometimes take great qualities for granted. I resolve to compliment more often this year. We'll all feel better.

Wishing you all a Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Peaceful New Year! ☺

