

# Charlie Brown's Christmas Tree: A Story of Overcoming Loss and Deprivation by Practicing Gratitude

An Excerpt from the Book, [\*Returning to Oneness—Seven Keys of Ascension\*](#)

By Leslie Temple-Thurston

Loss is only a perception of the limited mind. One year in the early 1980s I had worked quite late on Christmas Eve and had to drive a couple of hours down the Interstate to my apartment. Although I had never spent Christmas alone, due to my circumstances that year, I was destined to be spending Christmas on my own and had done nothing about it—made no preparations or anything. I had no furniture either, since I had just moved into the apartment. Somehow it felt like I was being set up to have quite possibly a most depressing holiday. Even though it was late, I thought, “Well, I’ll just go down to the local Christmas tree lot and see if I can get a tree.” It was already 8:30 p.m. The attendant was closing the gate as I got there, and the lot was empty of people and trees. I realized that all the tree shoppers must be at home eating Christmas Eve dinner with their families and friends. The salesman didn’t really have anything left, but we found a nice branch. Under the circumstances I was *thrilled* to get the branch! I took it home and sort of propped it up in the corner. It crossed my mind that this was going to be a dreary Christmas since I had no decorations, just a very short string of rainbow colored lights, which I wound around the tree. On the journey home, the branch had transformed in my mind to a tree. It was a Charlie Brown Christmas tree. I made the conscious choice not to feel like a “loser” and not to feel depressed about being alone in an empty apartment on Christmas. Instead of buying into the idea of loss, I chose to perceive my circumstances differently.

To my surprise I soon became totally entranced by the small tree/branch with its colored lights. It lit up the whole place since there was no furniture to compete with it! So I sat for hours in meditation—open-eyed meditation, just gazing at this tree. And I ended up sitting the whole night. Given that it was Christmas Eve, I thought, “Well, this is probably a good time to meditate all night.” During the long hours all I did was sing the praises of the Divine and express my gratitude, giving thanks for the year that had gone by and for the blessings of my life. I focused on all the wonderful things that had happened, and I *loved this tree*. I just worshipped the Divine through the beauty of this Charlie Brown tree!

I think it was about 1:00 a.m., when an energy came in that was so transcendental that I couldn’t focus properly on the lights anymore. My eyes went out of focus so that the lights were refracting in every direction, and the tree became sort of kaleidoscopic, rainbow-cloaked and aura-enclosed—just exquisite. All I could see was the aura around the lights and these rainbow beams going everywhere. It got more and more beautiful as the night flowed on. My state of consciousness became increasingly vast, eternal and transcendental. The experience lasted through the whole of the next day.

That day I walked on the deserted beach near my home and was in ecstasy. It didn't matter that my tree was this little Charlie Brown branch and that I had five colored lights on it. It had turned into a magical doorway into eternity. I was tapping into the generosity of spirit. With this experience came the realization that, "When you are in equanimity with the Truth, what will manifest for you is beyond your wildest dreams."