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Finding Joy in Christmas– When Everything 'Feels' Wrong

By Ellen M. DuBois

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The year 2001 proved to be a life altering one. Barring our own personal problems which already may have had you in a state of despair, the attack on America left the nation– the world– in a state of sadness, disbelief and hopelessness.

As we are surrounded by the sites and sounds of Christmas, many of us show a bittersweet smile while gazing at lovely Christmas lights or hearing a children's choir. We feel guilty for feeling happy when we are surrounded by so much tragedy and reflect upon a world that 'once was'.

It feels like the Christmas spirit has been knocked out of our sails and we are drifting aimlessly upon a sea of tears.

Yes, it's been one heck of a year. The loss we have sustained is incomprehensible. Combined with our individual problems; we're left wondering how to get through Christmas with joy in our hearts. Where is the room for joy when our hearts are filled to the brim with sorrow?

My eyes mist when I think of the lives lost and the families who must be struggling to shop for their remaining family members. What angst they must be experiencing. Those of us who didn't lose anyone feel for them– but, also feel helpless. How can we take away their pain? How can we make it easier for them to get through the season? That weighs heavily on many of us and contributes further to our attempts of feeling joy during a season that's supposed to be joyous.

I've reflected a lot on this because of my own feelings of confusion and despair this Christmas. I've battled with guilt and sorrow. I've wondered if I should even bother decorating for Christmas when there are so many out there caught in the web of grief. My heart bleeds for them.

I ask myself, "What right do I have to be happy?"

I've come to the conclusion that it's okay, even necessary to experience the joy and hope of Christmas this year. If we take our focus away from the gifts and decorations and point it towards what Christmas

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really is– we will find comfort, solace, peace and joy. For Christmas is Christ and Christ is eternal love, hope, life, joy and peace. Isn't that what we need right now– more than ever?

By focusing on Christ– the very reason this holiday exists– our burdens become lighter as we see a message of great hope and comfort. No, our pain isn't gone. No, we can't bring back those who were lost and no, we can't reverse time. But, there is no load too heavy that Christ won't carry for us. His birth was and is the greatest 'Christmas Present' anyone could ever hope for. And it's real. Through Christ and His message to us, we can take comfort in many things. 1. Those beautiful people who were lost in the tragic attack on America are with our loving Father in a realm that is real, alive and eternal. Though not with us physically, they are very much alive and happy. They are missed dearly on the earthly plane, but are living a wonderful, fulfilling life in a world much more beautiful than the one we remain in. 2. No matter how heavy your load may be, Christ is always there to help you with it. His

gift of hope, comfort, help, healing and life is there for you. You will be carried through your darkest hours. You will never be alone. There is someone right beside you who will get you through anything this world dishes out. Just ask. 3. The light of Christ shines within each and every one of us. The beauty of lights upon a tree or shining from a window symbolize his omnipresent light. If you do decide to put up lights this year– and are struggling with feelings of confusion – remember what those lights symbolize. They are symbols of the light of Christ and cannot ever be snuffed out. By displaying lights, you are showing hope to others who may need to be reminded of it very, very much.

It is my hope that we can, even with our very real pain, not just 'get through' Christmas, but celebrate it. It's not the pretty packages and ribbons that make Christmas what it is. It's God's promise to us all– His Love for us all– His ultimate display of His love for us by sending his only son to earth to show us we have eternal life through Him. That's what Christmas is about. Now more than ever before we need to hold fast to that promise and by doing that, we will find the joy in Christmas this year; even if it's amidst tears.

May the light of Christ shine in all of your hearts this Christmas; give you comfort, peace and joy.

"Peace on Earth– Good will to men."

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Ellen M. DuBois, MA – Ms. DuBois is engaged and has a dog who loves to critique her work. She is published in vol.2 of God Allows U–Turns with her piece, "The Angel in the Dumpster". She writes to touch the hearts of others. Please visit Writings of the Heart, her award winning writer's resource site– <http://writingsoftheheart.homestead.com/index.html>

Dear Santa: Christmas Sucks!

By Daggi Pulz

Christmas time is finally here, and most people during this holiday are happier than a fat kid eating a

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Krispy Kreme donut. Christmas brings so many great things to the table; the caroling, the NO SCHOOL, the snowmen and hour long snowball fights that ends with bloody noses, the eggnog and drunken relatives, the presents, holiday parties, and the drinking hot coco next to a roaring fire while cuddling up with your loved one. How could anybody not love this great holiday! It's a hiatus from the dark sadness of reality and a time where you can be ridiculously happy! But maybe too happy...

In a recent poll, over 45 percent said that they dreaded the holiday altogether. Not everyone seems to see the light that Christmas brings, and if you look harder into the eyes of this joyous holiday, you may see why. More people kill themselves around Christmas time than any other time of year. "Well," Khayeni Sanders, a fellow Christmas lover states, "I think you should make a club, or a house, for those people. It's like an equivalent of a homeless shelter! Wait, what's the question again?"

There are several reasons why people just don't like Christmas, one is that spending Christmas alone is a very depressing situation for anyone. The couple theme that constantly exists with this holiday is not easy to hide from if you are single. For people who are already suffering from depression, the Christmas season only makes it worse. Another reason is the belief that Christmas has become too commercial. In fact, over 50 percent of people polled said that they think Christmas should be toned down a bit. "It definitely has become too commercial with people putting out decorations two months in advance, but the spirit behind it has generally stayed the same for most people" declared Sarah Geiger. A third common reason why Christmas isn't favored by some is that there is often a feeling that everyone else is having a better time than you. The constant belly–full–of–jelly laughs around the company water cooler may have you thinking, "Did I miss something? Am I being left out?!"

What's going on?!" Other more common dislikes are the constant money spending, the overeating, and the Christmas parties. Christmas time can also remind people of a lost one, which could make anyone, have a miserable Christmas time. All of these horrible things that tag along with Christmas could make even Satan cry a tear of sympathy for the people who just can't see the joy Christmas can bring. It's a shame not everyone can be happy during this time of year, but being depressed on Christmas is completely understandable. These poor saps seem to miss the Christmas bliss train every year, but who knows; this year maybe, just maybe, they'll catch it.

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What Do You Want This Year?

MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS MEMORY

Wish Upon A Star

5 Christmas Movies For The Whole Family To Enjoy!

Christmas Happy Package

Tattoo Secrets

Stress The Silent Killer

Understanding Acne: Causes, Cures and Myths

Newbie's Guide to Stop Spam



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