

The Holiday Spirit

Henry M. Halff

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Tonight, I'm going to try to get you, or at least some of you, in the holiday spirit. Now I realize that many of you already are in the holiday spirit. After all, it is December 19. But many folks simply don't catch the holiday spirit. Dissatisfaction with the holidays comes in two forms. Many people have blue Christmases, Christmases marked by such things as loneliness or a loss of some sort. Others have red Christmases; they see red at the very idea of celebrating the Christmas holidays. It's the red Christmas folk that I'm talking to tonight. The blue Christmas people will have to wait until next year.

In my seasonal job, I hear plenty from those with red Christmases. Here are a few of their comments.

Dear Holiday Spirit:

I hate the Christmas Season. It's all money, money, money; buy, buy, buy; greed, greed, greed; gimme, gimme, gimme!

A. Grinch

Dear Holiday Spirit:

Here's what really frosts me about the holiday season. I have to take time off from work to spend the money I'm not making on presents that I give away to other people. What's the logic in that?

E. Scrooge

Dear Holiday Spirit:

Whatever happened to the Christ in Christmas? First they take our nativity off the courthouse lawn. Now it's this "Happy Holidays,

Happy Holidays, Happy Holidays” garbage. We need to get back to the true meaning of Christmas.

W. O’Reilly

Dear Holiday Spirit:

I’m a practicing Wiccan (with Jewish, Bahai, Muslim, and Buddhist leanings).

Please tell me where these Christians get off, taking over our Winter Solstice celebrations. Everyone knows that we were there first. Please tell the Christians to give us back the season, or we’ll take our Yule Logs and Christmas Trees and go home!

Free Spirit

If your feelings are anything like those of these folks, then you’re looking at a red Christmas, and I have some good news for you.

You don’t have to celebrate anyone’s Christmas but your own. You can make your own holidays just the way you want them to be.

Here are some suggestions.

Be generous. Generosity is always appropriate at this time of the year. By generosity, I don’t mean giving your kid 16 presents that he’ll play with for five minutes and then leave on the living-room floor for the rest of the year. I mean giving one present to some kid that has none, a kid that you don’t know and will never meet.

Show good will. When someone wishes you a Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays, return the greeting with twice the gusto. And don’t forget to issue a few such greetings yourself, delivered like you really mean them. Good will is the wonder drug of the holiday season. The more you spread around, the more you get back.

Transform yourself. Dickens knew all about the transformative power of Christmas. So did Dr. Seuss. They both knew that you could make yourself immensely happy by taking delight in the happiness of others. Make someone happy. Take your kid to a movie that *she* picks out. Put some money in a bell-ringer’s bucket. When you’re really strung out at the mall. Sit down, chill out, and don’t give up until you’ve seen ten happy people go by.

Be Merry. Merriment is an essential part of the holiday spirit. Pour yourself something hot, or something bubbly. Put on a stupid Santa hat. Two-step around your Christmas tree. Eat too much turkey. Fall asleep in front of the TV. You won't regret it.

Merry Christmas, y'all!