

Chalkboard

By

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I like Christmas and all the things associated with the holiday. Thus, in this Chalkboard I will conduct a Christmas experiment. I am going to give you a list of phrases. Read the survey list carefully. Keep in mind which one brings forth the most vivid memory. At the end of the article I will interpret your selection and assign you a “Christmas Quotient”. (Why, yes, it’s scientific. You thought I received my doctorate from a mail-order catalog?)

Instructions: Read the following list and see which one prompts the strongest memory— exchanging gifts with friends and loved ones, exchanging with the store the day after, sipping hot chocolate, watching little children with cardboard wings and gold garland halos sing carols, reading, at 2:00 a.m., swing set assembly instructions written by an illiterate, finding dings in your car door while at the mall, standing and stomping in an endless line because somebody said the grapes were marked 97 cents a pound not \$1.09, seeing the look of wonder in a child’s eyes on Christmas morning, having office parties, holding babies with red bows in their hair in Santa’s line, stealing kisses under the mistletoe, wading through piles of crumbled wrapping paper strewn across the floor, hiding your children’s presents in strange places, unwrapping your present early and then sneaking it back under the tree, hanging lights on the eve of your house, walking in the woods with your family looking for a “real” tree, getting gingerbread kisses on the cheek from a three-year old, undoing/”unboxing” decorations that you put up each year, hearing “O Holy Night” for the first time of the season, feeling guilty that you couldn’t afford some particular present, maxing out your credit card, eating treats brought by friends, cooking treats to take to friends, slipping a five in the Salvation Army pot, playing “Secret Santa”, holding hands with your spouse, buying your children red union suits with the button back flap, telling someone you loved the present when you really thought it was the ugliest thing you had ever seen, having an empty seat at the family table, attending or participating in choir concerts, band concerts, invitational tournaments, weeping silently while standing by the newly covered grave of a loved-one, being awe struck by the concept of vicarious atonement, singing “Grandma got run over by a reindeer”, eating Christmas dinner at Grandma’s house, and feeling, tasting, touching, or in

some manner experiencing love in one or more of its purest and strongest forms- kindness to the unknown or undeserving-fellowship between and among friends- the often fiery bond between parent and children-the “you make me complete” oneness between husband and wife- the sacrificial gift from the Creator to the creature.

Okay-score time. Give yourself a point for every time you said, “I can relate to that.” Award yourself a point for each smile, even the tiniest one. Do the same for each tear. If you scored at least one point that means you are alive and mentally functioning. That’s as high as the range of scores goes because that is the real meaning of Christmas- the gift of being alive. In my heart and soul, I know this life is not the result of a lighting bolt frying some primordial soup mix into consciousness but rather a planned opportunity from God.

All of the above phrases in my “survey”, some happy, some sad, are just memory starters-not reality. Life is lived in the “today”, not yesterday or tomorrow. Someone else has already said it best- Today is a gift, why else would they call it the Present?

Merry Christmas to you and your family. Make some great memories!