

13 Life Lessons From Classic Holiday Movies and TV Specials

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Holiday movies and TV specials can teach us how to live better and enjoy more happiness year round. These are some of the most important life lessons from a few old favorites and some other works that may be less well known.

"How the Grinch Stole Christmas":

1. **Sing joyfully.** Before he had his change of heart, singing was what the Grinch liked least of all. Surround yourself with the music of the season and sing along.
2. **Resist commercial pressures.** *The Grinch learned that Christmas doesn't come from a store.* Focus on the true meaning of the holidays by sharing time with loved ones and looking for ways to make others happy.
3. **Let your heart grow bigger.** Dr. Seuss suspected that the Grinch suffered from a heart two sizes too small. As soon as it grew three sizes larger he brought back the toys he stole, put everything right and got to love his new friends in Whoville.

"It's a Wonderful Life":

1. **Recognize that one person can make a difference.** While the challenges around us can seem overwhelming sometimes, we all create our own environment. *George Bailey leads a modest life, but he prevents good old Bedford Falls from turning into a sleazy Pottersville.*
2. **Celebrate the potential to create better outcomes.** With all the talk about "toxic" people, we may sometimes overlook the fact that we all possess a mix of constructive and destructive qualities. By appealing to the good in people, George helps them to succeed in every walk of life.

3. **Welcome help from others.** As powerful as George is, he still needs Clarence, the angel, to help him through a rough night. Regardless of whatever weaknesses you possess, you can still serve as somebody's angel if you're willing to reach out.

"A Christmas Carol":

1. **Teach old dogs new tricks.** We may sometimes feel that our habits are too ingrained to change. Scrooge proves that a life of stinginess can give way to one of kindness even late in life.
2. **Pay attention to your dreams.** We spend about one-third of our life sleeping. Put that time to good use by listening to what your dreams may be trying to tell you.
3. **Come to terms with your past. *Recognize the unhealthy patterns that get between you and greater happiness.*** Scrooge's greed cost him his first love. You may need to become more generous to transform your own relationships.
4. **Become more resilient.** The Cratchit family remains cheerful in spite of their poverty. Tiny Tim appreciates his blessings even though he's poor and crippled. *If we bear our hardships with patience, we can protect our peace of mind.*

Other Holiday Programs and Movies:

1. **Focus on others.** Steven Spielberg's cartoon, "Pinky and the Brain," is about more than a laboratory mouse trying to take over the world. The friendship between the two mice shines through when Pinky writes to Santa saying it's okay to forget about him and just give Brain what he wants.
2. **Work for world peace.** The true story of the 1914 Christmas truce is captured in "Joyeux Noel." *If German, French and Scottish troops can call a ceasefire on one Christmas Eve, maybe we can all be more peaceful.*
3. **Believe in Santa Claus.** "Miracle on 34th Street" looks like it was ahead of its

time in questioning consumerism. It's also timeless in affirming the importance of faith. Plus, it may offer the best legal argument for believing in Santa Claus.

Many of us look forward to watching our favorite holiday movies and specials each year. It's a great way to revisit their inspiring messages and share them with our children.