



How to Make This Christmas a Merry, Memorable One!

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There are many ways to make Christmas merry and memorable! Unfortunately, sometimes it's difficult nowadays to feel the joy through the cluttered maze that has become of Christmas. Through the years, Christmas has strayed too far from its original purpose and become a highly commercialized event.

When it comes to the holiday season, more people are concerned with buying the perfect gift for others and anticipating what they will receive, rather than focusing on the true spirit of the holiday.

It's time to get back to the basics when it comes to the season of gift giving, love, sharing, and caring. ***This year, you can make your Christmas a joyous and stress-free holiday by following these 3 easy tips:***

- 1. Give of Yourself.** If you enjoy providing gifts to others, that's a nice gesture. However, you should avoid dwelling on it too much. No matter what you can or cannot afford, there's always one gift that you can give to others: the gift of your time.
 - ***Christmas is only as commercialized as you allow it to be.*** Although it costs nothing, your time is the most precious gift of all.

There are many ways that you can give of yourself to others this holiday season:

- Be a friend who listens
- Spend time with a loved one
- Help someone with their household chores
- Babysit for a mother or father who really needs a break
- Let others know that you are available anytime they may need your help

2. Use Your Talents. No matter how nice that watch appears to look in the jewelry case, the homemade pen holder or the homemade blanket that you create for your friend, neighbor, coworker, or family member will be much more appreciated than anything you can buy in a store.

- ***Ultimately, handmade gifts are priceless, whereas the store bought gift will lose value over time.***

Sure, store bought gifts are nice, but people will value your handmade gifts more due to one reason: you put your time, efforts, and love into creating those gifts. When the receiver thinks about your hard work and dedication in creating the gift, it will become more and more cherished.

Here are some ideas of homemade gifts you can make:

- Fresh-baked cookies, pies or jams
- Hand sewn quilts or crocheted scarves
- Framed photo collage
- Personalized scrapbooks
- Custom made jewelry

3. Cherish Your Time Together. In the end, we can't take back time. Our time is lost in so many ways on a daily basis especially around the holidays.

- ***It's time to place our priorities on our family and friends rather than on the shopping and holiday preparations.***

- Why fight the crowds on Black Friday when you could be enjoying your kids' day off from school together? Wouldn't you rather create some warm, happy memories?
- If you and your spouse don't enjoy spending your day standing in long lines at crowded stores, then change it!
- Spending the night baking alone when your elderly mother is in town is such a waste. Plan your baking so you can enjoy each other's company while things are in the oven.

If you want to make your holiday truly merry, ***remember to spend the time that you have with your loved ones enjoying each other.*** Make joyous memories instead of a frenzy of worrying, shopping, cooking, buying gifts and over-stressing.

If you follow the steps listed here, you're sure to have a merry, memorable Christmas this year and every year!