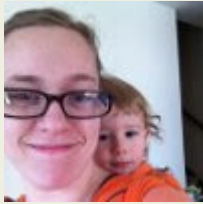


Santa Claus is not Coming to Town, Actually



Send her mail. [f](#)

"Balancing on My Toes" is an original column appearing every other Friday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Angel M. Ethell. Angel lives in the Chicagoland area with her family: sons Teen (13) and Lil G (2) along with their little sister Cassie Pie (dog), her partner Daddy G and father-in-law Grandpa G. She loves learning new things along with learning that she might not always be right... 100% of the time. Archived columns can be found [here](#). BMT-only RSS feed available [here](#).

I love Christmas. It has always been a family tradition for my Mom and now my Sister to pick out a new ornament every year and date it so we can spread a trail of ornaments out and decorate our trees with them. There are also a few others thrown in to fill it up. We are an "ornament on every branch" kind of family. Anyway, growing up it was my Mom, Sister, Brother and me getting ornaments. My older son was born in November of '99 and my long term partner and Father of my little son has been with me since '01 so we have quite a few of these ornaments every year. My excitement for the Christmas season ebbs and flows each year but this year my toddler is two so I am really feeling the Christmas spirit.

But There is a Darker Side to Christmas

Every one has heard the song "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," right? "You better not pout, you better not shout, you better not cry, I'm telling you why." On top of that there is the old "Coal in the Stockings" bit. Children are given the magic of Christmas and presents as a carrot to act in a desirable manner, or rather "behave" all year long. A year is a long time. Thankfully in my house we only grabbed the nice family traditions from the Christmas myth and I haven't ever been subject to that form of conditional approval. Because its really conditional approval that we are selling these kids. We want them to strive to be good so they can get presents.

Doesn't Really Work this Day in Age Very Well

In the age of immediate gratification children are given presents and sweets as a reward for just about everything, which kind of ruins the magic of Christmas or Halloween for that matter. Instant gratification, though, is another discussion for a different day. Christmas many years ago was truly a once a year thing where a child might ask for a book or a toy

and some candy, but fast forward that to Amazon wish lists and advertising galore and Christmas lists have to be longer than ever.

But Large Piles of Presents Really is Something to See!

So in my family where money is sometimes tight we give clothes and sensible gifts along with the non-sensible gifts and have a good time unwrapping tons of stuff. It is a lot of fun for all. And you know what? Many of our gifts are still labeled from "Santa." Because we just love it. Fourteen years ago though I had a son and decided to not lie to him about Christmas and not to use it as a manipulation tool. (I had had enough manipulation outside of Christmas growing up and I was done with it.) So I decided to celebrate Christmas traditionally until he was old enough to ask about it and then we had a talk about how his presents that he always got actually came from his family and that while Santa is a myth the wonder of the season is real. The lights, the music, the movies. It is all just so much fun; there just is no fat guy leading the parade. Yes, I love Christmas music and movies, don't judge me.

So now that I have another young son to spoil at Christmas I am going to have a really good time doing it. Perpetuating the Santa myth only just enough to make it fun but not so much that it compromises my gentle parenting and my desire to not teach my children that lying is okay as long as it was well intended. (You know, because its still lying *wink wink*.) We will bake cookies and eat pies, we will sing and open presents and we will love each other. We will continue adding ornaments to our collection but we will not be using the joy of Christmas to force any behavior modification on him because of course I think he's perfect anyway. I hope you all have a really nice, loving Christmas season but take this thought along with you: If you are not religious or pro Christmas but like some of the traditions you can use them if you like, but if you are pro Christmas, please, understand that there are many reasons aside from religion (which I personally abstain from) for which a parent might not want to perpetuate the Christmas myth. Respect each other for their standards because we are all just parents trying to do what we think is best. Merry Christmas!