

# Don't Let the Grinches Steal Your Christmas

This Christmas season, the grinches are staying busy as usual.

There's the usual crew who annually devote themselves to debunking the season, flailing away at everything from a babe born in a manger to the season's extravagant buying and selling to taking offense when someone says, "Merry Christmas!" In Iowa, [Satanists](#) have honed in on the holiday, setting up a [now-torn-down](#) display in the state capitol in the name of "religious pluralism." Pro-Palestinian [protests](#) occurred at the annual lighting of Christmas trees in places around the country, including New York's Rockefeller Center and Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Even worse is the grinch closer to home. This grinch hides in every human heart, waiting for the opportunity to kick Santa from his sleigh and take command of the reindeer. One moment you're humming carols while grocery shopping, flipping a buck into a Salvation Army bucket, or lighting the last candle of [Advent](#), and then out leaps the Killjoy of Christmas Present. The cat takes a swing at your Fraser fir, breaking the glass ornament your sweetheart bought on your first Christmas together. A patch of black ice sends your car into the ditch on your way home from Midnight Mass. On Christmas morning, despite your expressed desire to keep the occasion simple, Grandma lavishes expensive gifts on the kids. With the presents opened, your 6-year-old is primed to send his brand-new race car zipping around the living room, but Santa forgot the AA batteries.

At this point, if the only expletive that escapes your lips is "Bah Humbug," you're to be congratulated for your self-restraint.

So, yes, it's tough to keep the [Christmas](#) candles burning in this season of swirl and chaos, but here are some thoughts gleaned from friends and experience that may help.

## 1. Expect the Unexpected.

Your second-grader awakens violently ill at 4 a.m., and you spend the first part of Christmas day washing blankets and sheets while tending to him. The delivery of the special gift you ordered well ahead of time for your spouse is inexplicably delayed. You're flying off to Idaho to visit the folks for Yuletide, but you spend Christmas Eve in an airport when the flight is delayed.

Christmas is not some talisman against disasters large or small. It's real life, and you've got to roll with the punches. Keep a stock of [laughter](#) and good cheer on hand along with those candy canes. And speaking of airports and plans gone awry, it might help to remember that the [first Christmas](#) took place in a stable because "There was no place for them in the inn."

## 2. Stay Rested.

According to a [2020 survey](#), lack of sleep makes 55 percent of Americans irritable at times, with three in 10 feeling this way "with some frequency."

Add the stress of the holidays to this lack of shuteye, and odds are you'll soon feel crotchety as that old man at a stop light shouting at the kid in the next car to turn down his frickin' music. Bearing in mind that [sleep deprivation](#) is a favorite [means of torture](#) in the gulags of dictators, try to stay rested. It's key to your morale.

After all, when Santa takes off in his sleigh at the end of "The Night Before Christmas," he shouts, "Happy Christmas to

all, and to all a good night.” “A good night” means slumber, not staying awake until 3 a.m. wrapping gifts.

### 3. Know the Reason for Your Season.

If you don't know [why](#) you're decorating a tree, wrapping presents, baking cookies, or singing carols, your Christmas is likely to be a bummer.

“Jesus is the reason for the season,” goes the familiar Christian mantra. Near the end of [A Charlie Brown Christmas](#), a frustrated [Charlie Brown](#) cries out, “Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?” to which Linus replies, “Sure, Charlie Brown. I can tell you what Christmas is all about.” He then recites the passage from the Gospel of Luke regarding the appearance of an angel to the shepherds.

And if you're not a believer? Then perhaps you're celebrating for the spirit of the season, for love of family and friends, or to bring a [little light to the darkness of winter](#). Maybe you're looking for that “peace and joy” found in so many Christmas greeting cards.

Know what you want from the season, and you're far more likely to find it.

### 4. Remember the Grinch's Words.

Here are some lines from the end of Dr. Seuss's [How the Grinch Stole Christmas](#) after the Grinch has failed to steal Christmas:

*And the Grinch, with his grinch-feet ice-cold in the snow,  
Stood puzzling and puzzling: 'How could it be so?'  
'It came without ribbons! It came without tags!'  
'It came without packages, boxes or bags!'  
And he puzzled three hours, till his puzzler was sore.  
Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before!*

*'Maybe Christmas,' he thought, 'doesn't come from a store.'*  
*'Maybe Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!'*

That just about says it all.

Merry Christmas, everyone!

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