



Merry Christmas - Not Necessarily a Good Greeting!

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The Merriam Webster dictionary defines the word "merry" as full of gaiety and high spirits.

Unfortunately, that does not describe everyone's experience on any day of the year, let alone at Christmas. There are many during the holiday season who are lonely, sad, or sick. Some face circumstances that involve abuse, addiction or poverty. Many think about unfulfilled wishes or broken promises both given and received. Merry does not describe their situation.

The word Christmas usually is referred to as a Christian feast that commemorates the birth of Christ and is honoured as a legal holiday. Not everyone, however, is Christian, or has a celebration on December 25th. For some there isn't a feast or even a change compared to every other day of the year.

So, when it comes to the greeting "Merry Christmas" we may find that it is not appropriate, falls on deaf ears or is not well-received.

Even the expression "Happy Holidays" doesn't seem to fit the bill in all cases. Not everyone is happy before December 25th and many maintain that mood throughout and even after it passes. The idea of having a holiday might not apply as many people do not have time off from work and most don't even go away from home. There is no holiday. In fact, December 25th can be a day that involves stress, relationship problems, and lack rather than plenty.

So, how can we greet others and wish them well in December in a meaningful way?

I like the word "peace" and when I think about it, my thoughts go to freedom from chaos, conflict and stress. "Contentment" is a state of being satisfied no matter what the circumstances. "Love" can come from many sources and, when genuine, warms our hearts. Therefore, the best greeting, I believe, that we could express would involve the words peace, love and contentment.

If I could wish you anything, to help you through each day

If I could give you anything, to hold along the way

If I could hope for anything, I'd pray that you'll have peace

And that you'd feel contentment and love that will not cease.

May peace, contentment and love be present in your life each and every day!