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## Phil's Forum – Do You Believe in Santa?

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My son, Parker, turned seven this fall, the age where doubt about Santa starts to creep in. Last week he told me that some kids in his class say that Santa isn't real, that parents just "pretend to be Santa" and put out the gifts themselves.

I asked him, "What do you believe?" After some careful consideration he decided that he believed Santa was real.

After a lengthy discussion about video cameras, he decided that he wants to check the roof Christmas morning for sleigh tracks "just to be sure." (Anyone have a tall ladder?)

I knew this conversation would come up at some time. I recall vividly the Christmas when I was six and my eight-year old sister and I started having our doubts. We decided one night, while sitting on my parents' bed that we were just going to keep on believing in Santa because 1) if he was real, then we kept the faith and (hopefully) would be rewarded handsomely for it, 2) if he wasn't real, there was no harm done, and 3) it was way more fun to believe in Santa than to not believe.

Funny thing is I still believe in Santa. No, it's not because without Santa the Toy House wouldn't be in business (although that helps).

I believe in Santa for the same reasons I believed in him at age six – to keep the faith, because there's no harm in it, and it's much more fun than not believing.

But there's one more reason, one much more compelling reason that I believe in Santa. I have proof that he exists!

No, I haven't seen him with my own eyes. Nor have I ever been to the North Pole. But I know he exists as surely as I know my own heart pumps in my chest. (I've never seen that, either.)

Some people say that it would be impossible for Santa to exist because he would have to be magic to accomplish all he does. Those same people say that magic doesn't exist.

Oh, but I know it does. I've seen Christmas Magic happen before my very own eyes. Like my first Christmas Eve in 1980 when the travel-weary, broken-down man from Detroit showed up at the game counter looking for a Simon game just seconds after one had been returned. Or the customer in the early seventies who had his trunk frozen shut in an ice storm and needed my dad to help him out late one Christmas Eve. Or the time my father picked up the tab for all of his out-of-town nephews' and nieces' Christmas presents when his sister's husband was dying from a brain tumor.

Every time I hear of a family that has been "adopted", or I read about the community Christmas Dinners, or I watch the outpouring of the community into the red buckets of the Salvation Army, the boxes for Toys for Tots, or the Food Drives all over town, I know that Christmas Magic exists.

You see, Christmas Magic is all about the Spirit of Giving, with no greater example than the gift given to us all over 2000 years ago.

And since Christmas Magic exists, then so does the magician who keeps the Spirit of Giving alive.

Call him Santa Claus, St. Nicholas, Kris Kringle, or whatever you want. He's as real as anything. Just as you can't see your heart beating in your chest, you can feel the pulsating rhythm that gives you life. And deep down in that heart lies the feeling of joy called the Spirit of Giving.

That, my friends, is where you'll find Santa.

Merry Christmas and Happy Shopping!

Phil Wrzesinski