

# 1 December

**Groan. It's the first day of December. I've got about a hundred Christmas cards to write (and several ghastly round robin letters to read). The kids are opening their chocolate Advent calendars and I've just got this poxy book. What is this all about?**

The four stages of Christmas are:

1. You believe in Father Christmas.
2. You don't believe in Father Christmas.
3. You are Father Christmas.
4. You look like Father Christmas.

I think I'm between stages three and four. I give a lot of presents. I'm getting older. I remember the magic of believing in Father Christmas – of waking up on Christmas morning with presents at the foot of my bed. I remember the sober realities of not believing, of horizons narrowing to what is before me.

And now with Christmas just around the corner (and all those cards still to write), I'm surrounded by escalating busyness and can feel my stress level starting to rise. 'Is there something else to believe in?' is the question so many people are asking. I think the answer is yes, but there is lots of sorting out to do along the way.



- Write a Christmas wish list – not things you want to consume or purchase, but things to believe in, things to hope for.
- Prune your Christmas card list.
- At least make sure it is charity cards you buy.
- Don't write 'Must see you this year' on your cards unless you actually mean it. And if you don't mean it, why are you sending this card at all?
- Help save the planet and send an email-card, and then a note about which charity the money saved has been sent to.
- And with all the time you've saved, put your feet up for an hour!

*Why is Christmas like a day at the office? You do all the work and the fat guy with the suit gets all the credit.*

Ogden Nash

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