

The Twelve Steps of Christmas



Whether you celebrate Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanza, or the dark Sabbath of cloven-hoofed, broad-winged Baphomet, the holidays are here!

For some, 'tis the season to unplug telephones, lock doors, and wait out the locust plague of mandated jocularity. For others, it is time to smash a year's worth of despondency into a box, put a red ribbon on it, and proffer this package of doom to loved ones.

Yet, in a small Omro office, obscured by the grey carpeted walls of her cubicle, a magical minion of Kris Kringle boldly proclaims her love of all things Christmas. Candy cane earrings dangle, a bold rhinestone Nutcracker sparkles, and on her journey from file cabinet to copy machine, tan trousers reveal a flash of ankle sock adorned with tiny tannenbaums. Across her prideful bosom, a bejeweled seasonal sweater depicts the holy trinity: Frosty, Rudolph, and a figure you assumed was Loni Anderson playing a trumpet but is actually a golden-haired Christmas Angel.

She works in the accounting department at your office, her name is Sheryl, and she is your Secret Santa.

While you have hastily purchase a gift-certificate from the drive-through coffee place and shoved it in a regulation envelope to toss on her desk, she has slaved over a basket of handmade holiday treats nestled in mistletoe, including crochet stockings monogrammed with the initials of each member of your family. Next to a package of limited-edition

eggnog-flavored coffee ordered from a specialty catalogue, she has arranged a Ziggy mug featuring a small bald dwarf raising his mitten-like fists to the heavens and begging the question “Is it Friday yet?”

If the Ghost of Christmas Future were to hold out his spectral hand and instigate a tour of the world as it would exist without you, there might only be one person tending to the weeds surrounding your headstone and placing a balloon-n-bear bouquet on your grave. Bending over your sepulchral spot in culottes and Stride Rite sneakers, Sheryl would dust off a plastic poinsettia and wish you a happy new year.

If visions of Xanax dance in your head and your stockings brim with coal, you can mask all misery by decking out in joyful holiday fashions that fool your family, disorient detractors, and convince Sheryl that wishes upon yonder star really do come true.

12 Days of Christmas Styles That Will Make a Lonely Lady in Your Office Glow:

On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...a gratuitous Santa Hat: Hide negative thoughts beneath white fur and red velvet. Your Santa hat, perched at a jaunty angle, forces a festive atmosphere.

On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...two nonfunctional holiday vests: These tragic swaths of fabric are purely ornamental and provide neither warmth nor useful pockets. Faux needlepoint scenes of frolicking elves complete the damage.

On the third day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...a three piece snowman scarf set with gloves: While a melting snowman has always reminded you of the passage of time and ravages of the elements, this year cheery knit creatures composed of corn cob pipes, button noses, and eyes made out of coal will cover your slashed wrists and wrap around your neck like a noose.

On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...four musical pins: The delightful double-entendre of your “Ho, ho, ho!” pin will fail to delight after a second sounding, but thanks to the tiny expensive watch batteries within, these lapel accessories can bellow well into 2009.

On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...five gem-encrusted sweaters: (intricately defined @ <http://www.lesliehall.com/gemsweater/gallery.htm>).

On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...six holiday bows: The ultimate hair ornament in this series should look like someone shot you in the head and your brains exploded out the other side in ribbons.

On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...seven stuffed reindeer horns: To achieve the Rudolph look, develop a heavy holiday drinking problem. To further delight in the maddening isolationism you’ve created by liking only unsigned bands and unreleased independent films, claim to be representative of the lesser appreciated

reindeer. “I am an amalgamation of Dunder and Blixem as cited in the original 1823 version of ‘A Visit from St. Nicholas’. You may be more familiar with their modern pedestrian incarnations, Donner and Blitzen.”

On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...eight T-shirts featuring Dilbert, Cathy, and Garfield: Claims of ODing on coffee, chocolate, or lasagna pale in hilarity to assertions that a fruitcake is not the ideal gift.

On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...nine pots of face glitter: Sparkles on skin suggest the garish display of inappropriate antics at the office party is merely a preview of the debauchery possible in your Plymouth doubled parked in the manager’s lot.

On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...ten pairs of holiday underwear : Before stuffing these Grinch-imprinted gag gifts in coworker in-boxes, check with human resources to determine the boundaries of your organization’s sexual harassment policies.

On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...eleven red and green striped ties: When you care enough to do the very least.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...twelve pairs of elfin shoes with or without bells: Jingle, jingle, jingle. Without bells = murder, with bells = manslaughter.

The Twelve Days of Christmas, like the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, remind you that you are powerless over December 25th and your life has become unmanageable. You must believe in a power greater than yourself (Santa) and make a decision to turn your will and life over to him. After a fearless moral inventory, admitting the exact nature of your wrongs, you can humbly ask him to remove your shortcomings. Step 8 specifies making a list of all persons you have harmed (and checking it twice to find out who has been naughty and nice) in order to make amends. Start by apologizing to Sheryl. Happy hellidays!

TRIED: La Yerberia Urban Stress Tincture (www.layerberia.com) is formulated by a biologist/herbalist to minimize anxiety and promote a calm sense of clarity. I put it to the ultimate test (Christmas shopping at the mall) and found myself deftly negotiating sale racks and unfazed by the slow-moving human obstacle courses in my midst. A four star product!

TRUE: Fake fur is timelessly fashionable for winter. You’ll feel extra warm knowing that none of Santa’s reindeer were killed to make your coat.

TIRED: New Year’s diet resolutions are out. At some point, when you are six feet under, you will wither away to your ideal goal weight.

TRENDY: For an instant quick-fix butt lift, try the spirit of giving!