



In the spirit of the holidays, I'd like to step aside from business and share sentiments of holidays past.

**My upbringing in northern California** was one of diverse geography; beaches, cliffs, a fertile river valley, and even desert-like terrain. A rich landscape that provided many adventures for my older sister and I.

In retrospect, I take you to Christmases when we were little. With all the holiday decorations at both our home and our grandparent's home, it was like having two full-size Christmas celebrations in one day.

Every year my father would bring out the wood crates from storage filled with decorations, and we would put up ornaments and trimmings that had been collected in the family for years, many of which survived cats, kids, dogs, and moving.

**One of the big items was our Lionel Train.** It was set up piece by piece each year around the entire base of the tree. I remember it had connectors to the metal track, and you had to plug the electrical box into the wall outlet and flip the switch to get it to move. It even had speed options to control how fast you wanted it to go. Yes, my sister and I ran it off the track 'overcooking the ovals' more times than I could count. We would also put small 2 x 3" gift boxes in the open-top cargo cars so they would fly off the track as well. Fun!

**Tree tinsel was made of metal back then.** My father made my sister and I hang them one strand at a time, carefully and thoughtfully, as "throwing" the tinsel on the tree was never allowed and you could lose tree decorating privileges if you continued, once warned. We then removed it one by one to be stored again for the next year.



Our trees all decorated for Christmas with lots of gifts right after Santa arrived. The doll buggy, that was for me! Thank you, Santa!

**When I was about 4 years old,** we were living in a neighborhood where the homes were only about 20 feet apart or so. I remember one Christmas Eve, we were told, "off to bed so Santa can come." Somewhere during the night, I woke up because, without question, I heard Santa's reindeer bells on our next-door neighbor's roof. I jumped out of bed and straight to the window where I could see their roof. I must have stood there for an hour, staring at that roof. I would not take my eyes off it because I did not want to miss seeing Santa. I never did, but I was committed, or perhaps should have been.



**It is incredible when I look back at the fantastical reality of childhood.**

The whole Santa concept is absurd. A man in a red and white fuzzy suit (suspect right there), that travels through the air in a sled carried by flying reindeer (unauthorized aircraft). He then slides down the chimney into your house (breaking and entering), and leaves a bunch of loot under your tree with your name on the gift-tags stating it was from him (might stolen goods and now I am an accessory to a crime). I digress.

**Upon opening presents on Christmas morning,** all bets were off. It was a rip and tear frenzy with paper and ribbon flying everywhere. More fun. The rest of the day was dedicated to inspecting new treasures and showing them off to everyone, several times. Especially your sister.



My older sister and I on Christmas Day at our grandparents' house just before round 2 of opening gifts. First at our house, then at theirs. Check out those white satin drapes.

**I still like decorating for the holidays,** but now I do it for other people. I hope to enhance their holiday memories by helping to create an atmosphere that they will remember and share, as I have done here with you.



Here's hoping you all have a lovely holiday in whatever fashion you celebrate, and all the best to you and yours in 2020.

Cheers,  
Lauren Jacobsen Design



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