

What makes Christmas so special? Love.

BY MALIA BRAIEDY

GOING INTO THE HOLIDAY season, we're so often told that it's the most wonderful time of the year, but why is that?

I think there are a lot of things that make this time of year so special, and a lot of them have to do with the societal expectation that comes with Christmas. There's such a stigma when it comes to Christmas, as I feel like it's been commercialized to no end. Large corporations can have buyers in a chokehold when it comes to the holiday season (myself included), and they play a large part in getting us in the celebrating spirit. This year, the Midway Target's decorations, for example, included a ceiling-spanning set of cardboard lights that were put up the day after Halloween. Everywhere you look in the store, there's something holiday-related advertised, even before the Thanksgiving turkeys were advertised. And while I don't think the holiday season should be about Target's latest advertising ideas, I think there's a sense of joy that comes with the idea of buying things for others—the true joy of giving. Buying gifts for those you love can come with a sense of fulfillment, and really allow you to reflect on your relationships and the people you've surrounded yourself with for the holiday season.

When I think about Christmas, I'll admit that the glorious

Target decorations and the Starbucks Holiday menu cross my mind more often than I'd like to admit, but there's so much more that comes up for me. I think about putting up lights with my family, about the smell that fills the living room while my mom and I cook Christmas cookies, about the meals that I seldom get to share with my family during other times of the year. The comfort of the holidays always puts me in a good mood, especially when I get to spend time with the people I love with a hot chocolate in hand.

That's what makes the holidays so special. It's not a Toasted White Chocolate Mocha from Starbucks or the millions of dazzling lights across the cities—although some of them are truly shocking—it's the feeling of belonging and the overwhelming feeling of love that shines through, despite the often harsh winter weather it foreshadows. Whether it's with your family, friends, or anyone who you would consider close to you, the joy that can be found in the relationships around us is such a special feeling, and truly gives a sense of warmth to those affected.

That being said, go roundup some of the people you enjoy being around and get to celebrating, because there's a whole lot of love to go around this season. Happy Holidays, Golden Bears.



What Makes Christmas Special. Photo Credit: Rebecca Beasley