

Today marks the 177th anniversary of the publication of Charles Dickens', A Christmas Carol. With its timeless message of charity and redemption, Dickens drew attention to societal problems resulting from disparities in wealth, reminding Victorians that they have a duty of care to each other. Dickens' hope was that this lesson would be remembered throughout the year and not just at Christmastime, and to *keep Christmas well* is to be humble (not humbug!) and at its heart is about the importance of putting the well-being of others before yourself.

The novella so profoundly influenced the zeitgeist of the era that it could almost be said that Dickens' singlehandedly resurrected and codified the Christmas traditions we know today. These include everything from sending Christmas cards, to carolling, gift-giving, feasting and even to the expression *the Christmas spirit* itself. All of these were part of, A Christmas Carol, as was the message of conversion, from narrow self-interest to the greater good for all.

Visible, outward generosity through charitable giving is only possible with empathy for others, and we have Dickens to thank for reminding us of this. His story cuts through the materialistic trappings of the season and captures the true meaning of Christmas. In his own words, Dickens described the holidays as



"I really don't have any special requests. I just wanted to write about the experience."



"a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of in the long calendar year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of other people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys".

This he called the Carol Philosophy -the hopeful spirit that defines the story. For more on this, read [here](#).



As an observation, the only comparable example of how one person so influenced the direction of history through literature, would be the 1534 publication of the Lutheran Bible. Its success singularly established High German as the dialect of choice across the German States, and remains to this day the language of choice for 83 million citizens of the Bundesrepublik. The take-away here is that each of us can make a difference, and that it is less important as to whether we will be remembered centuries in the future for what we did, but that we remember others and do for those less fortunate now what we can,

with what we have, where we are. After all, what better way to keep Dickens' message alive than to give back to those most in need this Christmas season.

God bless us everyone.

Be safe, be well!

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P.S. To put you in a Christmassy mood, here's the recipe of the Cratchit's finest plum pudding [here](#).