

Nostalgia is a hard concept to grasp when you are a child. You haven't lived long enough to fully appreciate what it is. Nostalgia is that feeling of looking back fondly on old memories and placing yourself in those memories. You remember the sights and sounds, the smells and the touch of the things around you. The problem with nostalgia is that as a child, you don't appreciate it and you won't for years to come, and unless you prepared for those later years, you may have nothing to look back on. You may not have to wait until your 60s to feel a wave of nostalgia wash over you, but nostalgia may hit you in your mid-twenties as it does me, and especially around Christmas. I was lucky enough to have a father that wanted memories and something to look back on. To me, the events he set up were a pain, and prevented me from playing video games, or with my action figures, but I can wholly appreciate what he was doing now that I have reached the right age. You see, my dad used his video camera to make memories, especially at Christmas. He wanted something for us to remember.

On Christmas Eve, before my brother and I were sent to our rooms to fall asleep, but instead would lie there for hours dreaming of the presents waiting for us under the tree, my brother and I would sit in the family room on the floor in front of our dad sitting in his wingback chair. The video camera set up in the opposite corner, recording the three of us as my dad read *'Twas The Night Before Christmas*. My brother and I would sit there fidgeting and wondering what the point of it all was, other than we did it every year. I never really knew why other than dad wanted it done, so we did it.

On Christmas morning, after waking up way too early, lying in bed for another hour until forcing my parents and brother awake, I would wait at the top of the stairs until my dad gave the all-clear. This meant that the camera was set up in the family room, ready to capture the morning's events, the revealing of what Santa Claus had brought, the un-stuffing of stockings, and the unwrapping of presents. At the time I saw it as a cool way to remember what I got for Christmas each year and so we never put up a fuss.

Now that I have reached my mid-twenties, I certainly feel old, though don't let anyone over thirty hear you complain about your twenties for they will give you a look so cold and worn that you will instantly regret saying anything, and I am glad for my father's persistence on recording our Christmases. I've reached the age when Santa no longer visits me and it gives me a warm and comforting feeling to watch the old tapes and remember what it felt like to be a kid, so full of awe and wonder at the mystery of Santa, and filled with the joy and excitement of opening and playing with new toys.

My father passed a little over two years ago and this will be the third Christmas without him and I am so grateful he recorded those Christmas Eves and Mornings because it give me and my family a chance to spend Christmas with him again. The sense of nostalgia brought on by those Christmas home movies is overwhelming. Christmas is a time to be with your family and to make lasting memories. Just don't forget to remember them later.