

Dear Elle,

You have been asking me lately “Is Santa real?”

I have been thinking a lot about what I want to tell you. I decided to write down my answer for you so that I can say it just right and you can read it over and over again, if you have questions.

So, is Santa real?

The answer is yes. Santa is real, but not in the way that you think. There is no one Santa. Santa is not a man at the North Pole that gives gifts to all the children.

Rather Santa is more of a symbol that represents giving, kindness, love and service. The old, fat man in a red suit is a symbol for all of those good things.

And mom, dad, aunts, uncles, grandmas, and grandpas want to be a part of the giving and kindness and service, so we are on Santa’s team. Dad and I fill your stockings with treats and gifts, and we bring you presents on Christmas morning. You don’t hear us because we do it late at night and we are quiet as a mouse. We faithfully carry out the tradition of Santa every year with love in our hearts. People like me and daddy help Santa do a job that would otherwise be impossible for one man.

We say the gifts are from Santa because we don’t want to take credit for the presents. Giving is what brings us joy, not the credit for the giving; we just want you to feel love and magic on Christmas morning. That is what Grandma Kerry did for me and Grandma Pam did for dad and what their parents did for them.

Someday you will do the same for your children. You will love seeing their little faces light up Christmas morning as they see their gifts, just like we love seeing your face light up. You will grow to love picking out presents for your children; you will love the sleepless nights before each Christmas as you try to get all the gifts ready, and you will love the anticipation of what your children will find from Santa.

This won’t make you Santa, though. Just like it doesn’t make me and dad Santa. Santa is bigger than any one person, and his work has gone on longer than any of us have lived. What Santa represents is simple, but powerful. It is more than a story you read in a book and more than a movie you watch on TV.

And it is more than a jolly old, fat man magically fitting down chimneys. He teaches children to have a belief in something they can't see or touch.

That is a big job and it's a very important one. Throughout your life you will need the capacity to believe; in yourself, in your friends, in your family and in your abilities. You'll also need to believe in things you can't measure or hold in your hand or even see with your eyes. One of those things is God and His son, Jesus, which is the reason we celebrate Christmas in the first place.

The secret of Santa is not spoiled, but it is passed down from parents to their children when the children are ready for the responsibility to give as well. And now we have passed it down to you.

This knowledge puts you on Santa's team too. This means you can help us shop for your brothers and sister, and help set out their gifts on Christmas Eve. You can be a type of Santa for someone right now that needs hope and encouragement in their lives. You can share Santa's love and kindness with anyone you chose.

Now that you too know the secret of Santa, we hope that you will continue to hold that bright light of love and hope and that feeling of happiness that Santa has always given you. And we hope that when the day comes, you too will carry on the tradition of Santa Claus for your children!

So to answer your question: Yes, Santa is real. Although he is not a man you can touch or see, Santa is as real as love and hope and happiness.

Remember, it is not your place to spoil the secret for anyone else. You are now a keeper of the secret of Santa just like us.

Merry Christmas!

I love you,

Mom