

Celebrating Christmas Traditions

Transcript of Episode 509

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Julie Walker: Hello, and welcome to the Arts of Language Podcast with Andrew Pudewa, founder of the Institute for Excellence in Writing or as many like to say, “IEW.” My name is Julie Walker, and I’m honored to serve Andrew and IEW as the chief marketing officer. Our goal is to equip teachers and teaching parents with methods and materials, which will aid them in training their students to become confident and competent communicators and thinkers.

Julie Walker: Well, Dear Listener, this podcast is scheduled to launch December 25th. We will not be working on December 25th, and we are not recording this podcast on December 25th. And hopefully you are not listening to this podcast on December 25th. So if you are just hit pause, come back tomorrow and listen to it again.

But we have a really fun episode to share with you today. So normally this would be a little banter between Andrew and me, and when I told him this morning that we've got two podcasts to do: one on Unit 5 teaching thinking, which has already launched, and the other one is today's podcast called Christmas Traditions, and he said, oh, you should get Terra to do that one. And I said, that's such a great idea. So Terra, welcome to our podcast.

Terra Tyler: Thank you, Julie. I’m glad to be here, especially talking about Christmas.

Julie Walker: Especially talking about Christmas. So if you have seen any of our Twelve Days videos that we did for this year promoting the Twelve Days of Christmas, then Terra, she is the one that is over the top excited about Christmas. And when we were casting this role, I'm kind of like, why didn't they pick me?

'cause I love Christmas too. I even have a bathroom in my house that has Christmas decorations. Year round, but I'm so glad they picked you, Terra, because they are having you do some crazy things that I'm not sure I would necessarily be willing to do or able to do. So one of, we'll definitely put links in our show notes for some of the videos that you've done, the hundred days till Christmas was pretty hilarious, where she's going around the office marking off calendars, and there's a shot of her going into the men's restroom, marking off calendars. And of course you can kind of see who's in the restroom based on the next person's talking, but.

And right now you're wearing the shirt. That's a Buddy the Elf shirt, which. Everybody loves Buddy the Elf, and that's so much fun. So the theme today is Christmas traditions and of course we'll loop back around to IEW's Christmas traditions with Twelve Days. So what are

some of the things that you remember growing up and some of those things that you've now tried to incorporate in your own family?

Terra Tyler: Well, when I was growing up, Chris. Christmas is always about family, so it was just a time where we always got together with cousins, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and so I would say it really kind of kicks off around Thanksgiving for us gathering for that. My grandmother always had a huge Christmas tree loaded with ornaments, and it was just always such a fun time to decorate and gather the family. So we did a lot of meals. We did outside activities too. So it, everything was centered around family, so anytime we could come together with them was special.

Julie Walker: So talk about your meals. What kind of are, do you have some traditional Christmas dishes that you serve?

Terra Tyler: So in, in our home, so my husband and I, and with our kids, we do, when I was growing up, I don't recall actually having the same thing every year. Pretty traditional to have Turkey or ham. We always had deviled eggs. I'll say that was a staple.

Julie Walker: Mm-hmm.

Terra Tyler: So foods. Not anything specific that we had other than maybe just everything. I just felt like there was food everywhere all the time, so.

Julie Walker: So when I kind of like you, I don't remember necessarily many of the foods we ate as a child growing up. I do remember my grandmother took great pride in making Christmas balls, popcorn balls every year. And it was really dry and crunchy, and they made a mess everywhere. But every year we had those popcorn balls.

And when my husband and I got married, and we were trying to incorporate some Christmas traditions in our family, because my husband's half Japanese, we've done rice balls, also known as Musubi every year. And David would say like, this is not special. We ate these all the time. Why are we making this about Christmas? And I said, because we need our family Christmas tradition and I wanna be sure that our boys know that they've got Japanese heritage. So musubi it is not with the spam. Usually we did like a piece of sausage or a pickle or something like that, but anyway, little rice balls that we'd put soy sauce on and the boys would love that.

Terra Tyler: So these are like small rice balls. I'm not familiar with this.

Julie Walker: Yeah. Oh, well link in the show notes for a Musubi recipe, and if you're from Hawaii, exactly what I'm talking about. But that was brought over it with the Polynesian as well into Hawaii. So that's a fun thing. So tell me about the outdoor activities.

Terra Tyler: So around the holidays we would usually play a game of softball outside. My grandparents had many acres of land, and so we had a place where we could go outside and

kind of mark out the bases. And we had plenty of family as well, so everyone could participate. So I do recall playing softball and that would be all the major holidays.

So definitely even, even Christmas sometimes as well.

Julie Walker: Assuming there wasn't any snow because you grew up in this area, in the Tulsa area. Yeah.

Terra Tyler: Yes, and we did have several snowy Christmases when I was growing up. We haven't had as many as I've raised children here in Oklahoma, and it's a little bit sad, but we did have a lot of snowy Christmases as well. So if there was snow at Christmas because of the land where my grandparents were, we would do sledding. So they always had sleds. And so that would be what we would do on Christmas and around the holidays when everybody was in.

Julie Walker: Love that. Love that. Yes. I was born and raised in Minnesota. We definitely had snow at Christmas time. Then we moved to Southern California where we definitely did not have snow unless we went up to the mountains. But like your family, we would also play sports.

And our first Christmas together, this is probably too much information, but our first Christmas together was kind of a in-laws versus the out-laws flag football game. And so my brothers and my husband and brothers-in-law played, and there were other people that were added to the fun and mix. Well, that was on December 25th and on December 26th, I gave birth to our first son. And so David, who was supposed to be helping me, was so stiff and sore from playing flag football that, uh, well of course he was a tremendous help, but he was pretty sore.

Terra Tyler: Probably not the same level of help.

Julie Walker: No, not the same level of help, but yes, our family also, we just love Christmas. So talk about this Twelve Days of Christmas Giving that you've been roped in. You've worked for IEW, now how many years?

Terra Tyler: Almost eight.

Julie Walker: Almost eight years.

Terra Tyler: yeah, I think we're going on eight years

Julie Walker: So we have definitely done Twelve Days plenty of times. So talk about a little bit about how you got roped into this and what are some of the antics that you've had to do over the course of the last few weeks and months.

Terra Tyler: Well, I'm not sure who decided to rope me into this. It might be because they know I love Christmas, but otherwise they know I'm willing to, to be part of it. What have they asked me to do? Yes, they've, they've asked me to do a lot of silly things that I wouldn't

just normally do on my own, like going into the men's restroom and marking off a calendar. I don't normally do that here at IEW, or some of the things that they've had me film, maybe outside of the office that you can see. Um,

Julie Walker: out there in front of God and everybody

Terra Tyler: Uhhuh, yes,

Julie Walker: Some antics at Hobby Lobby.

Terra Tyler: some, some looks from people wondering what is this lady doing? But yeah, it's, it's really fun. I enjoy it so.

Julie Walker: So the Twelve Days of Christmas Giving. Why don't you describe to our listeners? I'll help you out because I know what all the gifts are. We have 12 days of gift giving that is to anyone who wants to participate starting December 26th, ending January 6th. So explain to our listeners kind of what's the point and what are we trying to accomplish.

Terra Tyler: Well, so generally on the Twelve Days, we kind of have a theme that goes along with each day. So it might be writing or poetry or grammar, or whatever that theme might be. I really think it's a time that we give back to our customers, we give something away free every day for those 12 days, resources that we may not normally have available for free—kind of highlighting those, helping them as their teaching and training their students. I think that being here at IEW, Andrew is so generous, and on that 12th day, giving away a physical gift that we actually ship for free to our customers is. It's truly a gift. You don't have that very often, so it's really fun to be a part of that and get these resources in their hands because ultimately that's what we want is to equip them with these tools.

Julie Walker: Yep. Perfectly said. I will just only add that we also want to give our fan club, the people that love us and know us and who might say to us, but Julie, you gave that same gift to us last year, not the physical gift. Because every, every year we try to come up with something new and fun, but on day one, I'll just say we are doing a talk on the value of reading aloud and giving away Andrew's talk *Nurturing Competent Communicators*.

But this year we have Andrew reading a story. Last year we had him read a story as well. This year it's a different story, so it's just fun to be able to give these digital gifts, but then it also gives those people that know and love us an opportunity to share it with their friends. We really want you to share with your friends just this wonderful thing that we do for 12 days, like Terra said, to give back and.

Every day is a new digital gift, and unlike the song the 12 Days of Christmas, it doesn't cumulate. It's an exploding ladder, so to speak. On day one, you get the gift. On day two, you don't get the gift on day one and day two, that's how the song goes, right by the end of the day. But on day two, once day two is launched, day one gifts are no longer available.

So yeah, we're asking you to come back and check your email because that's how you get the link to the gifts every day. Super easy. And there's a signup form, IEW.com/Christmas couldn't be easier. So go there, sign up. If you haven't done so already, and it's not too late, you can sign up even on day 12 to get the free gift.

And the way you do that is go to IEW.com/christmas, fill out the form, and then we will send you an email so that you too can get that free gift. And on day 13, it's over. A lot of preparation goes into this ahead of time, including this year, which what I'm loving, what we're doing this year is the videos that we're featuring you.

I did have some, what's the word? Hesitancy, because we're kind of doing a little riff on The Office feel where we're interviewing people while things are going on in the background. And the office is not one of my favorite television shows, just because I'm a manager, I'm a boss, I'm a director. I don't like how they portray the director on that because he's just a doofus. And I just just hope that I never come across that way. But, uh, who knows? We'll see how it is. But I wanna go back to Andrew and just kind of what you said and. He did not want to record this podcast. He thought that Terra would be more qualified, and in some ways he's our resident Scrooge, but not the Scrooge at the beginning of the story, the Scrooge at the end of the story, because at the end of the story, Scrooge has this lovely transformation from curmudgeon, grumpy, stingy, not caring about people, to a man who sees the value of giving, and so he gives to the poor. I think of the goose that he gives to Bob Crotchet and his family, and then he joins his really pesky nephew who keeps saying, "Come on uncle, you should come and join us." And he shows up and surprises them, and there he is, enjoying the family.

So being generous and being a part of a family, that's who Andrew is. That's who we hope to be here at IEW. So thank you, Terra, for joining us today, and Merry Christmas to you and all your listeners.

Terra Tyler: Merry Christmas.

Julie Walker: Thanks so much for joining us. If you enjoyed this episode and want to hear more, please subscribe to our podcast in iTunes, Stitcher, or Spotify. Or just visit us each week at IEW.com/podcast. Here you can also find show notes and relevant links from today's broadcast. One last thing: would you mind going to iTunes to rate and review our podcast? This really helps other smart, caring listeners like you find us. Thanks so much.