

IEW's Twelve Days of Christmas Giving

Transcript of Podcast Episode 352

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.

So Andrew, we are on, not quite the night before Christmas, but pretty close when we release this podcast episode. It's scheduled for December 21.

Andrew Pudewa: Right, and I personally do not want you or anyone saying "Merry Christmas" to me on December 21 or 22 or 23 or 24.

Julie Walker: But I can wait until the twenty-fifth.

Andrew Pudewa: Yes, that's when you should say "Merry Christmas." You know, it's interesting because our modern, popular American culture since I was a kid, is you get your Christmas tree up right after Thanksgiving. And then you roll the Christmas season up to Christmas Day, which is like the climax.

And then maybe, you know, depending on how lazy you are or how dried and dead it's looking, you leave it around for a few days. And by the twenty-eighth, you know, Christmas is over for most people. But that's not the historical way in which Christmas was celebrated. That's kind of a modern, particularly American way.

Julie Walker: Yes. And so we here at IEW, in some ways we are a more classical company, but in this way we are, in that we don't start celebrating Christmas. Well, we have twelve days of Christmas giving.

Andrew Pudewa: Yes, and we start on Christmas. Oh, the day after ...

Julie Walker: The day after Christmas because you know, Christmas Day.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah. So historically the Christmas feast or the season would begin on Christmas and last for twelve days, ending on Epiphany. And so the idea was, you know, it was a fasting and penitential season. In fact in the Eastern churches, Christmas Eve is a strict fast day. And then Christmas starts the season. And then you have twelve days of feasting and celebration. And so I think in part, my family kind of adopted this approach. And so we started with this, okay, twelve days of Christmas giving. We'll start the day after Christmas and give something ... give a present every day.

Oh. And trivia. I don't know if you knew this. The Shakespeare play *Twelfth Night*, which is one of my favorites, was called *twelfth night* because it was originally written to be performed on the last day of the Christmas feast cycle.

Julie Walker: I like that.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah. So I have tried to make it a tradition to watch the play, obviously the movie. And there are many good versions of it. And it's a comedy, so it's very light. I was actually in that once.

Julie Walker: Were you really?

Andrew Pudewa: I was in the play once.

Julie Walker: Okay. So for our listeners who are familiar with the play or who plan to watch it on January ... what would be the twelfth night?

Andrew Pudewa: Fifth, sixth. Somewhere in that zone. Whatever's convenient.

Julie Walker: What character did you play?

Andrew Pudewa: Malvolio.

Julie Walker: Malvolio. Whoa, really!

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah. It was kind of a little more main character. And he's kind of the goofy, stupid one, so it suited me. I can play goofy, stupid. But, yes, I very much enjoyed that play. So anyway, we are planning ... And of course, you know, like all good Christmas gifts, we don't tell people exactly what they are until they open it up. So tell us, how does our Twelve Days of Christmas go, and what are we looking forward to this year?

Julie Walker: So what the ... Our Twelve Days of Christmas promotion—that's kind of what it is—is it starts on December 26. And if our listeners today go to IEW.com/christmas2022. So those are the letters: Christmas. And then the numbers 2022 all smushed together, right. You will see a place where you can register, and that registration button does two things.

It enrolls you in the email reminders because it—and this is really important—every day we send out an email letting people know what the gift is. So that's when they're (the gifts) are announced. And so they go to our website, and they get the gifts. But if they don't get it that day, poof!

Andrew Pudewa: Oh, no, seriously? That's kind of cruel.

Julie Walker: No, it's reasonable; that's what it is.

Andrew Pudewa: I guess from a marketing perspective ...

Julie Walker: Well, and so we want you to come back to our website every day. So every day you get a new email. But the other thing that it does is it enters you into a drawing. So in addition to giving away free gifts, we are giving away prizes for twelve lucky winners. And then on the last day, I think we have five winners that we're giving away gifts to. But here's the exciting thing. So Days 1 through 11 ... And if our IEW families, teachers have done this a few years in a row, they might see: "Oh, yeah, we did that last year." On Day 11, we kind of have a tradition where we give away a certain gift.

I'm not going to tell you what it is. But that's kind of been our tradition – that we give away this present every eleventh day. And if you participate in this in the past, you might go, "Oh, I already have that gift." But two things about that. We always try to include new things. And this year we have, oh, a half dozen or so brand new gifts that we've never shared before that are sprinkled throughout the twelve days.

Andrew Pudewa: The elves around IEW have been hard at work. We'll put it that way.

Julie Walker: Indeed, they have. Indeed they have. But on the twelfth day, we actually give away thousands of a physical product that we will ship to your home.

Andrew Pudewa: Yes, I've been aware of this. And people almost think, "Well, that's too good to be true. Like, you're going to send me this very cool thing, and I don't even have to pay shipping?"

Walker: And I wanted to mention that too. I'm glad you brought that up. The free shipping is available throughout the twelve days.

Andrew Pudewa: Oh, so people want to stock up and get stuff for the new semester or the new year, or they just started homeschooling. It's a great time to get that free shipping coupon.

Julie Walker: Yeah, free shipping. And then, of course, on the twelfth day you can use that free shipping to get your free gift. And so it truly is, you know, limit one per household, but it truly is a gift. And you know, every ...

Andrew Pudewa: It's a cool one. Can I just jump in and say, when you brought me that thing that we are going to give away for the twelfth day and mail, that they get to hold in their hands – a thing I'm holding in my hands right now, I thought, oh man, people are just going to be so excited with this. It's one of those gifts that isn't even just for students. Like a lot of adults would look at it and say ...

Julie Walker: "Oh, so helpful."

Andrew Pudewa: "I secretly wanted to have this; it's going to be so helpful." And ironically, there's a very funny Easter egg in the Christmas gift. And it will be a product that we sell downline. But, okay. So what else should people know? Anything?

Julie Walker: Tell your friends. You know, every year we, as I said, we get thousands of people who—I don't want to say *cash in*—but you know, they get the free gift. And every year we're wanting more and more ... We really want more people to have an opportunity just to experience the joy of Christmas and to experience the joy of IEW. And so tell your friends.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah, and especially if you're in that world where Christmas ends on Christmas, we're going to start. So you're going to get like a double Christmas season if you participate here. But you know, we've had a lot of comments. I mean, I can think of a few offhand. One was someone posted or wrote me, or I don't know where it came from. But you know, "I just love, love, love, love, love, exclamation point, exclamation point, your Twelve Days of Giving." People are like, "I always got exactly the thing I needed to get right now." Like there was some supernatural assistance going on there.

Julie Walker: Perhaps there was. Yes.

Andrew Pudewa: And yeah, just so people know, some of these are audio or video talks that are not generally available. We have some other ebooks.

Julie Walker: Yep. PDF downloads. Things for classroom teachers, things for special needs families. We have some themes that are connected to humor. I'm not sure why we do this humor thing. Oh, that's right, because you're the funny man. And we have things connected to spelling, grammar, you know, just things that we do.

We have a day devoted to writing. Shocker, I know. But then we have this really special free gift at the end of our promotion. And you know, it's just a way to ... an easy way to have our friends and families who know us, who love us, to share with their friends. Hey, there's no commitment; there's no obligation. And as you say, you don't even have to pay shipping.

Andrew Pudewa: So we're going to send everybody ... Once they sign up, we're going to send them an email every day thenceforward for twelve days. But if they aren't interested, just delete it.

Julie Walker: Or subscribe.

Andrew Pudewa: I mean, we all have to delete a hundred emails every day anyway so ... But after that, we promise to stop sending emails every day.

Julie Walker: Oh, yeah. No, we don't ...

Andrew Pudewa: We don't do that kind of thing.

Julie Walker: No. That's true. Andrew, I don't know if you are getting this, but I'm certainly getting this right now: this Twelve Days of Christmas type promotion that's pre-Christmas and a lot of the things are ...

Andrew Pudewa: Well, you know, it's Black Friday, Cyber Monday. I actually saw one that said, "We are philosophically opposed to Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Therefore, our sale is going to be on St. Nicholas Day."

Julie Walker: Well, there you go.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah, we're all used to getting notice of things we might be interested in, and people can always unsubscribe.

Julie Walker: Exactly.

Andrew Pudewa: But we do promise that the everyday email is for just this season. And after that, you know, we only send like what – once a month or special events.

Julie Walker: And you know, you have the option of signing up for those newsletters or not. You know, you can sign up to get subscriptions.

Andrew Pudewa: And I know some people are curious because they're naturally calculating the odds. We're giving away gift certificates every day?

Julie Walker: One every day.

Andrew Pudewa: And how much is it?

Julie Walker: A hundred-dollar gift certificate.

Andrew Pudewa: And how many are there?

Julie Walker: Twelve.

Andrew Pudewa: Oh, just one hundred-dollars each day, not twelve hundred-dollars each day.

Julie Walker: Right. But on the last day, we pull out the five golden rings on Day 12 and, you know, allow five more people to get more ...

Andrew Pudewa: Okay. So people can calculate what are their chances. If they do every day, they have a twelve in however many thousand chance plus five ...

Julie Walker: We don't know. Right?

Andrew Pudewa: So seventeen in however many thousand chances. But I mean, that's kind of the way I'd think. Why not?

Julie Walker: Why not? And then, you know, you'll have that gift certificate. And you can get free shipping with your purchase with that. So, very good. All right. Well, I love Christmas as you know, Andrew. And if our listeners have been around at all, they know I love Christmas. I

love this time of year where we can just be generous and share love with everyone. And listener, I'll just say this to you. We are so grateful for you and hope that you have an opportunity to join us this year in our Twelve Days of Christmas so that we can share a little bit of love with you.

Andrew Pudewa: And we will actually say "Merry Christmas" once it has happened and we're in the season.

Julie Walker: Absolutely.

Andrew Pudewa: All right.

Julie Walker: Thank you.

Andrew Pudewa: Thank you.

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, Google podcasts, 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.