

# My Holiday Survival Checklist

Thoughts about the Holiday Season in General:

Remember what the holidays are really about. One of the gifts of your situation is that you get to look at things differently. What you ask and expect of yourself should be different. How you approach this emotionally loaded time of the year should be different. Something big has happened to you and you are forever changed. My hope is that in taking productive actions, you will be forever changed for the better and will not become a 'monument to despair'.

The real Holiday meaning is found in your heart. Joy can come in taking time to really reach out to others, to really listen to them and care about them. Even though there may be someone or something that is missing from your life this holiday season, there is still so much to focus your love and joy on, so much to be grateful for. Actively look for these things. It's very therapeutic.

Cherish the memories of the past and the ones you are presently making. Follow your heart in what you want to do as far as Holiday activities. However, you may feel like you want to shut yourself away until it's all over and that is absolutely NOT an option. You may pace yourself but do not hide yourself.

## ❖ **Isolation does not help you heal. Here are some processes that might however.**

1. Write about your feelings regarding the holidays. Perhaps write a holiday letter to the one you have lost.
2. Engage in quite sharing time with family members or friends.
3. Have a memory candle burning at a place setting for the loved one lost and in some special place in the house during other times.
4. Choose an organization you resonate with and contribute time, money, or gifts.
5. Find an individual or a family and try to make their Holidays a little brighter.
6. Spend time each day in quiet and inner silence.
7. Actively choose to focus on what you love about the Holidays. What makes you feel good about them?
8. When emotional moments come, don't stifle them. Feel them, express them and let them pass. Remember, Stuffing only works for the Turkey!
9. Engage in a creative project that lights you up. Perhaps make simple gifts or ornaments for everyone you are giving to.
10. Consider establishing new Holiday traditions. Don't try to do everything the same way it was done when your loved one was still present or when life circumstances were different.

Ok, so let's tackle the 'stuff' of the Holidays and figure out what we are going to do.

# Here is a check list to help you decide what you do and don't want to do

## Cards

- Mail as usual \_\_\_\_\_
- Shorten your list \_\_\_\_\_
- Include a Christmas letter \_\_\_\_\_
- Send No Cards \_\_\_\_\_

## Shopping

- Shop as usual \_\_\_\_\_
- Shop early \_\_\_\_\_
- Give Gift Cards or Cash \_\_\_\_\_
- Buy no gifts \_\_\_\_\_
- Make simple gifts \_\_\_\_\_
- Ask for Help \_\_\_\_\_
- Shop on line \_\_\_\_\_
- Use Catalogs \_\_\_\_\_
- Give Baked Goods \_\_\_\_\_
- Shop with a Friend \_\_\_\_\_
- Make a list of gifts to buy before going out \_\_\_\_\_

## Traditions

- Keep the old Traditions \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't attend Holiday Parties \_\_\_\_\_
- Leave town for the Holidays \_\_\_\_\_
- Attend religious service \_\_\_\_\_
- Attend services at a different church \_\_\_\_\_
- Spend quiet time alone or with close friends \_\_\_\_\_
- Visit the Cemetery \_\_\_\_\_

## Thanksgiving Dinner

- Cook dinner as usual \_\_\_\_\_
- Change the dinner routine \_\_\_\_\_  
(a buffet or different foods)
- Volunteer at a church or shelter \_\_\_\_\_
- Have a potluck dinner \_\_\_\_\_

## Decorations

- Decorate as usual \_\_\_\_\_
- Modify your decorations \_\_\_\_\_
- Ask for help \_\_\_\_\_
- Make a special decoration for the one lost \_\_\_\_\_
- No decorations \_\_\_\_\_

## Music

- Enjoy as usual \_\_\_\_\_
- Avoid \_\_\_\_\_
- Listen to it and have a good cry \_\_\_\_\_

## Holiday Baking

- Bake Cookies \_\_\_\_\_
- Fruitcakes \_\_\_\_\_
- Holiday Breads \_\_\_\_\_
- Cut back on Baking \_\_\_\_\_

## Traditions

- Attend Holiday Parties \_\_\_\_\_
- Cut way back on social events \_\_\_\_\_
- Buy the usual Holiday Foods \_\_\_\_\_
- Do not attend religious service \_\_\_\_\_
- Attend services at a different time \_\_\_\_\_
- Spend quiet time at home with family \_\_\_\_\_
- Open gifts at a different time \_\_\_\_\_

## Thanksgiving Dinner

- Go to someone else's home for dinner \_\_\_\_\_
- Have a small, simple dinner \_\_\_\_\_
- Go out for dinner \_\_\_\_\_
- Buy dinner already prepared \_\_\_\_\_
- Forgo a big dinner \_\_\_\_\_

## The Tree

- Buy a living Tree \_\_\_\_\_
- Cut one yourself \_\_\_\_\_
- Buy an artificial tree \_\_\_\_\_
- Pay a service to buy and decorate a tree \_\_\_\_\_
- Just do a small table top tree \_\_\_\_\_
- Put a tree on the grave site \_\_\_\_\_

## Holiday Dinner

- Prepare as usual \_\_\_\_\_
- Invite friends over \_\_\_\_\_
- Buy dinner already prepared \_\_\_\_\_
- Ask for help \_\_\_\_\_
- Change the location of the dinner \_\_\_\_\_

## New Year's Eve

- Go out to a gala affair \_\_\_\_\_
- Stay home alone \_\_\_\_\_
- Go to a small party with good friends \_\_\_\_\_
- Go to a movie \_\_\_\_\_
- Have a simple dinner party \_\_\_\_\_

## New Year's Day

- Spend as usual \_\_\_\_\_
- Go out of town \_\_\_\_\_
- Attend a party \_\_\_\_\_
- Spend time with a few friends \_\_\_\_\_
- Go to a movie \_\_\_\_\_

## A Holiday Trip

- Take family out of town for the holiday \_\_\_\_\_
- Go out of town to see family \_\_\_\_\_
- Take a trip alone \_\_\_\_\_
- Take a trip with a good friend \_\_\_\_\_
- Visit someone you feel safe with \_\_\_\_\_

## Holiday Dinner

- Go out for dinner \_\_\_\_\_
- Spend it with family only \_\_\_\_\_
- Change the dinner routine \_\_\_\_\_
- Have a potluck \_\_\_\_\_
- Have a small simple dinner \_\_\_\_\_

## New Year's Eve

- Go out to a quiet dinner \_\_\_\_\_
- Stay home with a friend or family member \_\_\_\_\_
- Have a few friends over to your home \_\_\_\_\_
- Have a simple dinner with your children \_\_\_\_\_
- Go out of town \_\_\_\_\_

## New Year's Day

- Remove the Holiday Decorations \_\_\_\_\_
- Avoid New Years Parties \_\_\_\_\_
- Have a gathering \_\_\_\_\_
- Write your hopes for the New Year \_\_\_\_\_
- Give yourself a lounging in bed day \_\_\_\_\_

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