



## TIPS FOR GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS ALONE

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The holidays are no time to be alone. The crowds, the shopping for gifts to give, the parties, all seem to be designed for groups, for couples, for families. Everywhere we go we are pressured to be part of some Norman Rockwell universe. However this is not always possible. For any number of reasons we may be facing a holiday season where we just have to soldier through it on our own. Here are some pointers that may not only help along the way but just may rewrite the whole holiday script forever. I invite you to keep a journal of the process. It helps you to focus on what you're doing and will serve as a companion on your journey.

### 1. Self Talk

Listen to yourself – what are you saying? Our minds are constantly chattering. Is yours counting out all the things you are missing, how worthless you must be to be so alone? On one side of a sheet of paper write these things down one by one. On the other side write down what a best friend would say to counteract them. Resolve to be your own best friend when you talk to yourself. Mind is the builder.

### 2. Do something special for yourself

Yes, this is the season for giving to others but now you are your own best friend so give something to yourself, a trip to a masseuse, a book you've wanted to read, a special meal. Let yourself know that the gift is appreciated. Send yourself a thank you card.

### 3. Do something special for someone else.

Helping someone else to feel better is a double whammy because it will also lift your spirits up out of the doldrums, at least for a while. It's a start and who knows, could become a habit. Keep it simple. Listening to someone who needs to talk is a great gift. Give away smiles. Just keep the personal touch in there so you can feel the energy return.

### 4. Walk in the fresh air 30 minutes a day.

Go outside in the fresh air and breathe deeply. Thirty minutes of aerobic exercise a day not only helps burn calories and helps us sleep better it also gets those endorphins going to elevate our mood and reduce stress. Pick an environment you enjoy, a park, the woods, city streets with shop windows, a quiet neighborhood. Vary your routine and keep a record of how much territory you cover.

### 5. Cherish your memories.

Good memories of holidays past can be wonderful gifts when you focus on being glad that you have had the experiences rather than sorry that you are not having them now. Take some time to analyze not just the circumstances but the qualities expressed. Perhaps love, safety, contentment, peace or exhilaration. Think of what you personally did to make it happen, even if it was only to be in the right place at the right time. What can you do to create those circumstances for yourself in the future? Write it down.

### 6. Get in touch with the spiritual roots of the season.

What's the reason for the season? Down through time the onset of the winter season has provoked ceremonies of a spiritual nature that go beyond today's hype and frenzy. Consider putting some time aside to explore meditation and/or prayer and the many benefits each of them has to offer. We are as human beings more than the sum of our parts. Learn to listen for the small, still voice within.

**7. If you have to cry-go ahead.**

Mourning is real and needs to be expressed. What is important to realize is that mourning is what you are doing. To mourn is to feel and show grief over something that has been lost, that no longer exists, or perhaps that can never be. The loss can be someone, or several some ones, you cared for but it can also be the loss connected with dreams and expectations that have not been realized. Whatever the source of sadness defining the issue and facing your feelings is the first step in a process that can lead to healing. You may feel self-recrimination, anger, and/or a sensation of abandonment. This is perfectly normal. Take ownership of your own grieving process and accept the need to work it through. Again, writing in a journal can be a good way to express your feelings.

**8. List three things you want to do.**

Make a list of all the things you would like to do in this lifetime. Take your time and let your imagination run free. When you, temporarily, run out of ideas select the three that sound like the most fun. Decide to spend January making realistic plans to actually do the top one on your list. At the same time don't forget to keep your eyes open for opportunities that may arise serendipitously to do the other two.

**9. Practice smiling.**

Find something to laugh at, even if it's just the sight of yourself in the mirror trying to practice smiling. Read Calvin and Hobbes, watch a Monty Python movie, find a toy to play with. Go to a pet store and watch the puppies or kittens. Yes, the physical act of smiling can remind you that it is possible, you've done it before and you can do it again.

**10. Go back to number one and remember to be your own best friend.**