



Finding Peace in the Season

by Beth Hook



Oh, the holidays, a joyous time, full of holiday cheer!!

Maybe or maybe not...It could be a time of feeling a bit more stressed, overwhelmed by responsibilities as we try to juggle many things. Sometimes, holidays mean “not so good” feelings, reminders of times that are sad, or maybe this time of year is simply overwhelming.

Whatever you are feeling, it's okay. And it's okay to not be okay. You are not alone.

There are things you can do to help you get through this time and manage these feelings. If this makes you feel overwhelmed, choose just 1 or 2 and start there. Sometimes, small steps make all the difference.

Practice acceptance of imperfection and find joy in what really matters:

Sometimes we have expectations that don't align with reality. It takes us adjusting our perception or expectations in order to cope with an outcome different from what we thought.

Take the time to think about how things may not go as planned. What does that mean and how to adjust? Slow down, think about what you are hoping the outcome will be, and reflect on what is most important about the situation. Disappointments come from having notions of how things should be and then when they are not, it can be a letdown.

It's okay to have expectations, even high expectations from time to time, and however, being able to manage emotions should they differ is key. Practice easing your mind, finding the small things to be joyous about. Acknowledge the little successes as many times they are the things that matter the most.

Find peace in how you respond and treat others:

- ❖ Show grace to others: During the holidays is a perfect time to practice our kindness, both to ourselves and others. It's simply true that we can only change our response and not other's responses to situations. So, by focusing on showing grace to others, we in turn can brighten our perspective on a situation and perhaps take changes or disappointments in stride.
- ❖ Helping others who may be alone during the holidays can also help raise our personal vibes and feel good notions. Being kind to others who also need extra care could be just what both of you need most.
- ❖ Taking a few deep breaths, using mindfulness or meditation strategies, can help us focus on the positives even in the midst of someone else's frustration. Deep breathing helps release calming endorphins that relax our minds and bodies allowing us to take a situation in stride.

Simplify:

Finding ways to share tasks is another way to reduce stress. Many times, sharing responsibility can be the best way to meet needs and help everyone to feel that they are an important part of the gathering or event. If sending holiday cards is weighing on you, reach out through social media or email instead. This is an acceptable way to spread cheer and reduce the extra stress of having enough stamps and so forth.

Honor boundaries:

Understanding your limits and needs and honoring them is another way to reduce stress. Tradition doesn't always mean it works best for everyone. It's okay to change the way you do things even if it's the way you have always done something in the past doesn't mean it works best now. There are shifts that may need to happen that could reduce stress around the holidays. Give yourself permission to make the needed adjustments, even if it's just for this year.

In addition, if you find yourself feeling a bit “blue” this holiday season, here are a few strategies explore that may help you cope and move through the season:

- ❖ Recognize how you are feeling. It’s okay if you don’t feel like celebrating. Give yourself permission for what you need in that moment.
- ❖ Spend time with people who care about you.
- ❖ Make time for yourself – Select a few events to be a part of and try not to over schedule yourself. Take time to relax.
- ❖ Stay active, exercise and maintain healthy habits.
- ❖ Avoid the use of substances including alcohol as it can increase depressive symptoms.
- ❖ If finances are a stressor or a concern, set a realistic budget and stick to it.
- ❖ Be present. Focus on the present and think about how you can appreciate the good things you have now instead of focusing on the past. Being in the moment helps reduce anxiety and worry.
- ❖ Do things you enjoy. Volunteering or helping others can reduce isolation and give you satisfaction you may be needing.
- ❖ Seek additional resources and support through professional help. [Care Solace](#) is there to help you search for the best fit for you and your family. See next page for more details.

As we move through this holiday season, remember to take moments for yourself, reflect and focus on something positive: It could be as simple as the noticing the warmth of the sun when you step outside, that one person’s smile as you walk into a store or maybe you heard a bird singing....Or how it felt to be that person smiling and lifting the spirits of others. The point is, let’s take this time moment by moment, step by step ~ finding the good or simply being understanding with ourselves.

Wishing you peace this season!

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