

When the Holidays Aren't Happy: How to Deal With Grief During the Festive Season

With all the bright lights, gift-wrapped presents, cheerful Christmas carols, and fun parties during the holiday season, it's easy to say that it truly is the most wonderful time of the year. This case, however, may not be the same for everyone.

When you have lost a loved one, the holidays could bring a wave of grief, and even the things that make the season festive serve as painful reminders of loss. This can be the toughest time of the year as you have to go through the occasion without the person who's important to you. As these critical days approach, here are the ways that can help you deal with pain.

Acknowledge Grief as Part of the Healing Process

There's a saying that time heals all wounds. It's not true at all times, however. The truth is, it's the things you do with the time that heals you. Acknowledging the pain and recognizing that grief is an active, working process helps—maybe not instantly, but trust that it *will* happen.

Allow Yourself to Say “No”

During the holidays, you may be subjected to invitations for various celebration parties and gatherings. If participating in these kinds of events bring you more grief than bliss, then you don't have to force yourself to go. Saying “no” doesn't mean that you're rude or selfish, but rather, you're just choosing yourself.

Create a Special Way to Honor Your Loved One

Losing a loved one doesn't mean that you have to set aside all the memories and traditions you've shared with them. Creating a particular way to remember your special someone by lighting a candle, preparing their favorite holiday dish, or making a small memorial can show that even though they're gone, the love you have for them remains.

Offer Kindness to Other People

Even though you're in mourning and grief, you can still offer something that brings happiness to others. Cook for families who don't have enough food to share, donate to those who are in need, or volunteer at a shelter. You may find yourself feeling better after seeing the smile you have brought about to someone.

Don't be Afraid to Ask for Help

Letting other people know that you're struggling and seeking help from them can help you cope with grief. They can be your family, friends, or colleagues who you know can provide you with the support you need. Reaching out to a professional counselor or looking for a support group can also help lighten the burden you're carrying.

It's okay not to be merry during the holidays, especially when you're grieving the loss of a loved one. Experiencing the pain instead of trying to escape from it can help you feel

better in the long run. Just trust the process of mourning, and you may find yourself healed eventually.