



DOING WHAT SEEMS RIGHT FOR YOU THIS SEASON

You may notice a saddened or anxious heart this year as the season's songs, lights, traditions, and gatherings take place even though your special person is missing. If you're wondering how you can make it through, be patient with yourself and know that there is no "correct" way to do holidays. Below are some options others have considered in trying to make their holidays less painful and more manageable for them. Perhaps some of them will feel right for you and yours.

Would it help to –

-plan ahead for activities and events of the season so that you have fewer surprises to contend with?

-order your gifts through catalogues or use the department stores' personal shoppers to avoid the crowds?

-list what you've enjoyed the most in past years and want to continue and what you've enjoyed the least which you can eliminate or change?

-change some traditional routines, like the time or place for the holiday meal or the gift exchange?

-do something different this year, like going to the Bahamas or accepting the neighbors' holiday dinner invitation?

-ask someone to help with or do overwhelming tasks like decorating or baking goodies?

-contemplate the meaning of the holiday rather than only your present life situation?

-share your wants and needs with your family or close friends?

-accept invitations with the stipulation that you can leave early or cancel if necessary?

-talk about the deceased in conversations with others in the hope that they'd be encouraged to do so too?

-avoid viewing life as "awful" during this season? Though you'll have difficult times, you may also experience some nice times. You will not love the person who died any less because you find joy.

-look for experiences that bring smiles and laughter to you, like building a snowman, watching a funny movie or spending time with children?

-remember to consider your family as well as yourself as you make plans? Perhaps making the holidays good for them will be rewarding for you, too.

-buy tickets to an event you'd like to attend and give one as a gift to a person you'd like to spend time with?

-let nature calm you by taking a walk in the woods or by putting your reading chair by the window?

Though you can't change the past, nor your loss, you can take charge of your PRESENT. Perhaps, if you let your tears and accomplishments mingle each day, your hurts can begin to find their way out, and healing can begin to find its way in. What can you do to make holidays most workable for you and the significant people who are still in your life?

by Dee Malena