



Finding Comfort in the Healing Gifts of the Season

What may the cherished traditions of the season teach you or remind you about the practices that can restore your hope, comfort your spirit and spark your imagination? How can you be reminded at this time of year to renew the connections that keep your desire and joy for living alive? No matter what your tradition or spiritual background, you can look to the memories and experiences of your tradition, rituals and celebrations to find some of the most powerful anecdotes for the burdens you bear.

Caregiver Burden - This time of year can be full of extra demands, expectations, and disappointments. When you are already trying to cope with the many stresses that accompany being a Caregiver, it is easy to see why you may be tired, frustrated or worn out.

Seasonal Stress - Seasonal stress occurs when people don't slow down. This can be a time of year that is met with hectic activities, many demands, and unrealistic expectations. We can get thrust into rushing, over doing, over spending, focusing on trying to meet the expectations of family and friends. We may struggle with isolation, or the loss of loved ones that are more sorely missed. As Caregivers, you may feel not only responsible for the care needs of the Veteran, but may also feel responsible for managing the expectations of family and all of the activities related to your traditions and celebrations.

Restore Cherished Memories - Take time to remember. What stands out for you about your holiday or traditional celebrations? If you were to reflect on your past celebrations and rituals, what comes to mind? What are the simple memories that bring you comfort? Look to these memories for inspiration and direction.

Creating New Traditions - This is a time of year when often people don't slow down. It's a time that is met with frantic activity, many demands and unrealistic expectations. All this frantic energy and effort on your part can become more of a pain than a pleasure. There is nothing like stressful rushing to squeeze the joy from any experience. Consider how you may wish to revise how you wish to celebrate and enjoy the season now.

Finding the Gifts of the Season - The holidays offer us so many ways to experience the joy of our senses. Even if you are struggling financially or are limited physically, the traditions have so many simple and comforting gifts for us to enjoy.



Connection to Others - Whether it is in the context of a holiday celebration or any time of the year, our connections to others keep us resilient, comforted and strong.

Connection to Our Physical Senses - Whether it is in the context of our celebration or throughout the year our senses provide a rich source of comfort and pleasure. We can use these gifts throughout the year to bring us back to life and provide a soothing gift of pleasure. Whether we are recognizing the beauty of the sights and sounds in nature, experiencing the pleasure of remembered smells and tastes, the feel of a cozy fire or the sound of traditional music, our senses are often alive in our rituals and celebrations.

The Magic of Simplicity - Returning to simplicity, creativity, gratitude, and giving, can often return us to the meaning of these original traditions and can be the perfect solution when we are caught up in the rushing and excess of the season.

Questions to Consider -

- When you look back, what memories bring you comfort and joy?
- What aspects of your traditions do you want to keep?
- How might you let go of the burden of expectations?
- What aspects of your tradition do you want to keep, change, or discontinue?
- What very basic and simple experience of either connecting with others or connecting with our senses might we wish to include in our current celebrations and traditions?
- How might you connect with others in celebration?
- How can you engage your sense of: taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell?
- How might you simplify, create, and give?

*We all have the capacity to benefit from the comfort and joy of our cherished traditions.
You deserve this gift and it is there for the taking!*

We wish you all the blessings of the season.