



Finding Comfort in the Healing Gifts of the Season

Your cherished seasonal traditions or rituals can teach, or remind you, of practices that have the power to restore hope, comfort your spirit, and spark your imagination. How can you restore the ritual activities and 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 traditions, rituals, and celebrations, to find some of the most powerful anecdotes for the burdens you bear.

Caregiver Burden –Holiday seasons 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. You can feel thrust into rushing, over doing, over spending, focusing on trying to meet the expectations of family and friends. You may struggle with isolation, or be grieving the loss of loved ones that are more sorely missed during holiday celebrations. Not only do caregivers feel responsible for the care needs of the Veteran, you may also feel responsible for managing the expectations of family and managing the activities related to your traditions and celebrations.

What can you do to find comfort and healing in the gifts of the season?

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.

Create New Traditions-This is a time of year most struggle to slow down. It's a time that is met with frantic activity, many demands, and unrealistic expectations. Consider how you may revise your rituals and traditions so they are a reflection of what is most important to you. Slow down and purposely decide what really matters and focus on that. Be flexible and develop plans that fit for where you are at now.

Connect to Others-Whether it is while celebrating a holiday or any time of the year, connections to others keep you resilient, comforted, and strong. Reach out to loved ones with a call, a card, or an invitation.



Connect to your Physical Senses-Your senses provide a rich source of comfort and pleasure. You can use these gifts throughout the year to bring you back to life and provide a soothing gift of pleasure. Recognize the beauty of the sights and sounds in nature, experience the pleasure of remembered smells and tastes, experience the warmth of a cozy fire or the affectionate touch of a loved one, and enjoy the sound of traditional music. Your senses can come alive in your rituals and celebrations if you pay attention.

Seek the Magic of Simplicity-Return to simplicity, creativity, gratitude, and giving, as this can often return you to the true meaning of the original traditions. Simplicity can be the perfect solution when you become 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 your senses might you wish to include in your current celebration or tradition?
- 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?

You have the capacity to benefit from the comfort and joy of cherished traditions.

You deserve this gift, which is there for the taking!

We wish you all the blessings of the season.