

HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS *Journal*



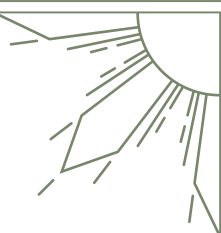


HELLO AND WELCOME TO THIS SPECIAL HOLIDAY ADDITION CALLED, HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

The holiday season for many is filled with hosting & attending family dinners, parties, decorating, baking, shopping, traveling and a list of other events and activities. There is hustle and bustle all around as people make plans to attend school plays, shows, and concerts. Our TV channels, social media pages and neighborhoods are filled with reminders of *Tis' the Season* daily.

All of these things seem to make our seasons *merry & bright* until loss creeps into our lives. What was once a season to embrace joy & laughter, is now visited with sorrow, heart-aching memories and tears. The absence of a loved one can make the entire holiday feel cold, bitter and difficult. Major losses can make holiday traditions feel burdensome and your pain may seem unavoidable. It's OK to recognize that these struggles exist, so that we don't ignore our feelings. Some of you may be feeling the urge to skip the holidays altogether. And that choice is yours.

I want you to realize however, that skipping the holidays doesn't make the feelings go away. I remember many times magically thinking and wishing that I could just go to sleep Thanksgiving Eve and wake up the day after New Years. The reality is that there is a way to survive the holidays with a plan. I don't mean "*plan*" as in you needing to attend all festivities and events. I mean *plan* as in deciding how you will approach the holidays so that you are mentally and emotionally ready to face them. It is possible to create new memories, honor old traditions and approach each holiday with compassion for your own grieving heart. I say this often in mostly all of my Instagram posts.. "be kind to your grieving heart."



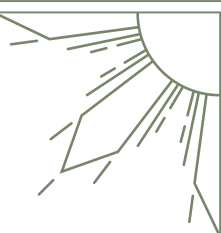
We need to to graciously approach the hard moments with such tender care for our hearts. You'll find your rhythm, your new norm and you'll discover what works for you. I'd love to share some hopeful insights and gently suggestions to help guide you in this coming holiday season. You will find them on the next few pages for the months of November through December with spaces to write as well. Writing is not only therapeutic, but it's also useful in decluttering your already boggled down brain. When you write, you are able to get the thoughts out of your mind, off of your chest and onto paper where you can see it and process it. Each month also has a large space for you to write your feelings and thoughts and I encourage you to write what you are grateful for. This will help remind you of things you still have and not solely focus on what you lost. Gratitude displaces hopelessness.

Plan: Without a plan you will run into vast spaces of decisions that could possibly make you anxious and weary on top of the sorrow you feel. Even if you plan to do nothing but stay home in your pj's and watch movies with your kids, that's still a plan. You don't want to wander aimlessly into the day because your feelings can be so unpredictable.

Boundaries: Create them and keep them. During holiday hustle & bustle, it's necessary to discover what works for you, who you will allow in your vulnerable space, where you are willing to go, and for how long. Boundaries are healthy and necessary for the care of your grieving heart and to safeguard your peace. They are not just for others, they are for you. You might need to bend this holiday season, but you don't need to break. Establish your boundaries.

Pray: Your prayer doesn't have to be a wordy narrative, you can simply say "God, I ask that you help me face each day with grace, strength and courage. Phillipians 4:6-7





Self Care: Pacing yourself, considering your emotions and finding moments to breathe and regroup are all a part of self care. Self care is healthy and necessary as your mental/emotional, spiritual and physical health all are impacted by your grief. Find ways to take care of your self during this holiday season so that you don't burn out. Extend tender love and care to your grieving heart. This could be as simple as taking a break from phone calls, visits and tv to read a book and take a nap. Or make your favorite cup of tea/coffee while sitting by the fireplace to start your day. Be intentional about your self care.

My Support System: Realizing that there are still loving, caring and supportive people in your corner, helps to ease the despair of loneliness. Sometimes these folks are much needed as they aid in un-anchoring us out of the despair that would be too heavy to bear on our own. *We all need somebody to lean on.*

Social Plans: You are not required to attend every festivity or event just because you were invited. This is why having a plan is necessary because you can decide whether or not you want to do anything at all. If you would like to do something, as sometimes it is helpful to insert moments of joy through events, then go for it. Plan which social events and activities you are willing to participate in, in order to take the pressure off of making last minute decisions that could possibly overwhelm you.

Gratitude: Gratitude displaces hopelessness. Write down what you are grateful for. In all things, give thanks 1 Thess 5:18

Be kind to your grieving heart this holiday season. Pace yourself, take deep breaths, pray and take it one step at a time.

Ready. Set. Begin!!



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Journal

November 2023

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Feelings & Thoughts:

I am Grateful For:

HAVE A PLAN. CONSIDER OLD TRADITIONS TO KEEP

[illegible]

Establish Boundaries for Your Peace. Write them. Keep them.

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Social Plans & Events

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Self Care Ideas

Mood Measure



HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS τ

HOLIDAYS *Journal*

December 2023

[illegible]

Feelings & Thoughts:

I am Grateful For:

CREATE MOMENTS TO BE
PRESENT WITH YOUR
CHILDREN/FRIENDS/FAMILY

**MAKE INTENTION TO BE
KIND TO YOUR GRIEVING
HEART BY:**

[illegible]

My support system

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Self Care Ideas

Mood Measure



HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS τ

Journal

January 2024

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Feelings & Thoughts:

I am Grateful For:

MAKE INTENTION TO BE
KIND TO YOUR GRIEVING
HEART BY:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with five horizontal blue ruling lines. At the beginning of each line, there is a small, empty square box, likely intended for a student's name or a date. The boxes are aligned vertically along the left edge of the page.

Explore Ways to find more balance & peace

[illegible]

Boundaries for Your Peace

[illegible]

Self Care Ideas

Mood Measure



