

What to Do When You Are Alone for the Holidays

by: Margaret Paul, Ph.D. Being alone for the holidays is a major challenge for many people. Holidays often conjure images of family, of warmth and the sharing of special time. Loneliness can be overwhelming when you have no one with whom to share holiday time. Many people, however, miss the point of what holidays are really about and what makes them special. Holidays are not about what you GET – they are about what you GIVE. Many people are under the misconception that the joy of holidays is about what you receive rather than about what you share. Our hearts get filled with love when we give and share love, rather than from getting love. This may seem like a paradox. Many people spend their time with others attempting to get love, attention and approval, thinking that this is what makes them feel happy and worthy. But getting attention from others to fill ourselves is like eating chocolate when you are lonely – it works for the moment but then you need more and more of it. Eventually it becomes an addiction. What really fills the emptiness is the giving of love. If you are alone over the holidays, the question becomes, “How can I give love in ways that will bring me joy?” Below are some suggestions for sharing your love and caring over the holidays: Gather toys from friends and store donations and bring them to children who would not otherwise have toys. You can find these children through schools, churches and various other organizations. Find a battered women’s shelter in your area and help to create the holiday there – preparing food, decorating the tree, and just spending time with them. Last year a friend of mine organized a number of her local markets to donate food over Christmas to the local shelter that housed mothers and their children who had left abusive husbands. She got to know the mothers and children and received great fulfillment in providing them with an abundant Christmas. Spend time with old people in nursing homes, especially those who have no family. Spending time caring about another lonely person will go a long way toward taking away your loneliness! Volunteer to help with serving food to the needy over Thanksgiving and Christmas. Many churches and other charitable organizations welcome volunteers to help in food lines over the holidays. Locate a retreat center near you that has a special event over the holidays and share your time with other people who are also alone for the holidays. Last year a friend of mine, who had just left her husband and was alone for the first time with no family around her, went to a beautiful retreat center on the East Coast. Twenty people gathered there to share Thanksgiving together. There was a wonderful ceremony of gratitude that she said filled her heart, and she enjoyed sharing time with new people. Find a church, temple or 12-step group in your area that has special events for singles over the holidays. Go to these events with the intention of sharing your caring with others, which you can do just by being interested in listening to another person. We all love being listened to and understood, and all of us have the capacity to give this to another. One of my all-time favorite movies is “A Christmas Carol,” – the one starring Alistair Sim. I just love the scene on Christmas morning when Scrooge realizes that no time has passed and he has the opportunity to give. He feels such joy at the prospect of giving, that he can hardly stand it! He dances around and stands on his head and laughs and laughs with the joy of giving! In one night he went from being a miserable old man concerned only with getting, to a man now focused only on giving, and he became a joyful person. While you might not have money to give, we all have caring to give. You have no idea how much you might enrich your own life as well as another person’s life just by giving your time, your attention, your interest, your smile, your understanding. Whatever your life circumstances, you always have the opportunity to give your caring. You will discover that giving your caring to others, especially over the holidays, is a profound way of caring about yourself.

About the Author

Margaret Paul, Ph.D. is the best-selling author and co-author of eight books, including “Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By You?” She is the co-creator of the powerful Inner Bonding healing process. Learn Inner Bonding now! Visit her web site for a FREE Inner Bonding course: <http://www.innerbonding.com> or <mailto:margaret@innerbonding.com>. Phone sessions available.

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