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Tips For Singles On Surviving (and enjoying) The Holidays

By Toni Coleman, LCSW

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Here you are, facing the holiday season alone. Have you been thinking about?

- *how alone and lonely you feel
- *excuses you can give family members as to why you can't come this year
- *what friends may be available to spend those long days with
- *how another year has passed and you are (still) single
- *how unfair it is that everyone else seems so happy and connected
- *how you will handle the office holiday party– single, take a friend, not attend
- *going to a far away (tropical?) place to escape it all
- *hiding out, alone, in your own home

If these thoughts sound familiar it is probably time to reflect on your feelings regarding this holiday season. If your goal is to hide out and endure it alone, you won't need to do too much planning. However, if you wish to experience at least a measure of the "peace and joy" associated with this time of year, you need to make and follow through with plans that allow you to participate in ways that are meaningful to YOU.

Remember, your senses are bombarded from October to December with music, images and Hallmark verses depicting the "right" experiences and expressions for the season. Remind yourself, every day if necessary, that there's nothing wrong with being single. You have the same need and right to enjoy this season as any couple or family does. How you choose to do this is up to you.

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After you have done some serious reflection, consider the following list of holiday tips designed especially for singles.

Don't make plans out of a sense of obligation. This is also your holiday season. Set limits, make good choices and enjoy. You may ask yourself; "do I really want to go out"? If so, make your next question something like; "does it sound like something I would enjoy or be interested in?" Or, "will I have the opportunity to meet and mix with other singles?"

Avoid unrealistic expectations from others, from yourself and from the holidays themselves. Relax, enjoy and don't expect so much that you will feel hurt or disappointed when things don't turn out just as you had imagined. This will defeat all the positive feelings and experiences that you may have already gained.

Make sure you give thanks for all the blessings you do have in your life. Focusing on what you don't have only encourages negative thoughts. Add a prayer of hope for the things you would like to work for in the coming year.

Don't overbook OR overstay a good amount of time with relatives/friends. Sometimes a shorter stay works best and leaves you energy and space to get back to your own home and decompress.

Look for ways to give to or do for others. Feeling useful and appreciated will provide a great boost to your holiday spirits. Check into volunteer opportunities at local shelters and nursing homes or through any local church or non-profit group.

Don't plan to spend the entire holiday season with married /coupled family and friends. Seek out other singles and singles groups/ activities where you can feel relaxed and able to share with folks you have more in common with at this time. Better yet, plan a get together with other singles for one of the holidays. A festive potluck meal, tree trimming party or other holiday event would probably be much appreciated.

Do avoid using food, alcohol or drugs to cope with holiday stress. Nothing is worse than the feelings that follow the use (or wrong use) of these things. This way of coping leads to depression, low self-esteem and a greater sense of isolation and despair.

Do decorate your home with any and all things that make it feel more festive and fun for YOU. Tune into all those wonderful traditions you grew up with. It does not have to be very costly or time consuming to begin your own traditions in your own place. Don't put off or deny yourself those happy holiday expressions, as you wait for your significant other. Make your life all it can be right now.

Consider emphasizing the more spiritual aspects of the holiday. Go to a concert featuring religious holiday music or attend a church (or other) service, (even better with a friend).

Finally, going away to an exotic place may be just what you do need. Look into tour or vacation packages for singles. This may provide plenty of rest and relaxation and help you meet new friends and develop new interests.

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Whatever you decide to do for your holidays, have fun and enjoy them. Focus on taking care of yourself and doing what is right for you. This way you will also be giving your best to those around you. Happy Holidays!

Toni Coleman is a relationship coach in Virginia. She specializes in working with singles who want to create lasting, intimate relationships. Toni has over 20 years experience in relationship coaching with singles and couples. She has written numerous email classes for singles on all aspects of meeting, dating and relating. She is the author of *The Art of Intimacy*, which goes out to thousands of subscribers monthly.

Single Cruise

By Martha Vasquez

When it comes to cruising, you can't blame the single traveler for feeling a bit neglected. Solo cruisers must pay "single supplements" if they wish to have their own cabins, which can be as much as double one's cruise fare.

And once aboard, singles find themselves in the minority, as their fellow passengers are largely comprised of families and couples. The fact is, cruise lines haven't made much of an effort to attract singles.

"Single travelers are a growing, important part of the market that can't be ignored," says Kari Lee, coordinator of Vacations To Go's singles cruises.

"There are more and more organizations that bring singles together; why not do that on a cruise ship?" says Lee. An energetic host or hostess is always on board to organize singles-only activities. These include poolside sail-away parties, private cocktail mixers with complimentary drinks, games and "single-mingle" dining. On some itineraries, singles shore excursions are available for an additional fee. They may include swimming with stingrays in the Bahamas and Cayman Islands and a beach party in Mexico.

Single cruises have proved to be popular. More than 2,000 travelers sailed the same year. Vacationers who reserve a cruise gain access to a private chat room where they can meet fellow singles traveling on the same itinerary. The chat rooms can get very active. Two ladies who signed up separately for the same cruise found out through the chat room that they live in the same town. They've already gotten together a few times before their cruise.

Solo cruisers can avoid the single supplement by bringing a friend, which pairs same-sex singles in one stateroom. But for those who prefer more privacy, single-occupancy cabins are available at the single-supplement rate.

Of course, some singles don't really want to meet someone else special while cruising and that's alright too. There is plenty on board to keep a single person busy and involved without having to mingle socially including the beautiful swimming pools, spas, jacuzzis, elegant dining and more.

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So if you always thought that you couldn't go on a vacation cruise because you were single that is just not true anymore. There is plenty that modern cruise lines have to offer both singles who want to meet other singles, and those who are just want to stay single but still have a great time.

Martha has written many articles about luxury travel, you can find her website at



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