

## Single During the Holidays and Loving It

A common myth is that the holidays are the loneliest time of the year for singles. This misconception is reinforced by the media, the Christmas carols and Hallmark cards which often targets the couple and family population. However, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 100 million unmarried and single Americans. This group comprises 44 percent of all U.S. Residents aged 15 and over. Many are single by choice!

In order to avoid the belief system that being single is less worthy than being coupled, it is important to take actions which increases positive self-esteem. By re-framing the "couple myth," singles can think of the holidays as an opportunity to feel the freedom to be authentic without living up to a partner's expectations.

Early in my single years, I experienced loneliness and depression and dreaded the holidays. It was only when I found a deeper sense of myself, did I begin to celebrate and enjoy this special time of the year. The first New Years Eve I chose to be alone, I was surprised at how much I enjoyed the evening WITH MYSELF!

If you are one of the million single Americans, the following suggestions can help you not only survive the holidays, but enjoy them.

- **Identify your character attributes**

By noticing what you like about yourself, you will be more likely to discover your talents which will give you deeper purpose and meaning.

- **Recognize your ability to survive and thrive**

By looking inward, you will have more confidence to count on yourself rather than being completely dependent on someone else for your happiness. Enjoy your own company. Perhaps you have a great sense of humor and can laugh at your own jokes.

- **Make a "Bucket" list**

By identifying your own desires, You will be more likely to pursue those activities. Remind yourself that some of your desires may not be possible if you were not single.

- **Give yourself permission to plan activities in which you enjoy**

By giving yourself freedom to structure "me" time, you may discover your creativity (dance, write, paint, decorate, play an instrument, etc). You may find that by allowing yourself to open your senses, your life may follow a direction that you had not imagined!

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- **Spend time with friends and family who help you feel loved**

I suggest making a list of who will support or sabotage your individualism. Stay away from those who are critical and judgmental.

- **Empower yourself to make plans of your own**

Take initiative to build a community that is your family of choice. Recognize you do not have to wait to be chosen. You can get together with a group of single friends and host your own party. Remember, you can choose!

- **Share yourself with others**

The holidays are about sharing and giving. This might be a good time to volunteer in one of your favorite charities.

Being single during the holiday season could be the high point of your year. Embrace your single-hood with a new attitude and confidence! You may be amazed at how much you like yourself which will only make you more attractive!

*"It takes more than a sudden leap to change a life. It takes a conscious act, a decision to take our life into our own hands".*