



A Ministry to Bereaved Parents and Their Families

Inviting Hope to Heal Broken Hearts

The Importance of Making Space for Grief During the Holidays

I want to take a minute to think about how important it is to make and maintain space for grief during this busy season.

You have to do it.

I know, I know-where to fit it in between family gatherings, social engagements, mandatory office parties and children's pageants?

If you don't, though, the grief will out itself one way or another.

So may I offer the following practical suggestions for this upcoming holiday season?

- **Start each day (whenever possible) with a few minutes of alone time.** Let those moments be the buffer between you and the day ahead. Don't allow your mind to wander to your "to do" list. Sit. Sip the hot beverage of your choice and let silence soothe your soul.
- **Don't overschedule your days (or nights!).** Exercise the option of saying, "no" to things that are not really important or necessary. Just because you have done it every other year doesn't obligate you to do it this year. Exhaustion always magnifies despair.
- **Try to balance busy days with not so busy days.** The surest path to meltdown is traveling in the fast lane.
- **Let other people take on responsibilities-especially if they offer- and even if they don't.** Asking for help when you need it is a sign of maturity, not a sign of weakness.
- **Keep a pad and pen on your nightstand and jot down any random thoughts that you don't want to forget before bedtime.** There is no sense worrying about something you can't address until morning and writing it down means you won't forget it.
- **Make use of online everything.** Have gifts sent directly to recipients. Order groceries for pick up. There are many ways to make life less hectic and more enjoyable. If you don't know what's available in your area, ask friends and family.
- **Plan for at least one recovery day for every large gathering/party/meal you have to attend.** Some of us need two.



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- ***Don't sweat the small stuff.*** If you are used to having matching everything, perfect centerpieces and gourmet meals it may be hard to lower your standards. But if there is one thing I have learned since Dominic ran ahead to heaven, it's that the companionship of those we love trumps anything else. People rarely remember how you set your table but they will remember who sat around your table.
- ***And if your heart is too tender to do anything but hold on and hope this month passes quickly, then do that.*** You don't have to live up to anyone else's expectations. Sometimes that's the best we can do and that is OK.

Grief requires so. much. energy.

So make space for grief in your holiday plans.