

Monday Self Care Newsletter

Horizon Grief Resource Center

The next eleven weeks of the year are full of holidays—religious, secular, and federal. After you have identified which holidays/dates are most significant to you and your family, you need to begin planning.

No matter which holiday/dates are important to you, Beth Kempton's constellation exercise can help you. In *Calm Christmas*, author Beth Kempton identified five aspects of the holidays/significant dates where individuals find joy and stress during this time of year.

1. **Religious or non-religious services or ceremonies.**

Examples: Attending a church or synagogue service. Participating in a Kwanzaa ceremony. Going to a Winter Solstice ceremony. Attending a Darkest Night or Blue Vespers ceremony in honor of your grief. Going to a carol service.

2. **Magical/Miraculous aspects of the season.**

Examples: Santa Clause, Father Christmas, the miracle of oil lasting for eight days

3. **Connecting with family and friends.**

Examples: Feasting or decorating together. Watching holiday movies, trick or treating, watching college bowl games.

4. **Sharing abundance of the season.**

Examples: Gifts, giving to others, service/volunteer work

5. **Your particular family traditions or heritage.**

Take some time to think about and/or journal about these questions.

1. Which holiday/significant date am I focusing on (go through each one individually).
2. Think about each of the five aspects listed above and rate their importance to you on a scale from 1-10 (1 being not important/stressful/not enjoyable to 10 being very important/energy giving/very enjoyable). ***Depending on the holiday/significant date you are focusing on, not all five of the aspects might be present, so exclude the ones that don't apply.**
3. Think about each of the five aspects listed above and rate their importance to your loved one who died on a scale from 1-10. Which of these do you want to do in honor of your loved one? Which ones are too painful and you want to avoid or change this year?
4. Have each of your family members think about the five aspects listed above and rate their importance to them on a scale from 1-10. (You could even have them complete #3 and see if you are on the same page).
5. Now take a look at all your answers from questions 2-4 and map them out—this is your constellation—to see your commonalities & differences.

Focus your attention and time on activities you rated high.

Give yourself & your family permission to stop doing things that you rated low this year (you can change your plans every year if you change your minds).

Where are there differences? What can you compromise on? Do you need to do those activities on your own or with someone else who enjoys them?