

How to Navigate the Holidays After a Divorce



Photo courtesy of Burst by [Nicole de Khors](#)

As much as they are a cause for celebration, the holidays can also be a [stressful](#) time for many people. This is especially true for those who are going through a period of loss or transition, such as a recent divorce or separation. It can be difficult finding the right support and you might wonder how you'll find ways to enjoy the holiday season this year.

Navigating a recent divorce is even more complicated if you are a parent. You might have to adjust to splitting custody with your ex. You might be learning to balance your job and all of your other responsibilities with being a newfound single parent. You'll also need to learn how to support your children through this time of transition, when you both might be lonely or missing the life you had before.

Luckily, there are some things you can do to empower yourself and focus on the future, not the past. One way to ensure you have a joyful holiday season is by focusing on your reasons to be grateful while also taking every possible opportunity for self-care and stress reduction.

Here are some ways you can navigate the holiday season if you're fresh off a split from your spouse:

Volunteering

Giving back to your local can be deeply rewarding. It provides a sense of purpose and perspective, reminding you to be grateful for all the good things in your life. In addition to offering an opportunity to make new friends with similar interests to your own, [recent research](#) has shown that volunteer work helps make you happier, too.

Spending time with animals

Pets have been shown to provide a health boost to their owners by reducing stress, anxiety and depression, and possibly even [lowering blood pressure](#). They also provide unconditional love, companionship, and loyalty, all of which can help reduce feelings of loneliness after a divorce.

If you don't have a pet and can't devote the time, money or attention to one right now, you might consider volunteering at a local animal shelter. In addition to experiencing the benefits of volunteer work, you'll be helping yourself while also helping animals in need.

Going to the park

Spending time in nature can help you stay mindful. Whether you prefer blue ocean waters, the greenery of rolling hills, a hike through a forest, or a relaxing stroll through a park, nature can help you help [escape stress](#) by refocusing your mind on the present moment.

Get some healthy perspective

"Stop letting [the holiday] stress you out," advises self-help author, Natalie Lue of [Baggage Reclaim](#). When we experience holiday stress, Lue says it is because "we pile on way too much expectations and build up this month into more than it is."

Instead, Lue recommends remembering the true meaning of the holiday while also keeping a keen focus on your own values and your identity. In the absolute worst case, this holiday will be over soon and you'll have eleven other months to look forward to this year.

Create a daily self-care ritual

Motivational speaker, Tony Robbins, recommends creating your very own daily [self-care ritual](#). If this seems like a daunting task at first, start with just a few minutes per day and gradually work your way up to an hour.

The type of ritual is completely up to you, but it should be an activity you enjoy that also helps you cultivate gratitude and mindfulness, such as yoga, prayer, or meditation. Why is this so powerful? It helps you cultivate a happy, empowered mindset.

Take time for yourself

Making time for your own self-care is extremely important throughout the year, especially around the holidays. There are many different approaches for finding a few minutes of "me time"

each day. For instance, journaling, daily [mantras and affirmations](#), and online self-care courses are all powerful ways to improve your quality of life and cultivate resilience after your divorce.

Whether you are recently divorced or not, it is possible to use this holiday season as an excuse for greater self-care. Gently work through each day with an intention of becoming even more confident and comfortable in your own skin. At the end of it all, you might find that you have a sense of inner peace that you never had before.