

The High Point Pook

HPC strives to guide, educate, encourage, and support

December 2022

Volume 36

It's the Holiday Season...

From about October 1 through January 15, the world goes holiday crazy. There's Yom Kippur, Halloween, All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day, Thanksgiving, Advent, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, New Years, and Epiphany just to name the major ones. Everyone seems determined to celebrate until they can't stand up. The human race has become so desperate to prove that life is an enjoyable experience that it's easy to become frenzied trying to do each holiday "right" and to meet everyone's expectations of what a "good" holiday should be.

We've all probably heard the song by Andy Williams "It's the Holiday Season." Some of the lyrics are: *"Happy Holiday, Happy Holiday, While the merry bells keep ringing, Happy Holiday to you. It's the holiday season, And Santa Claus is coming round...It's the holiday season, And Santa Claus has got a toy, For every good girl and good little boy, Santa's a great big bundle o' joy When he's coming down the chimney, down, He'll have a big fat pack upon his back, And lots of goodies for you and for me...It's the holiday season, So hoop-de-do and hickory dock, And don't forget to hang up your sock, 'Cause just exactly at 12 o'clock, He'll be coming down the chimney...Happy Holiday, Happy Holiday, While the merry bells keep bringing, Happy Holiday to you"*

Those lyrics sum up what's wrong with the holidays right now. Who decides who's a "good" person? And why should only good people get gifts out of his "big, fat, pack" regardless? And why should we have to pressure ourselves to fill those stockings? And what if the bells we hear ringing aren't merry but are tolling the passing of loved ones, our health, or our lifestyle?

I looked holiday up in the dictionary (you know me) and it says—holiday, noun. A period of time in which a break is taken from work or studies for rest, travel, or recreation. This newsletter is written in the hope that it will help you know that it's perfectly OK to not anticipate the holidays. You have every right to be dealing with grief, depression, or life's hard knocks. You are not a bad person if you aren't "merry and bright." It's okay to give Santa the boot and focus on your own mental, emotional, and physical health and to not associate with people who say you shouldn't do that. The holidays can be stressful, depressing, grief filled, and dark. So if you are one of the hundreds of thousands of people who don't get excited about all the holiday excitement—don't worry, you are not alone, in fact, the boat you are in is very crowded.

-Larae Thompson, Administrative Director & Personal Assistant to the Executive Director



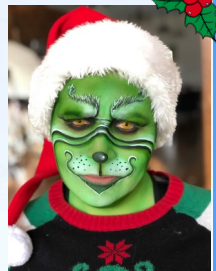
How to Handle the Holidays

The holidays can be associated with very different sets of feelings for each of us. For some, those feelings may be joy, warmth, and excitement. For others, it can spark feelings of loneliness, worry and stress. By taking the proper steps to prepare yourself mentally and emotionally for the holiday season, you have the potential to minimize your stress. Hopefully, you may even experience more joy.

Prioritize self-care. The first and most important thing to remember during the holiday is that self-care is a priority. Take some time to do things that will fill your cup, like reading a book, listening to your favorite music, watching a movie... if it's something you enjoy. There's no reason to feel guilty about doing small things to rest and recharge yourself.

- Keep your regular, healthy habits like eating right, sleeping enough, and exercising/moving during the week. All those things help to stabilize your mood, so uprooting those habits could drastically impact how you feel not only physically but emotionally as well.
- Accept help and seek support. You don't have to carry the weight of the world on your shoulders. It is okay to feel sadness, grief, and loneliness during a time of the year when people expect everyone to be joyful and happy. Your emotions are yours to feel and express and sometimes that becomes easier when you have the support of others to do so. Reach out to your friends and family and let them know how you're feeling.
- Set necessary and appropriate boundaries. The point here is that it is okay to say "no," especially when you're feeling overwhelmed.
- Adopt an "Attitude of Gratitude." Too often it is very easy to focus on the bad things that are happening to us, especially at a time where loss, isolation, and unexpected changes are becoming more prevalent. Gratitude allows us to recognize the good in our lives and the sources of those good things. Here are examples of some easy ways to practice gratitude in your daily life:
 - Set a reminder for yourself on your phone to pause and think of something you're grateful for in that moment.
 - Challenge your mind with positive thoughts.
 - Think about what lessons you can take away from stressful situations instead of solely focusing on your stress.
- Set realistic expectations. As time passes, traditions you're used to experiencing may naturally change. Family members may pass away. Typical gatherings may not occur. All in all, the holiday may look nothing like it did the year before, but it's important to recognize that and set your expectations accordingly. Instead of feeling disappointed and let down that things are different, find ways to create new traditions and memories. The more realistic you are with your expectations, the less opportunity to feel overly disappointed.

Some of these suggestions may seem easier than others and that's okay. It's not about doing it all, it's about taking small steps to manage during the holiday season. If you feel like even that may seem like too much for you, that's okay. We are all different, and do not have the same needs, what works for some will not work for others. Find what works for you and make it the best you know how. - Justina Nilsson, Counselor



PAUSE FOR MY PEACE OF MIND™

Practical Peace You Can Use Right Now

Access Peace of Mind for being truly helpful with:
Family, relationships, work, health, business decisions, solutions, texts, emails, conversations, to-do list, compassion, creating, rest, & letting go.

PAUSE

It's helpful to take a moment to pause my mind.

STEP BACK

I can pause to get out of my own way and open for my Peace of Mind.

STEP ASIDE

I pause for helpful direction with anything, anyone, including myself. With Peace of Mind as my goal, I ask, "Is there a peaceful way to see this?" and "What is truly helpful to think, say, and do, or not, in this moment?" Listen.

LET MY PEACE OF MIND GUIDE

I pause and follow my Peace of Mind for safe, calm, wise, and practical help.

EVERYONE IS WORTH A PAUSE

Pause: It's okay to take a moment.
I am willing to pause for as long as I choose.

Step Back: I pause to get out of my own way. Breathe. Give myself some space from thoughts, feelings, judgments, words, and actions. Draw no conclusions just yet. I am willing to receive Peace.

Step Aside: I pause for helpful direction with anything, anyone ~ including myself. Allow stillness to replace the chatter. With Peace of Mind as my goal, I ask, "Is there a peaceful way to see this?" "What is truly helpful to think, say, and do, or not, in this moment?" Listen to Peace. Receive Peace.

Let My Peace of Mind Guide: I pause to access my Peace of Mind and receive Peace. Wherever I am, whatever I am doing, and whomever I am with I can follow the Peace in my mind for safe, calm, wise, and practical help.

Practicing Pause shows me my part in Peace.
My part is essential.

We can choose to practice and apply "Pause For My Peace Of Mind" to help ourselves, our family, our friends, ... EVERYONE!

Visit: PauseForInspiration.org

© 2022 Pause For Inspiration. All rights reserved.

This holiday season, we encourage you to not just believe whatever thoughts pop into your head. Choose your thoughts. Gear them to be toward loving kindness, toward gratefulness, and away from chaos, away from upset and irritation. You do have power over your thinking. Try this PAUSE practice to help you remember your own Peace of Mind throughout the day.



Don't believe everything you think

Choose What to Focus On

Fatigue. It seems that our society runs on it and demands it be the normal standard. Ever feel like you're running, running, running? I'm guilty of it and especially during the holiday season I try to over-function with less and less sleep, more caffeine, more sugar, while ignoring my body's needs. Some things are required of us. Some things we are responsible for. I'm not advocating to abandon these things, but to pay attention and see where the choice resides. "Discover the power of choice" is one of SMART Recovery's mottos and if we pay attention, we can label sensations in our bodies, name the emotion, breathe to create safety, and self soothe (#the.holistic.psychologist). My hope this season is that we can be more mindful, gentle, and kind.

Try being more mindful right now. Notice color, texture, shapes, space, light, smells, temperature, volume, taste. Do so gently and without judgment. Pay attention to what is pleasing, pause and enjoy. Take delight in this world, in the things that are beautiful, kind, loving, generous. The things that just are.

What you focus on increases. Make a conscious mindful choice of what you will focus on in this moment. Whether it is the holidays, the new year, or winter, we are given a choice of what we will focus on. Try taking delight, even if it is just in the colors, shapes, and words on this page. Reflect and then acknowledge the delight and miracle that is you! You are worthy of love, belonging, and joy. We are so glad that you exist!

Connect more with High Point this winter through:
SMART Recovery- Tuesdays at 4pm
Skill Building Group- Wednesdays at 4pm
Individual Counseling appointments
Case Management appointments

-Emily Hand, LPC/MHSP, Clinical Director



Did You Know...

- ...the tallest Christmas tree ever displayed was in Seattle, WA, and was 271 feet tall
- ...every Dec 31st Antarctica has a big music festival called Icestock
- ...in ancient Persia people gave the gift of eggs to each other to bring good luck to their households
- ...a scientific study was done in Norway that decided Rudolph's red nose is caused by a parasitic infection
- ...a traditional Christmas dinner in South Africa includes deep fried caterpillars
- ...that Guinness World Records says the world's tallest snowman was in Bethel, Maine. It was a 122-ft, 1-inch tall creation—that's just a few feet shorter than the Statue of Liberty



Into the Ground

The seed is in the ground.
Now may we rest in hope
While darkness does its work.
-Wendell Berry

Happy Holiday to you from your HPC family!

