EMBRACING THE HOLIDAYS AFTER A LOSS

by Rosario Zavala, MSW, LCSW

The holidays evoke strong emotions for many of us. Memories of past gatherings with friends and family, or high expectations of ourselves and others, make this an especially difficult time for those who have lost a loved one. Consequently, this time of year may bring about a renewed sense of grief unlike that experienced in the routine of daily life. For this reason, it becomes important to initiate measures aimed at caring for ourselves during this special time of the year.

Below are suggestions which may make the holiday season more manageable:

► Be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Don’t overextend yourself.
► Plan ahead and do what is right for you. Think about what family traditions you wish to continue and which ones you will toss aside. Identify new ones you would like to begin.
► Spend time with caring and supportive people. Talk about your grief with friends and relatives who will listen to you without passing judgment. Ignoring your feelings will not make them go away.
► Mention the deceased person by name in your holiday conversations. Share your stories and give permission for others to do the same.
► Embrace your memories. If they bring you laughter, laugh. If your memories evoke sadness, it’s alright to cry.
► Go somewhere new for the holidays if you find that staying in the same place is too painful.
► It may be helpful to create a new holiday experience for you and yours.
► Renew your resources for living. Reflect on the meaning and purpose of your life.
► Take inventory. Try to make the best of this time and identify positives in your life that surround you.

May the memories of your loved one bring you joy this holiday season!

IF YOU FIND YOU ARE HAVING AN ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT TIME MANAGING YOUR EMOTIONS THIS SEASON, WE CAN HELP. SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TO MEET WITH A FSAP CONSULTANT BY CALLING 305-284-6604.
SUPER SIMPLE WAYS TO DEAL WITH NEGATIVE THOUGHTS
EASY WAYS TO COUNTER THE NEGATIVE NELLIES IN YOUR HEAD

GET SOME CARDIO
FIND A DISTRACTOR
LISTEN TO UPBEAT MUSIC
TAKE A WALK
DO SOME YOGA
SCHEDULE A SMALL AMOUNT OF TIME FOR WORRYING

REPEAT AFTER ME...
If you rapidly say a word or phrase over and over for a minute or two, the word will lose its meaning. Repeating words to reduce their power is a technique called cognitive defusion. You could even repeat it in a cartoon voice so it starts to sound plain silly.

JOURNAL IT
Spending 20 minutes writing about something that’s stressing you out can actually help you think about it less, say psychologists at the University of Texas.
Source: happify.com

“Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory.”
- Dr. Seuss

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