

Happy Holidays! Or Are They?

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The popular words of the season: Merry. Happy. Joy. Peace. Love. Cheer.

They sound good, but unfortunately don't adequately capture the feelings that are often provoked this time of year for many of us. Unfortunately, the pain doesn't disappear just because the stockings are hung.

Lost jobs, severed relationships, deaths in the family, health struggles, broken traditions, busy schedules, stressful relationships-- they all tend to rear their ugliest sides this time of year when we so want to pretend that all the Christmas decorations and ongoing carols will be enough to keep our spirits bright. But faking it or denying it can often only heighten the loneliness, unmet expectations and fractured relationships.

I want to invite everyone to embrace this season with hope AND honesty:

- What would be the most energizing thing you can do this holiday season that would "feed" you?
- What goals or values do you have that tend to get put on the back burner when you're stressed, sad or busy?
- How can you honor someone or something from your past that you feel you have lost?
- What new traditions can you create this year?
- How can you serve someone else this year?
- What would empower you to live within your boundaries (example: CNNfyi.com reports that nearly half of all Americans feel they spend too much at Christmas. Yet they do it anyway. How can you make choices that are in alignment with your budget? Your emotions? Your health?)
- Who in your life do you most want to thank this holiday season-- how can you do that in the most meaningful way?
- What, or who, do you need to face this month? Things that are tough or require courage and yet are in alignment with the kind of person you want to be?
- What, or who, do you need to minimize/avoid this month? Things that paralyze you, weaken you or drain you? Things you do out of guilt or pressure?
- What, or who, do you need to include in your life this month? What can that look like?
- What is one thing you can schedule ahead of time that would give you something to look forward to?

May you find more peace by spending time with your journal than with your credit card this season! :)