

## Make Yourself Holiday Sane

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Not only do some of us have old and harmful ideas about who we are but we can also have some crazy holiday traditions. A mom of two and a new client threw herself down on the office couch saying, “I’m bad. Please fix me.” As it turned out she was raised by toxic, mentally unhealthy parents who had physically beaten her and verbally abused her with demoralizing name calling. At age 14-years she ran away from home and somehow created a decent life with a decent and caring husband. As a Mom, however, she struggled with anger in the face of raising her children. She didn’t feel in charge of her behaviors or choices.

When we discussed the upcoming holiday we discovered a problem. She and her family were planning to go, as they did every year, to her parent’s home where she and her children were called (same old) shaming names. A light bulb came on when she realized she was passing on a toxic legacy to her children. She decided to give the upcoming season new and valuable meaning.

Often, change isn’t easy even when we choose it and facing the terror in your life can be even more difficult. She demonstrated great courage as she put a plan in place. She arranged for her family to spend Christmas Eve volunteering at a local homeless shelter and Christmas day at a retreat. Mission accomplished!

Here are some questions for you to consider:

- What boundaries do you need or want to put in place to protect your own well being and that of your loved ones?
- What activities are toxic or just plain draining? Are you willing to let them go? How and when?
- What does this upcoming season, whether it’s Hanukah, Christmas or a winter break, mean to you?
- What would you like it to mean to you?
- What memories do you want to create?

Remember, you’re probably stronger than you think and exercising self care strengthens your resilience. In this holiday season, may your dreams be bright and your days be filled with gladness.

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