



# Mindful Holiday Tips for Dealing with Stress, Difficult Relatives, and Grief

## 2. 11 Mindful Tips for the Holidays

1. Be realistic - Commit to no expectations and no assumptions.
2. Be gentle with yourself - Done is better than perfect.
3. Keep your regular routines – exercise, pet time, meditation.
4. Think moderation – limit alcohol, time with toxic people, food.
5. Don't be alone if you don't want to be.
6. Stay connected – drop off cookies to local EMS, call a friend.
7. Process emotions – when you are stuck ask yourself what you are feeling.
8. Drop the fantasy of how things ought to be. Focus on TODAY. Not yesterday or tomorrow
9. Prioritize and ask for help.
10. Practice gratitude – make a list of what you appreciate.
11. Don't lose sight of what really counts.



## 1. NAME exactly what you are feeling.

### Are you **anxious** that:

- You'll never get everything done.
- People will be disappointed.
- Family members won't get along.
- You'll let yourself and others down.

### Are you **angry** that:

- Someone you care about didn't prioritize being with you.
- Angry that someone has died and won't be there.

### Are you **excited** that:

- Everyone is coming to your house, but that puts the pressure on you.

### Are you **regretful** that:

- You don't deserve to be happy because of something you said, did or experienced?

### Are you **sad** that:

- Someone you love won't be there.

These thoughts and feelings can be based on ASSUMPTIONS, EXPECTATIONS, and PERFECTIONISM.

## 3. 5 Tips for Dealing with a Difficult Family Member

1. Give them something very specific to do to keep them busy. They will feel important.
2. Accept that person fully as they are. This lets go of the resistance. If you need something from them such as affirmation, they control you.
3. Don't take the bait. Remind yourself ahead of time of their patterns and be prepared not to react. Practice smiling without speaking. It works.
4. Let that person be right. No arguing. You won't win and it's not worth it.
5. No expectations. You don't need to be right. Just get it right.

## Coping with Grief at the Holidays

1. Surround yourself with people who love and support you.
2. Don't isolate yourself. Despite the temptation, try to avoid canceling the holiday.
3. Allow yourself to feel joy, sadness, anger – allow yourself to grieve. In your own way.
4. Draw comfort from doing for others.
5. Prioritize your self-care. Avoid alcohol, hustle and bustle. Get exercise. Write in a journal. Buy something frivolous for yourself, just because.
6. Create a new tradition. Celebrate in a new place. Announce that someone new will carve the turkey. Start a Memory Book that everyone writes in what they're grateful for each year. Light a candle in honor of a loved one.

## 4.



ST. MARGARET  
FOUNDATION

