



mindfulness at christmas time

Lisa Keeley

The truth is, that for many grieving people, **Christmas can be an intensely painful time** of the year. The intensity of what you are feeling speaks to the enormity of the moment.

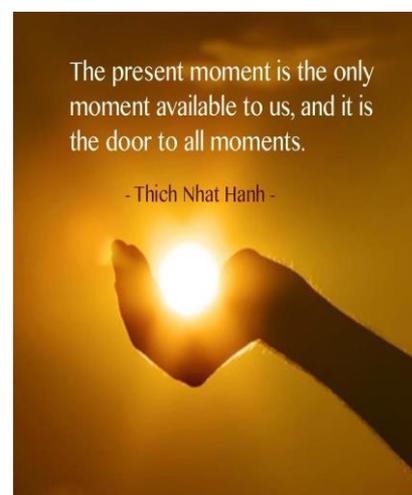
It's natural for us to try to resist, or refuse to accept, the reality of death, of grief and of our new and unwelcome current situation. Our pain is further fuelled by this resistance to what has happened. As we continue to resist, the pain only deepens.

By cultivating a Mindfulness Practice we can help to find calm and peace when we are faced with our grief. Mindfulness allows us to be fully present, aware and awake, moment by moment, and without judgement of what we are experiencing. We simply acknowledge the feelings and accept that they are real and natural, rather than try to fight them.

If you find there is not enough peace in your emotions or perceptions as you face the lead up to Christmas – writing cards, Xmas drinks, the office party, buying gifts, putting up the tree ... or if the thought of the empty place at the dinner table is overwhelming, it is helpful to practice calming them. By doing so, you are better equipped to be in control of your thought processes and emotions.

Try saying one of these 3 to yourself - at the critical moment, when you are feeling sadness or distress – it is immensely helpful to ease the strong emotions inside you.

1. *Breathing in, I accept my feelings
Breathing out, I calm my feelings...(at least 20 times)*
2. *Breathing in, I know that sadness is there...(at least 20 times)
Breathing out, I care for my sadness*
3. *Breathing in, I am in this moment
Breathing out, I am becoming calm
Breathing in, in this moment I feel calmer
Breathing out, I softly smile*



The present moment is the only moment available to us, and it is the door to all moments.

- Thich Nhat Hanh -

You can practise these either sitting or walking.

Doing these practices while walking is highly effective.

When practising any of the above, say the words softly in your mind with each step, including saying the words "breathing in & breathing out".

Goodbyes are only for those who love with their eyes, because for those who love with heart and soul there is no such thing as separation.
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Lisa Keeley of Tranquil Mind Solutions conducts Mindfulness Workshops in the Corporate Sector and also teaches Mindfulness Practices to individuals diagnosed with chronic illness.

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