

2020: Change up the way you look at the Holidays

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Recently, as I was scrolling my Facebook feed I came across a friend's status that resonated with me. She shared that for years she had been decorating her Christmas tree with ornaments passed down and it had become a mismatched, unjoyful tree. On a whim last year she started from scratch and designed an owl themed tree. It brought happiness to not only herself, but her entire family as well. It really got me to thinking. Holiday traditions can be a wonderful source of delight and memory creation, but how many times are we doing things because we have to, not because we want to?

2020 was the year of drive-by birthday parties, intimate backyard weddings, and live streamed meetings. How can we use the COVID-19 pandemic to try new things or reset traditions that might make us happier at the end of the day?

Try something new

Do you bake dozens of cookies to give as gifts or to bring to get togethers? Have you always used the same recipes, but find yourself wondering if there is something else out there? Certainly, don't feel like you have to turn your back on a tried and true baked good, but this is not the year to feel guilty about trying a new recipe, or making things easier if you are baking. Maybe make less, or buy prepared dough but you can bake and decorate the cookies. If baking brings you joy, keep it up and consider sharing your treats with a neighbor or friend that would enjoy them.

Relax

Pre 2020, did you feel the holidays were more stressful than fun sometimes? It's ok to say, "I'm not doing that this year." Maybe it will be just a change in 2020, or you'll realize you've been doing things wrong all along. I have cooked Thanksgiving Dinner for my family for at least the last 15 years. This year I've decided I'd like to try something different. Restaurants are struggling, and I've ordered a complete meal to go from a local establishment as a way to support them (and me too). They will have it all prepared and all I need to do is pick it up. No running to three grocery stores for all the ingredients and best deals, no waking up early on Thanksgiving morning to start cooking the turkey and no washing dishes all day long. Maybe I'll sleep in or go for a nature hike in the morning and that afternoon there will be more time for games with my immediate family and virtual meet ups with my out of state family. Whatever you decide to do, don't pressure yourself to make it feel the same as other years.

Reimagine Gifting

Shopping local isn't something new, but it's something to be cognizant of in 2020. Many small retailers offer direct shipping and curbside service. If you aren't comfortable going inside of stores to browse this year, check out their websites and social media. If you don't have access to

a computer, most small business owners would love to get a ringing phone from a potential customer asking questions, than not hear the phone at all.

Have you heard from a loved one how much they love your angel collection? Whatever that item is, consider this to be the year to gift something you love, but realize it could be loved more by someone else. When I was young my Grandma had a talking keychain that I loved. I still remember the year she passed it along to me, and she got to enjoy me loving it. That silly gift cost her nothing and was valued at less than a couple of dollars, but ended up being my favorite gift of the year.

We are using technology more than ever before. Use phone calls and virtual videos as way to capture an audio and/or video oral history directly from your loved ones. An intergenerational conversation with the matriarch and/or patriarch of your family can be a gift that is treasured for years to come. If you aren't sure what to ask here are some questions to get you started: <https://felicianvillage.org/sft1006/99grandparentsday.pdf>

No matter what your holidays look like this year, remember that each day is a gift in-itself. Even a giggle with a someone on the phone or silent reflection on years past can be good for your soul.