

READY OR NOT... HERE THEY COME!!!

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Try as you might, you can't escape the holiday season. Though it has been some years now, I still remember how I approached those first few holidays with fear and trepidation. I hadn't had the time necessary to know yet how the "new me" reacted to old situations. I didn't even want there to be a Thanksgiving or Christmas, for it meant I had to come face-to-face with the fact that my son wasn't going to be a part of them anymore. That brought out pain in me that I'm sure I don't need to explain to you.

But they came anyway, complete with turkey, trimmings, jingle bells and lots of ho ho ho's. Since a ho ho was hard for me to come by in those early years I didn't try. I fumed and fussed about what I was going to do, that first year in particular. What was left of my feeble brain deviled me to get an answer to the old question "What are you going to do to observe the holidays?"

I soon realized that if I tried to please everybody on the periphery of my life, I was going to please nobody. And since my needs were paramount it was only necessary that I work out something that afforded the least amount of pain for my husband, my daughter, and me.

I had several choices. Decide to do things as we always had done; decide to keep some of the old traditions, but introduce some new ones; or do as we eventually did-just ignore the whole thing. They laugh in the groups when I tell how my family spent Thanksgiving at the "Benihana of Tokyo" restaurant. Can't get any further away from tradition than that! But it was right for us.

As with many other things having to do with grieving for a child, there aren't any rules and regulations, and don't you believe anybody who tries to lay a bunch of them on you. My suggestion is this. Having gotten input from your immediate family as to their needs and wants; decide right now how you think you'd be most comfortable observing the holidays. Then make plans. Your brain will keep badgering you until it gets an answer-any answer. It really doesn't care what you decide, but it wants an answer. So give it one. You may decide at the last minute to do nothing you've said you would. It'll be too late then for your brain to devil you. This is true for all the holidays and any other day that is special. Just know that it's possible, still, for you to have some control over your life.

Remember, Benihana of Tokyo" is always an option for you. Don't worry about making reservations. It just isn't a busy day for them somehow!!!