



Make 'Peas' With Christmas

By Emma Sims, Holistic Therapist

As a fan of cracker jokes, I often replace the word 'peace' with 'peas'. But joking aside, for some, Christmas isn't a laughing matter and can be filled with dread as it used to be for me. Now I love it. Here are some strategies to help you to find your own peace with Christmas.

An Honest Look

Taking an honest look at your beliefs and what this time means to you can build it into something you begin to enjoy. When you have more of an idea of what you are comfortable with, you can then look to the needs of others more mindfully.

What are your own wants and needs? Make a list of the values that hold true for you. **What's your perfect Christmas Day?** What would you want to do? This understanding may evolve over some years, but it starts now. I spent many years alone at Christmas to find out what worked for me.

The Darkest Before the Dawn

Safety or feeling comfortable isn't always something that we talk about in terms of Christmas, but sadly some families or friendships can be challenging.

If this is potentially an issue for you, prepare yourself in advance. Contact organisations such as **Advance Brighter Futures**, **Women's Aid** or **MIND**. Have the phone line to **Samaritans** or **CALL** handy as well as the adage

'it is always the darkest before the dawn'.

Pushing through such difficult times can lead us to something better. I also love the saying **'those that matter don't mind and those that mind don't matter'.**

I have strong spiritual beliefs, but they aren't traditionally religious. I therefore redefined Christmas as a time to spend with people that I feel comfortable with and love. I set an intention to buy **meaningful gifts** not just because 'I should' buy them. I then wait for inspiration and it's great fun to see what unfolds!



Sherry and Homemade Christmas Cake!

In the lead-up, I may go to church. On the day I meditate, go for a walk or a run to absorb nature. I have many moments of deep gratitude and appreciation for what I have. I make a traditional turkey meal. **I love a sherry and of course homemade Christmas cake!**

Many of us gain weight over Christmas. By looking at the practice of mindful eating, we can focus on the present, moment by moment and ask ourselves **whether we really need or want this right now**, and slow our eating down. This method can allow us to stay balanced rather than overindulging 'just because' it's Christmas.



Mindful Eating

Mindful eating removes the judgement of what we eat. It allows us to accept our choices if we do overindulge. Consequently, you also enjoy them more (and ironically **eat less!**)

Setting the intention to change what can be a stressful time of year starts now. As you start to listen to yourself more deeply, you can make gradual changes over the years. Eventually, this time can become a 'peasful' time for you – **just don't forget the humour!**

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