

The Griever's Holiday Bill of Rights

Companions on a Journey Grief Support

- You have the right to say, “**time out**”. Take a time out to blow off a little steam, step away from the holidays, have a “huddle” and start over.
- You have the right to **tell it like it is**. When people ask, “How are you?” you have the right to tell them how you really feel, not just what they want to hear.
- You have the right to some “**bah humbug**” days. You don't have to be jolly and upbeat all of the time.
- You have the right to **do things differently**. There is no law that says you must always do the holidays the same way. Do 10 cards instead of 100, or no cards at all. Eat pizza instead of turkey!
- You have the right to **be where you want to be** – at home or with relatives or in the city or state of your choice.
- You have the right to **some fun**. When you have a day that isn't so bad and you feel like doing something fun, then do it. Don't be afraid of what someone else will say or think. Laughter is just as important as tears.
- You have the right to **change direction mid-stream**. Holiday grief is unpredictable. You may be all ready to go somewhere or do something and suddenly be overwhelmed. When that happens, it's okay to change your mind. There's plenty of time in life to be predictable. Exercise your right to change when you need to.
- You have the right to **do things at different times**. Go to church at a different time. Open presents at a different time. Serve your meal at a different time. Go to bed at a different time. Don't be a slave to the holiday clock.
- You have the right to **rest, peace and solitude**. You don't need to be busy all of the time. Take a nap whenever you need to. Take time to recharge your spirit.
- You have the right to **do it all differently again next year**. Just because you change things one year does not mean that you have written it in stone. Next year, you can always change it back or do it in yet another new way.

Adapted from Handing the Holidays by Bruce Conley, 1993