

Tell Your Story Newsletter (TYSN):

Specializing in Entrepreneurial and Organizational Storytelling

Let me tell your story!



Welcome Mid-December, 2019!

With winter's hoary wind and arctic temperatures now abating (last Friday saw -35C weather with wind chill), I'm relieved to report a mere -15C, as I write this issue of "Tell Your Story Newsletter!"

While we are in the midst of another festive season (Hanukkah, Christmas and other observances), I'm aware that this month is not a "Ho-Ho-Ho" time for many, who struggle with losses of career, family and other kinds.

So I return in this last newsletter of 2019 to "Coping with Christmas," a publication of the American Hospice Foundation (AHF). For those of us who care for others on a daily basis or who may feel overwhelmed by the work of self-care, especially given the often forced positivity of the season, the AHF reminds us to be attuned to our own emotions and needs.

Despite the challenges we all face and that fill our daily newspapers, I hope that you, good reader, can find a little time to enjoy the last weeks of 2019, giving thanks for the family or friends (not to mention good books!) that grace our lives.

I wish you peace this holiday season and good health, contentment and prosperity in 2020.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth

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Article One: *Feeling the Christmas Blues? Here are Some Answers . . .*

For many of us, even if we have been raised to observe Christmas or Hanukkah as a blessing, the holiday season can be painful.

The pain may come from the loss of a loved one, of a job, separation from a significant other, health or financial difficulties, the excessive pressure to buy and give, and so on. The so-called "holiday season" can be anything but "ho-ho-ho" in reality.

This holiday survival guide, written by the American Hospice Foundation, offers some ideas that may help us as we plan (or choose not to plan) holiday festivities. Please read on and know that you are not alone!

Christmas cards (choose one):

1. Mail as usual
2. Shorten your list
3. Include a Christmas letter that you've written
4. Skip it this year

Christmas music (choose one):

1. Enjoy as usual
2. Shop early, to avoid Christmas music
3. Avoid turning the radio on
4. Listen to the music and allow yourself to feel sad (or to cry)

Decorations (choose one):

1. Decorate as usual
2. Let others do it
3. Choose not to have decorations
4. Have a special decoration for a loved one, who may have died or left
5. Modify your decorations
6. Make changes, such as an artificial tree
7. Ask for help

Shopping (choose one):

1. Shop as usual
2. Shop early
3. Make your gifts
4. Make a list of gifts to buy
5. Shop through catalogues or the internet
6. Ask for help wrapping gifts
7. Shop with a friend
8. Give cash
9. Give baked goods
10. Ask for help
11. Go giftless and make a donation to charity

Traditions (choose one):

1. Keep the old traditions

2. Don't attend Christmas parties
3. Open gifts on the usual day
4. Attend a worship service
5. Attend a totally different place of worship
6. Visit the cemetery
7. Attend Christmas parties
8. Go to an entirely new place
9. Open gifts at another time
10. Do not attend a worship service
11. Light a special candle to honour your loved one
12. Bake the usual foods
13. Modify your baking
14. Buy the usual foods
15. Spent quiet time alone

Christmas Dinner (choose one):

1. Prepare as usual
2. Invite friends over
3. Eat in a different location of the house
4. Go out to dinner
5. Eat alone
6. Change time of dinner
7. Have a buffet/potluck
8. Ask for help

Post-Christmas and New Year's Day (choose one):

1. Spend the days as usual
2. Avoid New Year's parties
3. Spend time with only a few friends
4. Write in a journal about your hopes for the next year
5. Go out of town
6. Host a New Year's Party
7. Go to a movie Rent a movie from the library
8. Go to bed early

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STORYTELLER's CORNER

STORYTELLER'S CORNER: Words, Stories and Riddles on Writing and Editing . . .

This Month: An Advent Miracle Story

A friend and colleague in my faith community recently shared a remarkable story of his efforts, earlier in 2019, to deliver our community's 2018 gift donations to a downtown, charitable agency that helps victims of abuse.

He writes that last June (2019) . . . "I went into the [church] parlour and noticed that the gifts still sat where we'd left them, last December (2018), since the office of the recipient agency was never open. I had phoned, left messages and visited in person, multiple times, only to find the office closed."

He continues: "As I was driving past [one day last spring, 2019], I decided to give it one last chance and showed up to the agency, just after lunch. They were open!"

It was obvious that the staff had just come from a meeting. One of the folk there came over and asked me what I wanted. I told her that I was from the church and had some very belated Advent gifts for them.

She looked confused when I said gifts, but when I said that the gifts consisted of toiletries and other items, it changed to surprise. She asked how many, and I told her that the trunk of my car was full. Again, there was a look of surprise on her face. She spoke with the director and then went into the back and got a small cart. We then went down the car and loaded it up. It was a small cart, so I carried the extra packages that didn't fit.

When we got back to the office, she took the items into the back and the director came over and thanked me profusely. She told me that the topic of conversation at the meeting they'd just finished was how they were going to find toiletries to fill packages for some of their clients. They had a few items, but not nearly enough, and there wasn't money in the budget to purchase more. They left the meeting wondering how they'd find the remaining items, and that was when I walked in!

We called it Christmas in June! We could have delivered the gifts last December, when other churches were doing the same and when the need was largely met. But by delivering them in the spring, we met a great need at a time when others were not giving.

We can put this down to coincidence or fate or luck. I look at it as an Advent miracle and a sign that our Creator is alive and well and living among us."