

NAVIGATING THE HOLIDAYS (OR ANY DAY) FOR SENSITIVE AND EVOLVING PEOPLE

Ah, the winter holidays. A whirlwind of lights, nostalgia, indulgence, frustration, heartbreak, and joy. Whether you are going the traditional route, visiting a partner's family, spending time alone, or joining a Friendsgiving, the key during this time, and all the time, is to be honest with yourself about your needs. There are so many stressful factors during the American holiday season! Travel! Money for food and gifts! It's cold! Pressure to end the year on a high note! Diet triggers! During the holidays, we tend to put way too much on our proverbial plates and end up feeling burnt out and resentful in the end because of it.

This guide is for people who struggle with the holidays or know that you get especially stressed or triggered during this time. If you don't have those experiences, lucky you! hope you enjoy some time off work and you eat some great food! However, if you're like me, neurodivergent and sensitive and busy and emotional and wild and weird: read on.

My first piece of advice is pretty simple but also the hardest to actually realize: you don't have to be with your family if you don't want to. You don't have to spend the money, time, and energy with them if you find it too draining on your system, for whatever reason. It doesn't matter if you already told them you would. Yes, you may experience feelings of guilt, both self-imposed and from your loved ones. Yes, you may feel out of sorts. You might even feel a little lonely.

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But ask yourself where does that loneliness come from? Why do you feel lonely? Are you actually lonely or are you ignoring an aspect of your inner self that needs attention and love, not from external sources, but from your own heart?

And what is guilt anyway? Guilt is a super effective tool of judgement and shame, which binds us to folks and feelings we don't want to be bound to and are not our own. Use these feelings as warning signs because ultimately they take us outside of ourselves and our power by inviting us into fear and obligation. Guilt is really great at propping up your ego and having it run the show when your soul is asking for your attention.

The card that I pulled for this holiday season is the **Queen of Swords**. We are called to be sensitive, but honest. Loving, but with healthy boundaries. The Queen of Swords holds so much, but wields their power gracefully, intently, potently. They remind us that our boundaries exist to heal not to hurt.

Listen - haven't we all had enough of lying to ourselves? There is no more room for it. There's no more reason for it. The world is changing. There's no more time for pretending. And haven't we all had enough of the lies that we have been told about our history, our ancestors, our

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rituals, our power? Why would we spend one more second living a lie? To make others more comfortable? Why should the comfort of others come at the expense of our souls?

This holiday season, **prioritize truth. Especially when it hurts, when it feels unbearable.** Practice saying no in the mirror. No is a complete sentence - do not lose sight of this resonance when you are invited into mental gymnastics and guilt. Say yes to yourself every day. Practice saying yes every day to hasten the manifestation of your dreams. Yes to your soul, Yes to your destiny. You are the one responsible for believing they can come true. Your buy-in is necessary.

Our emotions are the marker for where we need to go deeper, ask more questions. Our feelings don't have to run the show. They don't own us. Contrary to what so many of us have been taught - it is okay to have emotions. They help us grow and have all the tingly feel-good stuff we like to experience as humans. And our basest impulses, as messy and wild as they might be, help us learn about our needs and how to eventually communicate them with love. Here are some steps to take when you feel like you're losing your grip - or any time really! You can apply these steps of emotional observation to any part of your spiritual journey, whether you are a newcomer to magic, deep in shadow work, or just moseying towards enlightenment.

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How do you express your truth without overly identifying with your emotions?

Pause! Set down what you are doing, whether it's a physical object or an obsessive thought.

Be present! Check in with where you are and how you are reacting. Don't fight against your body! Relax your body - unclench your jaw, uncross your arms and legs, breathe into your tension through your diaphragm.

Acknowledge what you are feeling! Name it with just one word - fear or anxiety or sadness or guilt etc etc.

Don't judge yourself! Experience your emotions without explanations or excuses.

Express your needs! It's important to speak your truth, even if it is just a gentle whisper to your overstimulated brain, with compassion for yourself above all. Whatever compassion and gentleness you have left, you can give to any person who might be bothering you (e.g. overbearing mothers, absent fathers, racist siblings, screaming children, etc etc), **but do not give them your full reserves of your strength!**

You need it for you!

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Don't expect neat resolutions! Feelings are complicated and being spiritually aware does not change that. Accept your peace where you can and don't try to manage other people's emotions or expectations. That's their job.

Walk away if you have to! Remove yourself from triggering situations if they are overwhelming.

Feelings don't last forever! Know that this moment and feeling is temporary. Know that your impulses do not define you. The truth is that you are Divine made manifest.

In conclusion: **it's okay to not be okay!** You don't have to pretend to be fine. Your family doesn't have to be fine. Your commute doesn't have to be fine. It's okay to be upset, anxious, or frustrated. You can't change how you feel, but you can choose how you walk through it. On that same token, for those who choose to spend this time away from your family for the sake of your self-care, it is very okay to feel okay and to not be experiencing any guilt or judgement. You should be proud for having the courage to navigate your journey as feels right for you. This will be my third holiday season away from my family and tradition. At this point I am

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My long term solution to stress, anxiety, and judgement is remembering that I am Divine. We are expressions of the consciousness of Love. Our power comes from our divinity - not from our bodies, not from our egos, not from our identities, not from our paychecks. Our power exists because we exist. We can choose to access this strength at anytime - all we have to do is be available for it.

If you are sensitive, and looking to do some healing and boundary building to bring some ease to your holidays and start your new year off right you can book a 1:1 reading with me on my website, aliawalston.com! For weekly spiritual guidance, tarot card pulls, recorded meditations, and more, you can also sign up for my subscription site **TAKING UP SPACE** for as little as \$6 a month. Visit aliawalston.com to get access.

Take the sweetest care of yourselves, loves.

xo, Alia