



**BANYAN**  
**THERAPY GROUP**  
REFUGE - RECOVERY - RESTORATION

### **Managing Holiday Traditions This Year**

Our hope is that you can transform this holiday season into a time of care for yourself and for your relationship if you are in one. It will take plenty of patience, courage, and gentleness, but we believe in the power of transformation. This will be your “act of triumph” - Moving a difficult season into a time that begins a new path of healing for you and your relationship if you are currently in a relationship.

As you go through this exercise, please only focus on THIS year. We don't know what next year will hold, so let's focus here on what you'd like from this holiday season. You can tackle next year's traditions when we get closer to next year. But for now, all you need to do is focus on today and the coming weeks.

Let's take a look at what you want this year to look like. To do this, let's first look at what traditions you want to let go of this year.

#### **What needs to be taken out this year**

When you think about this year vs previous years, what traditions do you just not feel up for continuing this year?

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Are there any events that you could live without attending this year? If so, write any of those down:

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Are there certain people or places that don't feel safe this year? Write down any of these people or places that you may consider not visiting:

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Are there certain gifts or other celebrations that you'd not like this year?

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Any other person, place, thing that you'd like to consider removing for this year? Remember, the years to come may be different, we're only talking about this year. Write any more thoughts down below:

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**What would you like to keep this year**

Now that we've looked at what you'd like to take OUT this year, let's look at what you'd like to KEEP.

When you think about special holiday traditions, what would you like to KEEP this year no matter what?

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Are there any events that you really want to attend? What would you like to make sure happens this year?

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Are there certain people or places that DO feel safe this year? Write down any of these people or places that you want to make sure are part of this holiday season:

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Are there certain gifts or other celebrations that you want to make sure happen?

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Any other person, place, thing that you want to make sure to incorporate this holiday season?  
Write any more thoughts down below:

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**What needs to be modified this year**

What traditions if any need to be modified this year? This could include adding new boundaries around these events, attending for a certain amount of time, restricting certain parts or people, maintaining different levels of safety, setting boundaries around alcohol use, etc. Write down any modifications you want for this year's traditions:

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Are there any modifications you have for events this year? Write them down below:

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Are there certain people or places that you need to consider boundaries or restrictions around this year?

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Are there certain gifts or other celebrations that you'd like to modify or consider changing this year?

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Any other person, place, thing that you'd like to consider setting boundaries or modifications around this holiday season? Again, remember that the years to come may be different, we're only talking about this year. Write any more thoughts down below:

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**What would you like new this year?**

This year can also be a year of recreation. Think for a moment about what you'd like this year to look like. It may not be a perfect year, but we can certainly create some new memories and make it as beautiful a season as possible.

Are there any new traditions that you'd like to make this year? What are they?

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Are there any events that you'd like to add or to create this year?

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Are there certain people or places that you want to add to your life this holiday season, or to incorporate in a new way?

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Are there certain gifts or other celebrations that you'd like to create this year?

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Any other person, place, thing that you'd like to create for this holiday season? This is your time to reimagine what this holiday season can be for you and for your relationship.

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Now that you've thought through your new vision for this holiday season, spend some time comparing your answers with those of your partner. You may need the guidance of a therapist or counselor to talk through these items and to negotiate with this holiday season will look like for you and for your relationship.

After finishing this exercise, write down your joint plan for the holiday season – How this year will be a new year for your relationship. We wish you all the best this holiday season.

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