

Time to Spread Holiday Cheer, Even When You're Down

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The Wall Street Journal:

On Thanksgiving, I called a normally peppy friend to wish him a happy holiday and was surprised to catch him at home. I asked what he was doing for dinner. His answer: "Nothing."

I invited him to my parents' house, where my family was going to celebrate. They've all met before, and I promised him the gathering was informal. He sounded relieved, and we set a time to meet. But an hour later he called, apologized profusely and canceled. "I really do appreciate your invitation," he said. "But I'm too depressed to be around people."

It's no secret that the holidays aren't a time of delight and wonder for everyone. Many people struggle to get through them. For people dealing with a loss from death or divorce, a serious illness or loss of a job, the season can be bittersweet, if not downright depressing.

I've been struck by how many people have told me they are struggling with the holidays this year. One reader wrote about how hard it is to be single at family holiday events. A friend whose husband has cancer worries this Christmas will be his last. A neighbor who lost his father a few weeks ago says he doesn't feel like putting up a tree.

Read the whole story: [*The Wall Street Journal*](#)