

5 Steps to Maintain Your  
Sanity This Season

*a*  
***Holiday***  
***Handbook***  
*for*  
**2020**



by Reverend Lisa Sarick  
with artwork by Cami Sarick

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# A Letter from the Author

*Dear Friends,*

*There's nothing like a global pandemic to show you what you really value. All that you are missing, yearning for or sad about losing in 2020 are those things and people that mean the most to you in this life, right? Conversely, I know I have realized many things that I am fully content without. Haven't you?*

*As the holidays approach, we can use this newfound awareness and mix it with a little creativity to make this the most meaningful season of our lives. We can fill our hearts and spread love, just in different ways than we have in the past, perhaps.*

*It starts with adjusting our attitude and our focus. Then letting go of expectations and comparison. After that, we are free to decide to bring joy to every moment from now until New Year's Day. We can welcome 2021 with open arms and from an empowered place. That is my wish for you – that you find peace and joy in the moment as it is and share that with others. A truly holy holiday season.*

*In this little book, I'm proposing 5 steps to help make these holidays as simple and enjoyable as possible. I've included tips and ideas for each step, but sincerely hope that the concepts inspire you to focus on what is truly important and enjoy this time in your own way.*

*Please share this guidebook with anyone you think might benefit from it. May your days ahead be holy and wholly enjoyable. Many Blessings.*

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lisa".

## *Step 1*



Take a moment to reflect on who and what you value most. This pandemic may have helped to make that abundantly clear. If you are a journaling type, break out your journal and make a list of what is most important to you and what you want the holidays to be about this year.

Next, accept that it is 2020 and there is a worldwide pandemic. That things may be different. That packages may arrive late. That supply and availability of items and ingredients may be limited. That people may not be willing to travel or might not be ready for an in-person gathering. That many of us, maybe even you, are grieving or sad. Drop expectations and comparisons of this year's holidays to any other year.

Take a breath.

Now back to your journal. Brainstorm and jot down ways that you can fulfill your truest wish for the holidays while keeping yourself and loved ones safe and comfortable.

I'll help get you started. How about:

- A Zoom gathering ugly sweater contest or [game night](#).
- Live someplace warm? Have a Thanksgiving picnic.
- Send packages full of love for people to receive in the mail.
- Share the secret recipe and a video of you making that dish everyone loves, to their email inboxes.
- Send everyone a video slideshow of photos from holidays past.
- Write letters telling your favorite people what you love about them.
- Write your intention for the season on a sticky note and put it some place you will see it every day. Stay focused on what's important.



## Step 2



Take a cue from other cultures, traditions and people to enjoy the holidays and winter months.

For example:

- Books and chocolate, like in Iceland. Lots of books are published at the end of the year in Iceland because it's tradition that people get books and chocolate on Christmas Eve to cuddle up with.
- Honor the Winter Solstice, as earth-based traditions do. Praise the return of the light, of hope, of good things to come. Light a candle or have a bonfire and imagine it awakening warm love and renewing hope within you.

- Embrace Hygge (pronounced “hoo-guh”), the Danish concept of coziness and contentment to help you feel good when it’s cold and dark outside. Cuddle up with a blanket and [a warm drink](#), microwave that neck wrap, or turn on the electric blanket an hour before your bedtime so you can slide into the warmth.
- Take inspiration from the sweet book [29 Gifts](#), which relays Cami Walker’s journey and how giving a small gift every day for 29 days helped her mental and physical health and well-being. There happen to be 29 days between Thanksgiving and Christmas! Imagine what would happen if you thought of others for that whole period.
- A favorite tradition from my childhood, that is COVID-friendly, is driving around to look at holiday lights and decorations. I remember being in my pajamas as a kid, in the car, as we drove to the neighborhoods known for Christmas lights on most or all of the houses. Then we OOOHed and AAHed. Still a favorite memory - above any presents that I received.



## Step 3



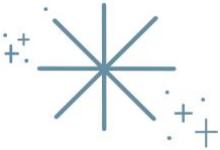
The Gods willing, this will be the only Thanksgiving, Hannukah, New Year's Eve and all holidays during a pandemic in our lifetimes. The only one without rushing around, long road trips or flights, hours of preparing or cooking. One without having to steady yourself in case of conflict or tiptoe around a difficult family member. One that is simplified.

Allow this to be rejuvenating. Relax.

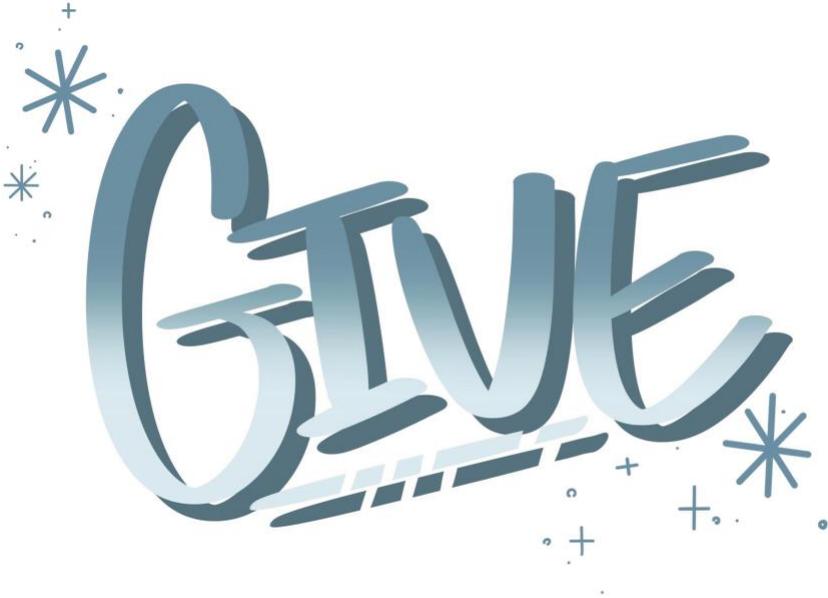
Don't know how to relax? Let me help:

- Sleep in.
- Read a book or a magazine from cover to cover.
- Watch a marathon of Jumanji movies or the oddly addictive Great British Baking Show.
- If you like to cook, make slow food.
- If you hate to cook, order takeout for days.

- Do [restorative yoga](#).
- Take a long, leisurely walk.
- Start a 1000 piece puzzle on the table.
- Use that meditation app you downloaded.
- Go off-grid for a day, with no news, social media or information coming in at all. Listen within.



## Step 4



To give is to receive. That's because giving helps us to remember and appreciate all that we *do* have. It fills us up from the inside, renewing our feelings of abundance and connection.

What can you give this holiday season? Here are a few ideas:

- Make gifts meaningful by listening to what your loved ones say that they want. Ask them what they would like or think about what would make them smile. Extra thoughtfulness, care and consideration can make even a small gift truly wonderful.
- Find out their [love languages](#) and give in the way they prefer to receive.
- Help a neighbor shovel snow.
- Drop off a surprise meal next door.

- Set flowers on a doorstep without getting caught.
- Call someone you love but have not spoken to in a while. Make time for them and mostly listen.
- Use your soul gifts (the things you're great at) - whether it's singing, organizing, baking, crocheting or anything else - to put something uplifting, useful, inspirational, informative or delicious out into the world. Give it as a gift or to uplift the social media spaces.
- The pandemic has exacerbated food insecurity for so many including children, with schools going virtual. If you have the means, [donate to Save the Children](#) to aid their effort to feed the children most in need.



## Step 5



Stop and notice the moment. This can be done any time, alone or with others. Bringing presence to the holidays is what truly puts the Holy in the days.

Here's how to do it:

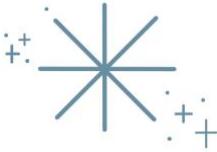
- Be still.
- Drop your awareness into your body.
- Feel inside, perhaps at your heart center (the center of your chest) or in your belly, while you quietly observe the moment.
- Witness the sounds around you, smells, sensations inside and on your skin.
- Watch what is happening but feel your energy while observing whatever it is – whether it's snow falling outside the window,

your children playing, someone cooking or talking or your cat sleeping.

- Notice how it feels in your heart center.
- Take in the sacredness of the moment that will never be again. The beauty of Now.

As I write this, my dog is softly snoring behind me. I hear the whirr of the leaf blower, my husband blowing the fallen leaves across the yard. I am comfortable in my yoga clothes and balanced on my ball chair. The faint smell of burnt sage is in the air. My heart feels warm and full. All is well.

**All is well, My Friends.**



## *In Conclusion & Gratitude*

Thank you for reading my little holiday handbook. I truly hope that it helps you in some way. I'd like to offer a final blessing to conclude the book and this year.

We may never be the same after 2020, some say. I say, *may we* never be the same. If we are open, teachable, we can receive the lessons and the healing that it offered. So, here is my prayer:

*May this year of challenges, loss and change help us to grow, and to become more loving.*

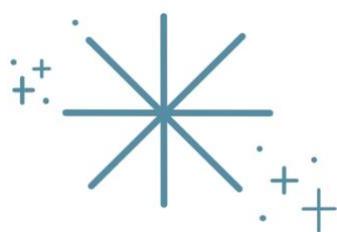
*May we hold on to what we have realized is truly important, and cherish those we love just a little bit more.*

*May we learn from our elders, respect their wisdom and record their stories before they are gone.*

*May we remember to hug and touch when we have the chance.*

*May we understand that we are one small, interconnected world of people and creatures, and that we are all in this together.*

*May we appreciate the simple pleasures that make this life so beautiful.*



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