



## 5 Tips On How to Enjoy the Holidays While Going Through a Divorce/Separation



### #1 Go Easy on Yourself

Emotions may be overwhelming during the holidays! Know that you may have bouts of sadness, anger or other strong emotions. Take good care of yourself and give yourself as much nurturing as you can. If you had a friend who was in your shoes, how would you treat them? With love and compassion, of course! Get in touch with the things that you KNOW will lift your mood and try your best to stay away from anything that upsets or saddens you. For instance, if trimming the tree with old ornaments makes you sad, buy new ones or create a new/old theme with parts of the tree celebrating different years. Again, change things up now that life is changing.

Consider: if you had no obligations and no limitations, what holiday activities would you engage in to keep your spirits up? Theater, concert, day at the museum or a winter hike then back home for some hot cocoa? In an especially stressful season, with the added stress of a separation or divorce, any care you can give yourself will help you make it through.



### #2 Create New Traditions & Discard Old Ones

"Every Christmas my girls and I selected the day we would celebrate Christmas. We planned new traditions together while they kept the Christmas Day routine at their dad's. The scale of Christmas became more child-oriented and child-focused — less focused on adult-themed celebration. The kids (not the adults) decorated the tree. Adults were not allowed to move around the ornaments and 'fix' things. By creating a uniquely new experience, we did not interrupt their customary holiday rituals." (-Claire N. Barnes, Kids' Turn)

There may be some traditions that you found yourself dreading every year, but they were important to your ex-spouse. Know that those traditions no longer have to continue. The good news is you can let go of any traditions that you were not keen on and begin creating new traditions that you'll enjoy!



### #3 You Are Not Alone

- Almost everyone wishes someone could read their mind and offer help when in need. However, we don't know anyone who can actually read minds. Just remember, if you need help making your holidays merrier, don't be afraid to ask! Don't wait for someone to guess what you need because there's a chance that they might not guess correctly.



### #4 Establish Boundaries

Setting boundaries for yourself is always important for maintaining your emotional health. However, it is absolutely vital around the holidays. Begin by initiating the conversations you need to have with friends, family and colleagues so that your wishes are known before it becomes an issue. Are there gatherings that you would rather not attend this year? Are there topics you would prefer to not discuss in certain groups? Are there boundaries that need to be set for your children, if you have them, so that they are as comfortable as possible and can enjoy the festivities? Making your preferences known will help your family and friends be sensitive to your needs and make the holidays happier for everyone.



**DiPietro**  
FAMILY LAW GROUP

"Protecting What Matters Most"  
Divorce and Family Law Attorneys

FamilyandDivorceLawyers.com  
703-370-5555

Offices in McLean, Leesburg, Rockville,  
Frederick and Washington, D.C.

### #5 Remind Yourself: It Will Get Easier

The first year after a separation or divorce — especially with holidays and anniversaries — is usually the toughest to get through. Sometimes, it's a matter of simply marking off the days until the occasion has passed and rejoicing that you made it through. Holidays often serve as a painful reminder of the past, but you can focus on "rewriting" your holiday story to one of new traditions, new beginnings and new memories.

