

# THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR WHAT GRIEVERS WANT YOU TO KNOW

By Nan Zastrow

Whether it's your First Noel or the persistent tenth after the death of a significant loved one, it's likely not going to be a **Rockin Around the Christmas Tree** kind of the year. There are painful reminders everywhere about what and who is missing that can't be ignored. Holidays are all about family, friends, and connections. While some bereaved just prefer a **Silent Night**.



It's not unusual for a griever to choose to have a **Blue Christmas** and not come **Home for the Holidays** this year or for several years to come. The dilemma of what to do or how to handle holiday grief is a personal one. If it was your loved one who said **You Make It Feel Like Christmas**, you could surely understand the reluctance for **Seasons Greetings**. Celebrating will strongly depend upon the bereaved person's resiliency and how far they've progressed in coping with their grief as to the decisions that rule their holiday this year.

Here's What Griefers Feel And Want Others To Know: The hopeless **Unchained Melody** in a bereaved person's mind is **All I Want for Christmas Is You**. How could

they wish for anything more? **What Do the Lonely Do at Christmas?** Likely, they will do whatever they can to hang on to **Christmas Memories** because **Christmas Won't Be the Same Without You**.

**Should Old Acquaintances (Auld Lang Syne)** be forgotten. Large crowds, even groups of related families and extended families can be a threat to **That Christmas Feeling**. Coaxing a griever into a crowd of stimulating holiday party noisemakers and **Jingle Bells** can quickly backfire. **Do You Hear What I Hear?** It's their cry to **"Remember Me at Christmas"**. I am lonely and wondering **Who Took the Merry Out of Christmas**.

**You're a Mean One Mr. Grinch**. Every sight and sound resonates with **Christmas Once Again**. Unless you've been through it, you really don't have a clue what it's like to wake up and think **Christmas Will Be Just Another Lonely Day** when everyone is singing **Feliz Navidad** and you aren't. **Mary, Did You Know** that I'm not quite ready to let go of my grief yet?

Christmas is more than **One Day at a Time**. It begins before the **12 Days of Christmas**. Only then does reality hit home that **It's Beginning to Look A Lot Like Christmas**. Somehow, **We're Gonna Make It Through This Year**. Griefers just want to avoid the **Celebration**. They have little desire to **Deck the Halls** with elaborate decorations or hear the **Carol of the Bells** permeating throughout stores. And they're not expecting any gifts **Underneath the Tree**, not even a **Present Without a Bow**.

**When Christmas Comes Around**, everyone expects a Griever to feel **Merry and Bright**. However, there is mourning in the merry that steals its Glow. The joy and **The Magic of Christmas** for a griever is when they can recall **Good Times**. There is nothing sweeter than fond memories and **The Gift of Love**. It's the greatest gift of all. **That's What Christmas Means to Me**.

It's **Not Christmas Til Somebody Cries** or laughs! What family doesn't watch **Christmas Vacation** or sing **Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer**. For many who grieve, **Laughter at Christmas** may be lacking. So, don't be surprised if **Christmas Makes Me Cry**. While on the

other hand, a little levity can offer a moment of distraction and normalcy. In the right situation, a hurting griever just might laugh until they cry.

Memories awaken the **Ghost of Christmas Past**. Family and friends may think that strong encouragement for the bereaved to maintain traditions will be healing. They may suggest **My Favorite Things** to soothe my wilting spirit. On the contrary, **O Christmas Tree** might be the last tradition I wish to tackle. **Tinsel and Lights** or even a **Sleigh Ride** just might not be as beautiful as it was last year. There might be **Nuttin' for Christmas** to cheer about. Suggestions of ways to change traditions are okay, but never pressure a bereaved person to conform just because you think it would be good for them.

**Merry Christmas Darling!** No one has the capability of rewriting the past or bringing a loved one back. Grievers don't want to spoil the holiday for other family and friends but **Christmas Without You** is reality. **If I Make It Through December**, I'll be relieved. No matter how you color it, how you "sell it" or how you try to make it different. **Christmas Just Ain't Christmas Without the One You Love.**

**Tis the Reason for the Season** makes the holiday even more challenging. **Faith, Hope and Love**—the greatest of these is love. On **O Holy Night**, churchgoers offer greetings of **Let There Be Peace**. And, **It Came Upon a Midnight Clear** that the faithful must believe that "this too shall pass. That may not be comforting to a griever still be struggling with "Why?" **O Come All Ye Faithful** lend a hand, say a heartfelt **Christmas Prayer for Peace on Earth** and for the griever offer **A Christmas Blessing**.

It's true. Some Grievers find comfort in **Angels We Have Heard On High**. **The Heart and Soul of Christmas** resides in the bond with our loved one who died. Many bereaved find **Tidings of Comfort and Joy** in the glorious acknowledgement that their loved one remains present in their lives. **Their One Wish** (for Christmas) might be for that **Star of Wonder** guiding them home someday. They believe **Christmas in Heaven** is even grander than we can ever imagine. To my loved one: Know that **My Heart Goes On** without you and you are forever and **Aways On My Mind**. **The Spirit of Christmas** will forever be my **Love** for you **Until the Season Comes Around Again**.

A **Picture-Perfect Christmas** may not be in a griever's "selfie view" yet. Of course, some holidays will never meet the expectations of their **Last Christmas**. That is not to say that **Christmas at This Time Next Year** won't have all the possibilities of fulfilling the voids that this year's holiday may intentionally impose. **If We Make it Through December**, the **Hope of Christmas** is that with time, healing, and continued support, the griever you are so arduously companionship may be singing, **I'll Be Home for Christmas** and proclaim that he or she has found that one thing---**Joy to the World**-- that can put the joy back into joyful and rebound. **Hallelujah! Go Tell It On The Mountain!**

