

SURVIVING

CHRISTMAS

THE EASY

WAY 2025





A SIMPLE GUIDE FOR A CALM,

JOYFUL CHRISTMAS

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Finding Peace in the Season of Pressure

Christmas has a way of magnifying everything
the joy,
the chaos,
the love,
and sometimes, the pain.

For many mums, it's the season when we pour out every ounce of energy
trying to make things perfect for everyone else. The gifts,
the dinners, the
decorations, the memories — all crafted with love,
but often at the cost of our own calm.

This guide is here to remind you that Christmas
doesn't need to be perfect to be beautiful.

It doesn't need to be filled with noise, glitter,
and endless to-do lists. It can be something softer — a time to breathe,
reconnect, and rediscover what really matters.

Whether you're walking through recovery,
trying to step away from old habits,
or simply craving a more peaceful season, this book is your companion
— a gentle hand on your shoulder reminding you:

You are allowed to do Christmas differently this year.



The Heart Behind This Guide

For years, Christmas was about survival
rushing,
pleasing,
overspending,
overthinking,
overdoing.

But in the process, many of us forgot what it actually feels like to enjoy it.

When we step into recovery
from addiction,
burnout,
people-pleasing,
or just emotional exhaustion.

The holidays can feel strange.

We're used to numbing,
fixing,
or forcing happiness.

But now,
we get to choose something new.



This guide was created to help you do just that.
To find calm in the chaos.
To create moments that feel real, not rushed.

To build traditions that nurture your heart and your
family, not drain them.

It's filled with stories,
reflections,
self-care practices,
recovery support,
and even a sprinkle of festive fun
— simple baking ideas,
kindness activities,
and little ways to make this Christmas special without
losing yourself in it.



A Note Before You Begin

Take your time with this guide.
You don't have to read it all at once —
let each section meet you where you are.
Some parts might make you reflect,
some might comfort you,
and others might give you that small push t
to reclaim joy in a season that once felt heavy.

Let this be the year you give yourself permission to:

Slow down without guilt

Say no without apology

Choose peace over pressure

And remember —
Christmas is not about doing more,
but about feeling more present.

You are already enough,
and this season can be too.



Letting Go of the “Perfect Christmas”

From the time
we're little, most of us are handed the same picture of Christmas —

glowing lights, smiling faces,
matching pyjamas,
and a perfect tree surrounded by laughter.

But life rarely looks like the movies.

And if you're walking through recovery,
healing, or simply trying to hold it all together,
that glossy image can bring more pressure than peace.

This is where we begin to redefine Christmas — not as a performance, but as a
presence.

Not as something we have to get right, but something we get to feel.

You don't need the perfect dinner, the perfect gifts, or the perfect family gathering.

What your children and loved ones will remember most isn't
how the table looked —

It's how it felt to be around you.
Warm. Calm. Present.

This year, instead of chasing the picture-perfect version,
what if you created a season that simply feels right for you?



The Real Meaning of Redefining

Redefining Christmas isn't about lowering expectations —
it's about aligning them with your truth.

It means asking:

“What matters most to me and my family this year?”

Maybe it's a quiet morning walk
with a cup of tea before the house wakes up.

Maybe it's a phone call with someone who's supported you
through the hard days.

Maybe it's watching a movie in your pyjamas,
not running around trying to make everything “perfect.”

Redefining is an act of courage,

especially in a world that
sells us endless images of excess.

You're choosing authenticity over approval,
peace over pressure,
meaning over materialism.



Shift the Focus: From Doing to Being

Here's a small mindset shift that can change everything:

Old Way of Thinking TO New Way of Living

"I have to make everything perfect."

TO

"I get to create what feels peaceful."

"People will judge me if I don't do enough."

TO

"My peace matters more than their opinion."

"I'm falling behind."

TO

"I'm exactly where I need to be."

When you shift from doing to being, something powerful happens —
you reconnect to your own sense of calm.

You stop reacting and start choosing.

This is the foundation of recovery, too.

Whether it's recovery from addiction, burnout, or emotional overload,
the process always begins with one brave decision:

to show up as yourself, without numbing, without hiding.



Reflection Prompt

Take a few quiet minutes to write or think about this question:

“What does a calm, meaningful Christmas look like for me now?”

Write down three words that capture how you want the season to feel this year
not what it should look like, but what it should feel like.

Some ideas:

Peaceful

Joyful

Simple

Connected

Grounded

Real

Keep those words close.

Let them guide your decisions over the coming weeks —
from what invitations you accept to how you spend your quiet evenings.



Affirmation for the Season

“I release perfection and embrace peace.

I don’t need to impress anyone

I just need to be present.”

**Repeat this whenever you start feeling the
pressure to “do more.”**

**Let it become your gentle reminder
that slowing down is not failure
it’s freedom.**



Mini Exercise: Rewriting the Christmas Story

Grab a notebook or journal and write your own version of the Christmas story

— not the traditional one, but your personal one.

Start with:

“This year, my Christmas will be about...”

Then list:

The feelings you want to create.

The moments you want to remember.

The things you’re choosing to let go of.

This little exercise plants the seeds of a new kind of holiday

— one built on truth, balance, and calm joy.



The Truth About Triggers

The festive season has a way of bringing everything to the surface.

Old memories, emotions, and patterns can sneak up when you least expect them.

]

You might feel joyful one moment and suddenly tense or tempted the next — and that's okay.

It doesn't mean you're weak; it means you're human.

Triggers don't just come from alcohol or substances

they can come from people, places, or even

emotions like guilt, loneliness, or pressure.

The goal isn't to eliminate them — it's to recognize and prepare for them.



Plan Ahead — Protect Your Peace

If you know certain situations or people could stir up discomfort, it's perfectly okay to plan ahead. You're not being difficult — you're being wise.

Try this simple plan:

1. Identify Your Triggers

Think about the people, events, or feelings that make you uneasy.

Is it a Christmas party where everyone's drinking?

A family member who causes tension?

The pressure to "act fine" when you're not?

Write them down. Awareness is power.

2. Make a Response Plan

For each trigger, decide how you'll care for yourself if it happens.

Bring your own non-alcoholic drink.

Have a supportive friend on standby for a quick text or call.

Drive yourself so you can leave when you need to.

Remind yourself: "I can leave. I don't owe anyone an explanation."

3. Have a Calm-Down Ritual

Something simple that helps you reset — stepping outside for air, breathing slowly, or putting on a grounding song.

These little resets protect your calm more than you realise.



Grounding Exercise: The 5-4-3-2-1 Method

When you feel triggered, anxious, or overwhelmed:

Look around and name five things you can see.

Name four things you can touch.

Identify three things you can hear.

Notice two things you can smell.

Finally, find one thing you can taste (even just a sip of water or a mint).

This quick exercise pulls you back into the present moment — out of your head and back into your body.

It's like pressing a reset button for your nervous system.



When Temptation Knocks

If you've struggled with drinking or using to "get through" the holidays, remember
— the urge to escape usually means you're craving comfort, not chaos.

You don't miss the drink itself;
you miss the feeling you thought it gave you
— ease, confidence, warmth, connection.

Now, you get to give those feelings to yourself in healthier ways.

Try this instead:
A warm bath or hot chocolate ritual in place of a glass of wine.
A candlelit journaling moment after the kids go to bed.
Music that lifts your mood and soothes your mind.
Calling or texting a friend who "gets it."

These are not small swaps — they're small victories.



Affirmation for Strength

“I am stronger than my urges.

My peace matters more
than a moment of escape.”

Keep this one in your phone
notes or on a post-it by your mirror.

Read it when temptation whispers.



Mini Reflection: Building a Safety Net

Write down the names or numbers
of three people you can reach out to if you start to
struggle.

Label them

“My Support Circle.”

-
Include:

One person who’s walked a similar path

One who always brings calm energy

One professional or group (AA, NA, SMART Recovery,
a therapist, or a faith leader)

Having these ready means you’ll never face hard moments alone.



Quick Holiday Safety Tips

Keep your favourite alcohol-free drinks stocked

— sparkling water,

mocktails, or tea blends.

Eat regularly and rest — hunger and exhaustion can lower emotional resilience.

Avoid “just one” conversations; they never end with one.

Keep your recovery reminders visible

— bracelets, affirmations, or daily notes.

You’re not avoiding the fun

you’re choosing your peace. And that’s something to be proud of.



Protecting Your Peace Is Not Selfish

One of the hardest parts of recovery and healing
especially around Christmas

is learning to say no without guilt.
For years, many of us said “yes” to everything
and everyone because we didn’t want to disappoint people.

We carried the weight of keeping everyone happy³
, even when it drained us.

But boundaries are not walls — they’re doors.
They’re the way we choose what (and who) we let in,
and what we gently keep out.
When you protect your peace,
you’re not pushing people away —
you’re creating space for real connection,
not obligation.



What Boundaries Look Like in Real Life

Setting boundaries doesn't always mean dramatic conversations.

Sometimes it's as simple as quiet choices that honour your energy and wellbeing.

Here are a few examples:

Saying, "I'd love to see you, but I can only stay for an hour."

Deciding not to attend an event where alcohol will be flowing freely.

Turning your phone on 'Do Not Disturb' for an evening of rest.

Choosing not to discuss certain topics that make you feel unsafe or judged.

You have full permission to protect your peace, even if others don't understand it yet.



How to Say “No” Kindly but Firmly

Boundaries don't have to be harsh
they can be calm, respectful, and still strong.

Here are a few ways to express them:

“Thank you for inviting me, but I’m keeping things quiet this year.”

“That doesn’t feel right for me right now.”

“I appreciate you thinking of me, but I already have plans to rest.”

“I’m focusing on my wellbeing this season — I hope you can understand.”

Every time you say no to something
that drains you, you say yes to something that restores you.



Reflection Prompt: Where Do I Need Boundaries?

Take a moment to think about the parts of Christmas
that usually cause you stress or exhaustion.

Maybe it's overcommitting, spending too much,
or feeling pressure to visit
everyone.

Ask yourself:

“Where do I feel stretched too thin?”
“Who or what leaves me feeling emotionally drained?”
“What would peace look like instead?”

Write down one boundary you can set this year — even a small one.
Then, remind yourself: you're not being rude — you're being responsible.



Affirmation for Boundaries

“My peace and recovery are worth protecting.

It’s safe for me to choose what supports my wellbeing.”

Read this aloud whenever guilt creeps in.

Remember — guilt is just an old habit of people-pleasing trying to pull you back.

You are allowed to live differently now.



Mini Exercise: The Boundary Check-In

At the end of each week in December,
take five minutes to check in with
yourself:

What felt good and calm this week?

What felt heavy or stressful?

What can I adjust next week to
make space for more peace?

This simple practice builds awareness
and awareness builds freedom.



Remember: You're Modelling Self-Respect

When your children,
friends,
or family see you honouring your boundaries,
they learn something powerful
that it's okay to take care of yourself.
That love doesn't mean self-sacrifice.
That it's possible to be kind and firm at the same time.
Every time you protect your peace,
you're teaching others to protect theirs too.



Why New Traditions Matter

Children remember how Christmas feels
not how perfect it looked.

They remember the laughter while baking,
the warmth of snuggling under a blanket,
and the love that filled the house.

When you're in recovery or simply re-centering your life, creating new
traditions is a beautiful way to heal both yourself and your family.
You're not erasing the old; you're rewriting them with peace, presence,
and connection at the heart.



Presence Over Presents

It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking children need more
more gifts, more activities, more excitement.

But what they truly crave is you — your attention, your calm, your laughter.

This year, try simplifying your celebrations:

Choose one meaningful family outing instead of several rushed ones.

Spend an afternoon making homemade decorations instead of buying more.

Let go of “keeping up” with other families;

your children need memories, not comparison.

You're giving them something far more valuable than toys,

you're giving them emotional security and

love that lasts long after the season ends.



Reflection Prompt:

“How Do I Want My Children to Feel?”

Pause for a moment and think about how you want
your home to feel this Christmas.

Peaceful? Safe? Fun?

What can you do — or not do — to create that
atmosphere?

Write down three feelings you’d like your children to
remember when they think about
Christmas 2025.



Small, Meaningful Traditions to Start This Year

Here are some easy, heart-centered ideas that nurture connection and mindfulness:

The Gratitude Jar

- Each family member writes something they're thankful for every day in December.

Read them aloud on Christmas morning.

Kindness Countdown

- Instead of chocolates, fill an Advent calendar with daily acts of kindness:

“Give someone a compliment,” “Share a toy,”

“Bake for a neighbour.”

Christmas Eve Story Time

- Light a candle, make hot chocolate, and read a story that focuses on hope or kindness.

The Night Walk

- Go for a slow walk together to see the lights.

Take a moment to breathe the cold air, listen to the quiet, and feel present.



Festive Baking Together: Simple Recipes for Connection

Baking is one of the easiest ways to bring

calm,

creativity,

and joy into the home.

It's sensory, mindful, and full of opportunities to connect.

You don't have to be a master baker

— the magic is in doing it together.

Here are a few easy, family-friendly recipes

to include in your guide



1. Christmas Star Biscuits

Ingredients:

250g plain flour

125g butter (softened)

100g sugar

1 egg yolk

1 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 180°C.

Mix butter and sugar until creamy.

Add egg yolk and vanilla.

Stir in flour until dough forms.

Roll out and cut into star shapes.

Bake for 10–12 minutes or until golden.

Decorate with icing or sprinkles once cool.

□ Mindful moment: Notice the smell of butter and sugar, the sound of laughter, the warmth from the oven — this is presence in action.



2. Hot Chocolate Spoons

Ingredients:

200g milk chocolate

Wooden coffee stirrers or small spoons

Mini marshmallows or crushed candy canes

Instructions:

Melt chocolate and spoon into silicone moulds or small paper cups.

Insert a stick or spoon and top with marshmallows.

Chill until firm.

Stir into warm milk for a cosy treat.

💡 Mindful tip: While you wait for them to set, talk with your kids about something that made them smile today.



3. Gingerbread Hearts

Ingredients:

350g plain flour

1 tsp baking soda

2 tsp ground ginger

1 tsp cinnamon

125g butter

175g brown sugar

1 egg

4 tbsp golden syrup

Instructions:

Mix dry ingredients.

Melt butter, sugar, and syrup together.

Combine mixtures, add egg, and stir into dough.

Roll out and cut into heart shapes.

Bake at 170°C for 10 minutes.

Decorate with icing or ribbon for hanging ornaments.

💖 Connection idea: Write positive affirmations or kind words on the hearts before decorating.



Affirmation for Family Connection

“I create moments that matter, not perfection.

My love is enough, my presence is enough.”



Mini Reflection: A Christmas That Heals

Recovery teaches us to rebuild from the inside out.

Let this Christmas be one that heals

— through warmth, creativity, laughter, and calm.

These new traditions are not just for your children; they’re part of your
recovery story too.

Each memory you make this year becomes a reminder:

you can do this, you are doing this, and peace really is possible.



Why Self-Care Matters More at Christmas

The holidays can be joyful,
but they can also drain every bit of your energy

if you're not careful.

Between social events,

family demands,

and emotional memories,

it's easy to slip into old habits of

doing everything for everyone else.

Real self-care isn't selfish — it's self-respect.

You cannot pour from an empty cup,

and you certainly can't create peace for others

if you've lost your own.



The Foundations of Calm

There are three simple pillars
that hold you steady through the season:

Routine – Keep your basic rhythms intact.

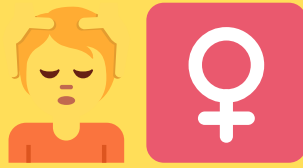
Sleep, meals, and daily movement aren't luxuries; they're anchors.

Rest

– Schedule real downtime,
even fifteen minutes with a cup of tea and silence.

Reflection – Take a few quiet minutes
each day to notice how you feel and what you need.

These tiny choices build emotional stability
and prevent burnout.



Ten Micro-Practices for Daily Self-Care

•
Light a candle each morning and set a
small intention for the day.

Step outside for five deep breaths of cold, fresh air.

Write down one thing you're proud of each evening.

Listen to calming instrumental music
while cooking or cleaning.

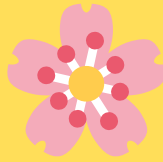
Drink a full glass of water before every coffee.

Say “no” once a day to something
that doesn't serve you.

Stretch for two minutes before bed.

Replace scrolling with journaling for ten minutes.

Keep a gratitude note on your fridge.
Whisper, “I am doing my best,” whenever guilt appears.
Small actions add up; consistency beats intensity.



Energy-Mapping Exercise

Take a blank page and divide it into two columns.

Label one “Energy Givers” and the other “Energy Drainers.”

Under Energy Givers, list everything that fills you with calm or joy

— walking, baths, laughter, music, early nights.

Under Energy Drainers, list what leaves you tense or exhausted

overspending, over-committing, certain conversations.

Now choose one thing from each list to act on this week:

Add more of a giver.

Limit or remove one drainer.

That simple balance shift keeps your energy stable through the busiest
weeks.



Journaling Prompt

“What do I need this Christmas to feel grounded and at peace?”

Let your answer guide your plans

— not what others expect,

but what your heart actually needs



Affirmation for Self-Care

“Rest is productive.

Peace is my priority.

I choose calm over chaos.”

Repeat this before bed or anytime the to-do list feels
overwhelming.



Remember: Progress, Not Perfection

Recovery and self-growth aren't
about doing every self-care step flawlessly
they're about noticing when you need to pause
and choosing to listen to yourself.

If all you manage some days is breathing deeply and
keeping your peace, that's enough.

You're rewriting what Christmas feels like
one calm
moment at a time.



The Holiday Emotions Nobody Talks About

Family gatherings can bring comfort

— and chaos.

Even when we love our families deeply,

old patterns can surface: unspoken tensions,

pressure to act cheerful, or reminders of what we've lost.

If you're in recovery or learning to live more mindfully,

this can feel like walking into emotional quicksand.

You can't control other people's behaviour,

but you can control your energy and responses.

Peace isn't about avoiding your family;

it's about protecting your inner calm no matter

what happens around you.



Prepare Before You Go

Just like you plan what food to bring,
plan what emotional tools to bring too.

Ground yourself before walking in

— three slow breaths,

shoulders relaxed, remind yourself:

I am safe and calm.

Visualise how you want to feel afterwards

— light, peaceful, proud.

Set a time limit for visits if needed.

You can always leave early.

Have an exit phrase ready like

“I’m just going to step outside for some air.”

Preparation isn't overthinking

— it's self-protection.



Choosing Peace Over Proving a Point

Sometimes you'll be tempted to defend yourself,
explain your choices,
or fix family misunderstandings.

But peace doesn't come from winning an argument;
it comes from walking away with your dignity intact.

Try this mantra when conflict stirs:

"I don't need to prove my growth. My calm speaks for itself."

Respond gently, or not at all.

Silence can be stronger than debate



Reflection Prompt

Ask yourself:

“What usually pulls me into stress or drama during family time?”

“What can I do differently this year to keep my peace?”

Write your answers down

— awareness turns triggers into teachable
moments.



Practical Boundaries for Family Gatherings

Limit time with people who drain your energy.

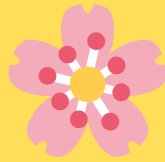
*Avoid topics that spark arguments — you don't owe
anyone explanations.*

Bring your own car so you can leave when ready.

*Create a quiet space — even stepping into the
bathroom to breathe counts.*

*Have a support check-in text ready with a friend or
group.*

You're not being distant; you're being deliberate.



Healing Takes Time — For Everyone

Family patterns don't change overnight.

Sometimes your growth will make others uncomfortable
because it highlights their own unhealed places.

That's okay.

You don't need them to understand your journey right now.

Every calm response, every boundary held,
every moment you walk away instead of reacting
— that's healing.

Not just for you, but for future generations watching you.



Affirmation for Family Peace

*“I meet others with compassion,
but I don’t sacrifice my serenity.*

I choose peace over pressure.”

Read this before any gathering

*— let it settle into your heart like
armour made of grace.*



You Don't Have to Do This Alone

One of the most healing truths in recovery

— and in life

— is that we are not meant to heal in isolation.

The holidays can feel lonely when you're trying to protect your peace,

but connection is still possible.

Real support isn't about big crowds;

it's about genuine people who understand and uplift you.



Redefine What “Support” Means

Support can look different for everyone.

For some, it's a weekly meeting or online group.

For others, it's a close friend who listens without judgement,

or a faith practice that keeps them grounded.

Think of your support system as a circle,

not a hierarchy.

Each person adds a different kind of strength:

A sponsor or accountability partner for honesty.

A friend for laughter and light moments.

A counsellor or mentor for guidance.

A spiritual or creative practice for inner balance.

You don't have to face hard days alone

— you just have to reach out once



Reflection Prompt: Who Holds Me Up?

Write down the names of three people
or groups that help you feel supported.

Ask yourself:

“When I feel low, who makes me feel seen and safe?”

Keep that list visible

— your emergency calm plan for tough days



Affirmation for Connection

“I am worthy of help and community.

Reaching out is a sign of courage, not weakness.”

Repeat this anytime when the urge

to withdraw appears.

Connection is how you stay strong

when life gets loud.



Practical Ways to Stay Connected This Season

Join a recovery or mindfulness group.

Online meetings count!

Schedule check-ins

— even a 10-minute chat keeps you accountable.

Share your wins

— sobriety milestones, peaceful moments, small
victories.

Volunteer together

— giving back fills your spirit and keeps perspective clear.

Create a “buddy system” with a friend for mutual motivation.

When you give connection, you receive connection.



Faith, Spirituality, and the Quiet Within

For many, faith or spirituality becomes a safe place
to rest when the world feels heavy.

Whether that's prayer,

meditation,

journaling,

or simply sitting in silence with gratitude,

it's about connecting to something bigger than yourself.

You don't have to believe in anything specific — just believe in
possibility.

Believe that healing is happening, even on quiet days.



Mini Exercise: Reach Out Right Now

If you're reading this and thinking of someone

you haven't spoken to in a while

— send that text.

A simple "Thinking of you,

hope you're doing okay"

can spark warmth on both ends.

Connection grows through tiny acts of care

.



When Christmas Feels Quiet

The world tells us Christmas should be full of people

, laughter, and light

— but sometimes it's not.

For many, it's a season that stirs memories of people

we've lost or reminds us of connections that have changed.

You might find yourself surrounded by others

and still feel lonely.

That's not weakness.

It's part of being human — and it's part of healing.

When you feel that ache, know this: loneliness is not the absence

of love, it's the space love once filled.

And even in that space, hope can grow.



Making Peace with Missing Someone

Grief doesn't disappear at Christmas

— it just dresses itself in tinsel.

You might catch a song, a smell,

a favourite dish that brings tears you didn't expect.

Let them come.

Tears don't ruin Christmas; they make it real.

Ways to honour those you miss:

Light a candle in their memory.

Make their favourite recipe and share the story behind it.

Hang a photo ornament on the tree.

Write them a letter, telling them what you'd say if they were here.

These rituals don't keep you stuck in sadness — they help your heart keep
loving in a new way.



If You Feel Lonely This Season

Loneliness often whispers that nobody cares

— but that voice is lying.

People do care, but they may not know how to show it,

or they may be carrying their own hidden struggles.

Instead of waiting for connection, try gently creating it:

Join a local community event or charity drive.

Message a friend who might be feeling the same way.

Attend an online recovery meeting — even listening can help.

Get outdoors:

nature has a quiet way of reminding us we belong

to something bigger.

You don't need to fill every moment.

Sometimes the bravest thing is to simply sit with yourself and say,

“I'm okay. I'm safe. I'm still here.”



Comfort Box Activity

Create a small “Comfort Box”

— something tangible you can turn to when emotions feel heavy.

Ideas to include:

A candle or essential oil you love.

A soft scarf or blanket.

A small photo of someone who makes you smile.

A note to yourself:

“This feeling will pass.”

Your favourite recovery or affirmation card.

It’s a simple act of self-soothing — reminding yourself that comfort can come
from your own hands.



Affirmation for Healing

“Even

in

quiet

moments,

I am held.

Love still lives here

— in memory, in growth,

and in me.”



Reflection Prompt: A Different Kind of Christmas

Ask yourself:

“What small ritual or moment could

I create this year to honour love,

loss,

and new beginnings?”

Maybe it's lighting a candle at the same time every evening.

Maybe it's writing gratitude notes to people

who supported you this year.

Whatever it is, let it bring peace — not pressure.



Remember: You Are Never Truly Alone

Someone, somewhere, is thinking of you

— maybe someone you don't even know yet.

The world is full of people rebuilding, healing,

and hoping for peace just like you.

And this guide, this journey, this season

— they're part of your story of resilience.

You're doing Christmas your way now,

and that's beautiful.



Finding Light in the Small Things

-

Recovery, growth, and healing are journeys measured in moments

— not milestones.

Sometimes the biggest victories aren't loud;

they're quiet,

gentle,

and easily missed.

They're in the morning you wake up feeling hopeful again,

the night you choose peace over chaos,

or the simple breath you take before reacting.

Gratitude helps you see those small wins.

It turns ordinary moments into proof that you're changing, healing,

and moving forward — one day at a time.



Why Gratitude Heals

Gratitude doesn't deny pain; it balances it.

It reminds your brain that even on hard days,

something good still exists.

When you practice gratitude regularly,

your focus shifts from what's missing to what's already working.

Try this daily practice:

Before bed, write down three small things you're grateful for.

They don't have to be profound

“my morning coffee,”

“a text from a friend,” “a quiet walk.”

Over time, those little notes of thanks

build emotional strength



Reflection Prompt:

Looking Back with Kindness

Take a moment to reflect on this year:

“What challenges did I face

— and how did I grow through them?”

“What surprised me about myself?”

“What am I proud of, even if nobody else noticed?”

Write your answers freely.

You might be amazed at how far you’ve come,

AND how strong you are 😊



The Power of Perspective

Instead of asking,

“Why did this happen to me?”

Try asking, “What did this teach me?”

That shift changes everything.

Every setback, every lonely night,

every difficult decision

— they all shaped the strength you carry now.

Gratitude doesn’t mean everything went right;

it means you found meaning even when things didn’t.



Mini Exercise:

The Gratitude Jar

Find a jar or box and decorate it.

Each day in December,

Write one thing

you're thankful for on a small piece of paper.

On New Year's Eve,

read them all out loud,

alone or with your family.

It's a simple ritual that turns reflection into joy.



Affirmation for Growth

“Every step I’ve taken
— even the small ones
matter.

I honour how far I’ve come,
and I welcome where I’m going.”

Let this be your reminder:
the woman you’re becoming
is already showing up.



#

Carrying Gratitude Into the New Year

As the season ends and the new year begins,

take your gratitude forward.

You don't need a grand resolution

— you just need a gentle intention.

Something like:

“I will choose peace more often.”

“I will speak kindly to myself.”

“I will trust that healing takes time.”

Gratitude turns endings into beginnings.

“This is your chance to walk into the new year

not with pressure,

but with purpose.”



Your Go-To Calm Plan for December

When emotions run high or life feels busy,
it helps to have a simple toolkit you can turn to.

Think of this as your “emergency calm kit”

— a collection of strategies,

reminders,

and supports to help you stay steady,

strong, and peaceful through the season.

You don’t have to do everything in this section.

Just choose what feels right

— and keep it somewhere visible

for when you need it most.



1. Daily Calm Checklist

Try to complete at least three of these each day:

- ☒ Drink water before coffee.
- ☒ Step outside for five minutes of fresh air.
- ☒ Eat something nourishing.
- ☒ Send one kind message to someone.
- ☒ Stretch, move, or dance for two minutes.
- ☒ Write down one thing you're grateful for.
- ☒ Light a candle or take three deep breaths before bed.

Small acts of care repeated

often build powerful peace



2. Emotional First Aid Kit

Keep these ready

— either in a small bag,

journal, or note on your phone:

A calming playlist

Favourite affirmation

Recovery or support contact list

Breathing exercise reminder

Your “why” — a short note on why your peace matters

When stress hits,

go straight to this toolkit

instead of old coping habits.



3. My “When It Gets Hard” Plan

When I feel triggered, I will:

Example: Go for a walk,
text my accountability partner,
or make tea.

When I feel overwhelmed, I will:

Example: Take three deep breaths,
step outside,
or play calming music.

When I feel lonely, I will:

Example: Reach out to one person or
attend an online meeting.

Preparedness isn't pessimism

— it's peace in action.



4. Recovery Resource List

Support Options:

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) – www.aa.org

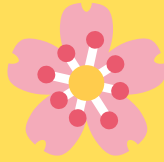
Narcotics Anonymous (NA) – www.na.org

SMART Recovery – www.smartrecovery.org

Mental Health Helplines – local numbers

Online women's recovery or wellness communities

Faith or spiritual groups



5. Gratitude & Grounding Page

Today I'm grateful for:

One thing I did well today:

One thing I'll let go of:

Affirmation:

"I am calm,
capable,
and worthy of a peaceful life."



6. My Holiday Boundaries Reminder

I will not say yes when I mean no.

I will rest before I'm exhausted.

I will not explain my recovery to anyone who doesn't respect it.

I will let go of guilt faster than I used to.

I will choose peace every time I can.

You don't need perfection — just awareness and intention.



Final Note from the Toolkit

You've already built your foundation by showing up for yourself.

This toolkit isn't about rules — it's about reminders.

Reminders that you are resilient,

resourceful,

and ready to experience a calm,

joyful Christmas your way.

Keep this section printed or bookmarked

— your guide through the season whenever things feel too much.



A Season to Savour

After weeks of planning,
wrapping, and running around,
this is your gentle reminder to pause.

Pour a cup of something warm,
light a candle,

and enjoy these simple festive recipes and
mindful rituals designed to bring joy and calm into your home.



Family Favourites: Bakes to Share

These recipes aren't about perfection
— they're about connection. Easy, cosy, and full of love.

Cinnamon Star Cookies

You'll need:

225 g butter, softened

100 g sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract

300 g plain flour

1 tsp cinnamon

To make:

Preheat oven to 180 °C.

Cream butter and sugar until light. Stir in vanilla.

Fold in flour and cinnamon. Roll out and cut into stars.

Bake for 8 – 10 minutes until lightly golden.

Dust with icing sugar and share warm with cocoa.

AND ENJOY



Festive Tray Bake

Quick Tip: Perfect for using up leftover dried fruit or chocolate!

You'll need:

150 g butter

150 g sugar

2 eggs

175 g self-raising flour

A handful each of raisins, cranberries, and chocolate chips

To make:

Cream butter + sugar. Add eggs and beat well.

Fold in flour and fruit/choc mix.

Bake in a lined tin (180 °C, 25 – 30 min).

Cool, slice, and dust with icing sugar or drizzle melted chocolate



Mindful Moments: A Season of Stillness

Among the hustle, take a moment to notice the small joys
— fairy lights twinkling, laughter in the kitchen, the scent of pine.

Try these mindful pauses:

Morning Gratitude:

Write down three things you're thankful for before your day begins.

Five-Minute Stillness: Sit by the tree with no phone, no list — just breathe and
listen.

Mindful Walk:

Step outside, breathe in the crisp winter air, notice the colours,
the sounds, the light.

Unplugged Evening:

One night a week, switch off all screens and play a board game,
bake, or talk by candlelight.



Reflection & Reset

The holidays mark both an ending and a beginning.

As the year closes,

spend a little time reflecting on what you're proud of

— and what you'd like to welcome into the new one.

Journal prompts:

What was my favourite memory this festive season?

Who made me feel most loved and supported?

What new tradition would I like to start next year?

How can I carry this feeling of calm and gratitude into January?



A Final Note

The spirit of Christmas isn't found in the perfect table setting

or the most expensive gift

— it's in the warmth of moments shared,

laughter echoing through the house,

and the quiet contentment of knowing you've done enough.

Thank you for joining me through this guide

— may your home be filled with peace,

joy, and beautiful memories.



Wrapping Up the Season

As the fairy lights fade
and the last of the wrapping paper disappears,
take a deep breath and smile
— you made it through another Christmas.

This season isn't about perfection;
it's about presence.

It's the laughter that bubbles up unexpectedly,
the quiet cup of tea when the house finally settles,
the moments that remind you what really matters.

Before you move into the new year,
take a few minutes just for yourself
— to reflect, to reset,
and to recognise how far you've come.



A Gentle Reflection

What did I learn about myself this season?

When did I feel most at peace?

Who or what brought me genuine joy?

What can I let go of before the new year begins?

No matter how the holidays looked this year

— busy or calm, sparkly or simple

— know that you showed up, you created memories, and you did your
best.

And that is always enough..



A Final Thank-You

Thank you for taking this journey through the guide.

I hope it's helped you plan with more ease,

create with more joy,

and pause with more intention.

Here's to a new year filled with warmth,

laughter,

and small, beautiful moments.

You deserve them all. 🧡



Notes & Planning Ahead

Use this space to jot down ideas,

reflections,

or inspiration for next Christmas

— or simply things you'd like to remember

as the year begins anew.

Next Year's Ideas:

- New traditions to start
- Recipes or crafts to try again
- What worked well this year
- Things I'd do differently
- Goals or wishes for the new year



A Gentle Reminder

The holiday season can bring joy

— but it can also bring challenges.

If you ever notice someone struggling,

or if you feel overwhelmed yourself,

please know you're not alone and help

is always available.

You might start with:

Talking to a trusted friend, your doctor, or an

organisation.

There is no shame in asking for help, it takes real

strength



**If you ever notice someone beginning to struggle,
or if you feel yourself slipping under the weight of it all,
please remember: you are not alone, and help is always within reach.**

You don't have to face it in silence.

 **If you're in Ireland:**

HSE Drugs & Alcohol Helpline: 1800 459 459 (Mon–Fri, 9:30am–5:30pm)

Samaritans Ireland: 116 123 (24/7 Freephone)

Pieta: 1800 247 247 or text HELP to 51444

**If you're reading this elsewhere, reach out to your local helpline or
emergency service**

— support exists everywhere, and people do care.





Remember:

You can't pour from an empty cup.

Take care of yourself first, check in on others with kindness,
and never underestimate how much difference one small, genuine
conversation can make.

This season, and always
— be gentle with yourself and those around you.
You never know who needs that light the most.

✨ Compiled & created with care, love, and support

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If you or someone you know is struggling,
please reach out

to one of the helplines above, or to a trusted professional.

You are never alone. 💛