

Holiday Bill of Rights

(From the American Psychological Association)

1. You have the right to say **TIME OUT**, anytime you need to. Time out to let up, blow a little steam, step away from the holidays, have a “huddle” time and start over.
2. You have the right to **TELL IT LIKE IT IS**. When people ask, “How are you?” you have a right to tell them how you **REALLY** feel, not just what they want to hear. You need to take care of yourself, be attuned to your feelings (P.S. You also have the right to smile and say you’re fine, because telling them how you really feel isn’t worth your time – some people will never understand anyway.)
3. You have the right to some “**BAH HUMBUG**” days. You don’t have to be “Jolly Old St. Nicholas” all the time. You are not a bad person just because you don’t feel like singing Christmas carols all day.
4. You have the right to **DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY**. There is no law that says you must always do the holidays the same way. You can send 10 cards instead of 100 – or no cards at all. You can open presents at someone else’s house. You can do without a tree. You can have pizza instead of a turkey. Make up your own rules.
5. You have a right to **BE WHERE YOU WANT TO BE**. Be at home, or with relatives, or with friends. Be in any city or state you choose. There’s no law that says you have to stay home.
6. You have the right to have some **FUN**. Don’t be afraid of what someone will say if they see you laughing and having a good time. Laughter is every bit as therapeutic as tears. If you are doing something that your loved one would have enjoyed, think of their laughter and feel their laughter inside of you.
7. You have the right to change direction in **MID-STREAM**. Grief is unpredictable. You may be all ready to go somewhere or do something and be suddenly overwhelmed, immobilized. When that happens, it’s okay to change your mind.
8. You have the right to do things at **DIFFERENT TIMES**. Go to church or synagogue at a different time. Open presents at a different time. Serve your meal at a different time. Go to bed at a different time. You are not a slave to the holiday clock.
9. You have the right to **REST, PEACE, and SOLITUDE**. You don’t need to be busy all the time. Take a nap whenever you need one. Take time to pray or meditate or recharge your spirit – it can do much more for you than eating another big meal.
10. You have the right to **DO IT ALL DIFFERENT AGAIN NEXT YEAR**. Just because you change things one year or try something different, does not mean you have written it in stone. Next year you can always change it and do it in yet, another new way.

(Article submitted by Dr. Nancy Gup,
Gup and Associates, Inc.)