



Holiday Stress: Single at the Holidays? by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Q: Dear Susie, I feel like the last single guy in America. Amid the sparkle of the holiday season, all I can see is couples and families and women shopping for their men. How can I take my mind off of being single this year?

A: In the absence of a significant other (*or in the presence of a troubled relationship*), holidays seem to underscore loneliness in many otherwise well-socialized, well-adjusted men and women.

Endorphin Boosters to Lift Your Spirits at Holiday Time:

1. Put yourself on top of your list, and give yourself something you long for. It needn't be expensive. Can you arrange for a day off? A lunch date with an old friend? Buy some new CDs? Start a vacation savings account.
2. During many holiday seasons I've retrieved authentic, heart-rending Letters to Santa from a local post office and anonymously fulfilled wishes for toys, mittens and PJs for whole families. Try it! When you wake on Christmas morning you'll savor the knowledge that you've secretly made wishes come true. It's awesome.
3. Reach out and give of yourself in some way. Opportunities abound in December to volunteer at schools, shelters, soup kitchens and many projects. Clergy members of any denomination will know where.
4. Get yourself a pen, a beautiful journal and make a "thrills" list. List every thrill you've ever had, from shooting stars to simple pleasures. Create a couple of new thrills yourself.
5. Wish! Wish for you, and for everybody else. Wish really big! To quote Oscar Hammerstein: *"You got to have a dream! If you don't have a dream, how ya gonna have a dream-come-true?"*
(Enjoy lots more stress-relief tips at www.relaxintuit.com/tips.asp)

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