



Trauma & Dissociation Bridge of Hope

Fall & Winter Holidays

Note About BoH:

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As we enter into the holiday season of fall, we are facing Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. New Year's Eve follows immediately on the tail of these.

This can be an incredible time of the year for some who have their family and/or friends, and who find this time of a year to be a treat.

Others struggle at this time of year with various reasons it's a difficult time. Many feeling lonely in the midst of the big part of the holiday festivities for reasons they may or may not share with others.

During this holiday season, we want to challenge you to know you are not alone even when it

feels that way. You are loved greatly by Jesus who gave of His life to give us life. Sometimes that's hard to remember or believe because we don't feel it or we don't really believe it. No matter where we are, He accepts us exactly where we are and where we need intervention.

May you be true to you this holiday season, and if nothing else, know that we care here and desire to share that we've been there and we who have, know there is hope beyond the pain, suffering, and loneliness.

May you find this season to be a better one or one with a new tradition that helps you to feel better and less alone.

Christmas Stress Tips

Budgeting is a big issue for Christmas. There can be that pressure to buy and buy for everyone and to at least match what we have done in previous years, perhaps even when our situation is different now. Consider finding alter-

native options to gift giving, such as a family or friend gift exchange, or make some home made gifts.

Time is another factor that is tough. It gets busy with regular life issues, gatherings, shopping and more.

Try to schedule out time for you to be able to continue your regular schedule without over extending. Add in shopping around regular times out rather than making special trips at the last minute.

The Broken but Significant Tea Cup

When we're chronically ill simple things like unexpected paper work or a trip uptown to do errands can throw our schedule and health into turmoil. While experiencing one of these days, I came home only to realize that my special tea cup was broken.

You may think, 'no biggie' but my tea time is one way I try to be good to myself. Try as I might, this area in my life is still lacking so I saw this as a set-back. Every time I'd sit down for tea, I'd be looking at

a broken tea cup.

It finally dawned on me that as broken as we are God loves us and uses us to achieve wonderful things. Now as I sit down for my tea and notice the crack in my tea cup, I'm comforted by the knowledge that as cracked as I am, I'm still loved and used by God to do good things.

The Christmas Season is here and it comes with a lot of bustle. I think it's important we not only try to be good to others but also good to our-

selves.

Psalm 130:13-14 says: For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

We are God's creation and He values all of us. This Christmas, as a gift to God, I will value all of God's creation.

Submitted by C J G



No Bake Chocolate Peanut Butter Bars

Ingredients:

1 cup butter or margarine melted

2 cups graham cracker crumbs

2 cups powdered sugar

1 cup peanut butter, crunchy or smooth

1-1/2 cups semisweet chocolate chips

4 tablespoons peanut butter

Directions:

In a medium mixing bowl, stir together butter

or margarine, graham cracker crumbs, powdered sugar and 1 cup peanut butter until well blended. Press into the bottom of an ungreased 9 x 13" baking pan.

In the top of a double boiler over hot (not boiling) water, melt the chocolate chips with the tablespoons of peanut butter, stirring occasionally until smooth. Spread on top of the mixture in the baking pan.

Refrigerate for about 1

hour before cutting into bars.

Yields about 24 depending upon how big or small you cut the bars/squares.

Submitted by
Andy

Hope

I've found myself in a very dark place.
It was like being in a pit so deep there
was no light.
Looking up, there wasn't even a glim-
mer of hope.
I felt hopeless.

I found an awesome counselor who
was experienced with trauma work.
It took what seemed like forever to
work through everything, but in the
scope of how long the abuse happened,
it was minimal time.
I found hope in therapy.
I found encouragement from my coun-
selor.

She believed in me and my healing.
She helped me by sending me to
trauma program when it was need-
ed.

Today my emotions can still be up
and down at times, but overall eve-
rything is well. The flashbacks have
stopped, I'm no longer hypervigi-
lant, and my fear of men for the
most part is gone.

I have a new life now.
Thank you to my counselor and my
support system for helping me.
You've encouraged me and the hard
scary work has paid off.

Alone Yet Not Alone

The last few years, I've
been alone during these
fall holidays. In the
past, they typically put
me in the hospital. I
couldn't cope previously.
Being alone brought out
a horribly depressed side
that resulted in feeling
life was useless.

Time has taught me that
I'm able to manage be-
ing home alone. I do

spend my time with a
mixture of writing cards
to those I love and care
about, being online and
playing games. I enjoy
the solitude now, and
I've also learned that at
least one of my friends
will bring me a Thanks-
giving plate or Christ-
mas treat.

Sometimes I'd like to
have family to spend

time with so there is an
empty spot sometimes,
but I fill it with spend-
ing time online with
those who are in the
same position that I am,
and listen to them and
they to me.

*"This year I'm
thankful for
friends who
became my family
of choice.*

*My friends are
safe."*

Poets and Angels

The holidays are upon us
It is the time of year,
We need to share what is in our hearts
With those that we hold dear.

Open your soul to the words
Open your heart to the sounds
Of the poets and the angels
They are all around.

Submitted by Maren

It is the season of sharing,
Of love and peace on earth.
A time to celebrate our loved ones.
A time to find our mirth.

Struggles

I'm beginning to understand the meaning of the word "struggle."

Never in my life have I been wrapped so tight, felt so exalted by my unwillingness to fight.

Up all night but couldn't pray with any of my might—It's a struggle I fight with until the morning light.

A blind man's bluff—I lost my sight and now I'm ready to give up.

I honestly don't know what to do. I don't want to figure it out so the diagnosis declares I'm through.

True!

But not if I have a God who cares enough to see me all the way through. Making sure to step right in after I make the first move, by faith, because it would be a shame to see so many gifts go to waste.

I'm so special but only if I knew it.

Those saints were right when they told about those sleepless nights—It's not only a struggle; it's a ruthless fight.

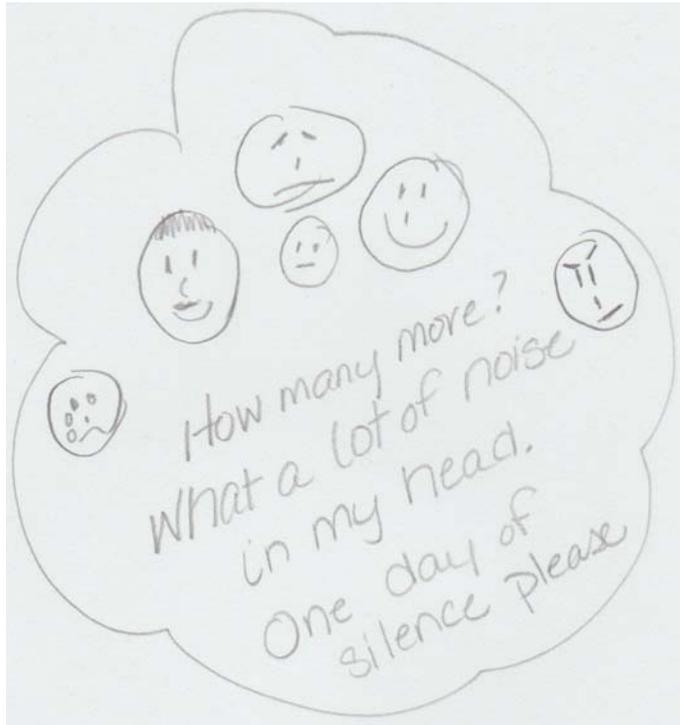
My blood mixed with more blood and a storm of lightning tears, rain. That blood is reminis-

cent of pain; the pain that was inflicted when, for me, Christ was slain. And that comes to mind when, after this realization, my willingness to sin still remains.

Now you tell me that's not a crying shame.

Submitted by:

Sheena D. Johnson



Just for Fun

H A P P Y Q R W I C O D E P E N D E N T
 D E M E E D E R C H I L V A L U A B L E
 C L Y C M E D I C A T I O N G O N G E G
 A I T O R T U V B R S C A B E E T I R R
 R F E H E B O R D E R L I N E C H I A E
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 S Y X T G P L F I L I F E S I F R U N S
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 P E A C E S H X A V A M P L E E P E I N
 P A N L T T E E P A Q W O R T H Y T V O
 O L G E O S R H A E W R I T E M R H E I
 R K E I P P C O E L C C O P E A E E R S
 T M R S O W I X O P I T R O V I V R U S
 G N I S S E L B L P E N A Q R N O U S E
 R Q E M K E T L I V I N G T C H C I I R
 O L V E C O M F O R T Q U I I S E N D P
 U C H R I S T I A N Q U I T E O R P A E
 P P C C H E L H T L A E H L A T N E M D
 S A V Y E D U C A T I O N K L O V E M D
 F O R G I V E N E S S O H R I S T M L H

Terms of Recovery

Anxiety	Depression	Living	Survivor
Bipolar	Education	Medication	Therapy
Blessing	Expectation	Mercy	Valuable
Borderline	Forgiveness	Mental Health	Worthy
Christian	God	Peace	
Codependent	Grief	Recovery	
Comfort	Happy	Redeemed	
Courage	Healing	Support Groups	

My Life

My father hurt me. I didn't want to believe it was true, so I pushed it deep inside and pretended everything was fine. So the mask I wore, it kept slipping until one day it wouldn't stay on any longer. My world crashed and I lost every sense of who I was.

With the help of a wonderful therapist, I began the climb out of the pit.

In fact, I started to face the terrible injustice I had been through. In the process though, I felt God was far removed. Like He didn't hear me or care about me. It felt void inside my heart.

Through the patience of a very good friend, I started to see some hope that God hadn't left me. My friend would pray with me and assure me that God was nothing like my father.

So as my mind and emotions were beginning to heal, so was my spirit. As I began to understand how Christ grieved when I was abused, I remembered those in my life who gave me hope. They showed me the love of

Christ. As my spirit continued to heal, so did my mind and emotions.

I still have a ways to go until I'm healed, but each day brings a hope that I am not alone in this journey. Each week I find my spirit is moving closer to healing in Christ. I'm beginning to see my purpose in Him and long to fully know the plans He has for me.

If you've been abused, you're not alone. God hasn't left you, even if He feels far, far away. There is hope—I'm living proof there is life beyond abuse.

Submitted by:

Kristen



Rest

Fear
 Grabs hold of the heart
 Strangling peace
 Taking away from freedom.

 Stop it!
 Rest in Him
 Know I'm safe

It's not my time.

 Rejoice
 Lift up His name.
 Reach upward and know that He will hold me.
 Thank you for being my Savior.

Season of Hope

There's a season of hope
And it's not far away,
Just 'round summer's corner
Past fall straight away.

Slip south beyond Winter
Of icy depression
Into a bright Spring'-like
Hope-filled expression.

My eyes glimpse the seasons
Transform all around me
From desperate and dying
To healthy and free.

The comfort of moonlight
Is potent and bright,
Replenishing our bodies
With stamina and might.

Mere words rain so soothing
Refreshing and clear,
Cleansing our souls
Of past abuses we fear.

Calm wind's so restful
As it blows in the night,
It is God's voice reminding
To fight the good fight.

When gray clouds hung heavy
And blanketed my earth,
For a time, I felt hopeless,
Stripped bare of self-worth.

Then Sun peeked from shadows
And shown on my land,
I know now for certain,
Here healing's at hand.

Submitted by:
Kathy



Holiday Revival

Happy Holiday!... Or not so happy. How do you see it? Do you look forward to this time of year with an attitude of peace and good will? Or do you suddenly start wishing you were a bear and now would be a great time to find a deep cave to crawl into?

If your case is anything like the latter, you're not alone. Many people dread the time of year that starts right around Thanksgiving and comes to a close after January 1st or mid-January if you celebrate Orthodox Christmas.

Varied are the reasons for the holiday burn-out, depression, the "Blues", what you call it or go through so may be related to the overwhelming sense that so much "needs" to be done (decorating, buying gifts you can't afford or for people you don't even know how to shop for, events to attend or practice for, sharing in that holiday spirit with family, friends, business associates). Or, you may be lonely and separated from loved ones (wanted or not), watching the traditional events going on around you, feeling lost and unable to be a participant in any of it.

To say that the commercial side of Christmas, etc., has influenced the way we look at the holiday season, is a gross understatement. T.V. programs and advertising, holiday movies, Hallmark, K-Mart and Target certainly play a major part of getting our holiday spirit out of our pockets and into theirs! Not to say we shouldn't spend a little extra just for fun (as well as to boost economy). Also, if the "Haves" need an excuse to help the "Have-nots", let this seasonal reminder be reason enough to help lighten someone's burden, for just a moment.

Whatever circumstances you may be faced with during this time, here are a few practical ways you might be able to fix some of the problem areas for yourself.

1. Don't try to do it all. Don't feel obligated to shop for everyone down to your second cousin thrice removed. Bake cookies or sweet breads for friends & relatives (Or whatever... I make a powdered, holiday spice tea.) If you want to do extra give to The Salvation Army, the homeless, the collections jars for the needy. They will appreciate your donations!
2. Send form letters. I've done it for years and I don't think it's impersonal or that people learn much more about my year from this letter than from a signed greeting card. When I receive form letters from friends or relatives, it's a gift, in itself, to learn about their lives and times. I've saved some that were hilariously funny and charming.
3. Buy a artificial tree. I finally did—from a thrift shop. Spray pine freshener for the smell. No more needles, no watering and better for the environment. Or skip the tree altogether Put lights on a window and a large indoor plant Just do whatever suits you.
4. If you do shop, get it over with early. I try to keep away from the stores after Thanksgiving. And try to remember, gifts are from the heart and don't need to be expensive. I have a dear cousin who one winter, when money was tight, made singing tapes of carols and gave them

to her loved ones (by the way, she has a lovely voice and plays the piano). Use your talents.

5. Instead of hosting the family dinner, invite the family to join you in volunteering at a Homeless Shelter or to make food baskets for the poor. Imagine not gorging ourselves on Christmas Day! Quite a unique concept for some of us.
6. Give yourself a gift of time. Make 15 to 30 minutes daily to relax; walk, do some light exercises meditate, listen to music, play with the kids or your pet, call a friend just to talk, drink herb teas, look at old photo albums, play the guitar or piano, or even ride the city bus if you have one. These revitalizations help maintain good health mentally, physically and spiritually.

These things are just some examples to show a less stressful side of celebrating the holidays. If these things do not apply to you, because you are hurting or alone and need more than a fresh outreach for the holidays, there is a helping hand from the Hope Recovery friends who provided this newsletter. Contact them by email or in their support forum and they will help guide you to support and comfort and more. May this holiday be a step to your healing.

Submitted by:
Patti S.

Christmas

Christmas is the time of year when some people may experience being alone without family, or struggle with missing a loved one who is far away or deceased. Perhaps they are struggling because they are juggling finances to provide gifts for their family. Maybe Christmas time has been a bad time of year for them due to an abusive past.

This year, consider giving Christmas a new meaning. First, it is a time we celebrate the birth of the Christ child. This focus is on the thankfulness and praise for a way of salvation and a new life. If they've not accepted Christ as their Savior,

maybe this Christmas is an opportunity to do that. If they don't know how or have questions talk to the staff members of Christian Forums or a pastor.

Consider making Christmas a time that's not about giving and receiving presents but about new meaning or new traditions. Rather than missing those they love and who are far away, open their homes to friends who are alone on Christmas as well. Perhaps they prefer to get out of the house and would be better suited to volunteering at the local soup kitchen as a gift of service.

Being single, I've always

felt alone at Christmas. Over the years, I've found this time to be a time of remembering those I love, not with gifts, but with words of love. I write to them with messages of how much they mean to me. I can't afford the gift giving, but I can give of my heart words of love and encouragement.

Find a new purpose for this season to make it a time that they look forward to. Above all, know that you are not alone. There are many others who find the holidays a difficult time to go through. Together we can make this a new time of celebration and comfort.



MISSION

The mission of Hope Recovery is to provide Christian-based supportive compassion in the lives of trauma survivors by assisting them in recovery, providing support, resources, committed volunteers, and standards of excellence.

VISION

Hope Recovery aspires to provide excellence in service and support while assisting trauma survivors in achieving their recovery goals.

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Online Christian Support message boards are available at www.hope4christianrecovery.net

If you're feeling **suicidal**, please contact 800-SUICIDE or if outside the US, go to www.befrienders.org

If you are being **abused**, experiencing incest or rape, please contact RAINN at 800-656-HOPE. RAINN provides links to international agencies.

If you are in a **violent relationship**, call 800-799-SAFE. For international contacts, go to www.hotpeachpages.net/a/index.html

We're on the Web

www.hope4christianrecovery.org

Subscribing to Bridge of Hope

Fees:

Free to Survivors.

\$4 donations from supporters and professionals is requested to cover the costs of the website..

Donations may be sent to our PO Box, or online via PayPal.

**You Are
Not Alone!**



When all seems like a struggle, there is hope.