

## *The Holiday Army*

Here it comes again—the Holiday Army—in its annual march against us. Some of its generals are called “Thanksgiving,” “Christmas,” “Hanukah,” “New Year’s Eve” and “New Year’s Day.” They are no respecters of the heartbroken and emotionally wounded, and their troops are merciless.

They take no prisoners! They demand that we participate in their joy and nostalgia or they will mow us down with their militant tanks of holiday spirit.

Sometimes they declare their war on us openly — without shame or remorse. Sometimes, they wait for us in ambush. Their intelligence operators have been working diligently all year, waiting for the Thanksgiving Day (or sometimes Halloween!) trumpet signal to begin their attack. They just don’t seem satisfied to have their celebrations and parties and dinners and festivities unless they can recruit ALL of us into their ranks.

Actually, we wish them well. All we really want is for them to leave us alone and let us mourn in peace and quiet. We prefer our “Silent Nights” to their “Deck the Halls” and Jingle Bells.” We don’t intentionally spoil their fun, it’s just that our pain makes them uncomfortable. They’ve been conditioned to believe that “The Holiday Season” should have no blemish of suffering or lack of frivolity. We must not only bandage our wounds while in their presence, but cover them with taffeta and sequins besides.

They are convinced that all we need is to “put on a happy face” and all our sorrows will magically evaporate.

In their mad pursuit of happiness, they shoot us with the bullets of shopping, piped-in music, special holiday foods and fragrances, gift wrapping, decorations (especially the angels!), joyous children with happy smiles, cards, invitations, parties and gift exchanges. Any other time of the year, snow is considered a nuisance to shovel and plow through. At the holiday season, though, it is touted as romantic and is linked to sleighs and starry nights in front of fireplaces, snuggled close to those we love.

Contact [SafeHavenForWidowed](http://SafeHavenForWidowed)

Registered ® 2010 Safehavenforwidowed.org

© copyright 2013- 03-18 16:36:34 - All Rights Reserved

## *The Holiday Army*

The most devastating bombs they drop into our lives are the images of reunion — times of greeting and hugging folks who are much loved and sometimes

not often seen for awhile. They may only be separated by geography; our absent loved ones cannot cross the chasm of loss that looms before our tear-filled eyes. They remind us of things we should be thankful for (and we are more thankful for many of those things than they can ever imagine).

They prod us with their spears of delightful togetherness, never realizing that what they celebrate is what we cannot now enjoy. We would not dream of attacking them in these battles for holiday survival. With our noses pressed against the glass that divides us, we actually long to be able to be part of their happiness. We remember the times we joined in their fun and we, too, were part of their army of nostalgia and joy.

Our broken hearts and bleeding wounds do not excuse us from being gracious, however. While grief does not give us permission to be rude and selfish, and we take no overt action against their aggression, we are not without defenses in these battles. We can shield ourselves with the armor of dignity with kind but direct and simple explanations: “We understand your need for celebration, but this year we prefer quiet and private reflection and meditation.”

“Right now it’s hard for us to function in large groups and to appreciate laughter and high spirits.” “Our energy is so limited; we’d appreciate some quiet one-on-one time with you in a more spiritual atmosphere.” We can gently remind them of how important it is for us to remember those we love who are gone. These are statements that clarify our position without judging or criticizing them for theirs. In kind and non-threatening ways, we need to tell them what’s good for us, because they won’t think of it on their own, and they can use the education.

Contact [SafeHavenForWidowed](http://SafeHavenForWidowed.org)

Registered ® 2010 Safehavenforwidowed.org

© copyright 2013- 03-18 16:36:34 - All Rights Reserved

## *The Holiday Army*

We also can exercise the muscles of our sense of humor. It will take some effort on our part, but so does anything that is worthwhile and good for us.

We can teach ourselves not to fall into the trap of thinking that our grief makes us the center of the universe. We can limit our demands that others treat us in “special” and “deferential” ways because of our pain.

We can cut them a little slack and remember that once upon a time, we were just like they are now. It’s good and healthy for us to review our perspectives now and then and decide if we’re being fair and reasonable.

We can express our love in simple and unhurried ways without all the frenetic, expensive and often hysterical hype that the holidays can generate. And we must exercise the expression of our love. Grief does not rob us of our ability

to love; it reminds us ever more dramatically of our need to both give and receive love while we are here. Whenever we can take some control in our situations, we empower ourselves, and then we feel less like victims in what seems like a war of “peace on earth, goodwill toward men.” Anytime we can educate and inform with mercy and compassion, we have given a truly spiritual holiday gift of love that will keep on giving forever.

May your season be filled with genuine blessings of peace.

Contact [SafeHavenForWidowed](http://SafeHavenForWidowed)

Registered ® 2010 Safehavenforwidowed.org

© copyright 2013- 03-18 16:36:34 - All Rights Reserved