



a guide to coping with the festive season



Questions, questions, questions!

With the festive season come questions about how you'll be celebrating Christmas. From polite office party talk to questions from new friends and partners, questions can be intimidating and uncomfortable. People often struggle to tell others that they won't be spending it with family.

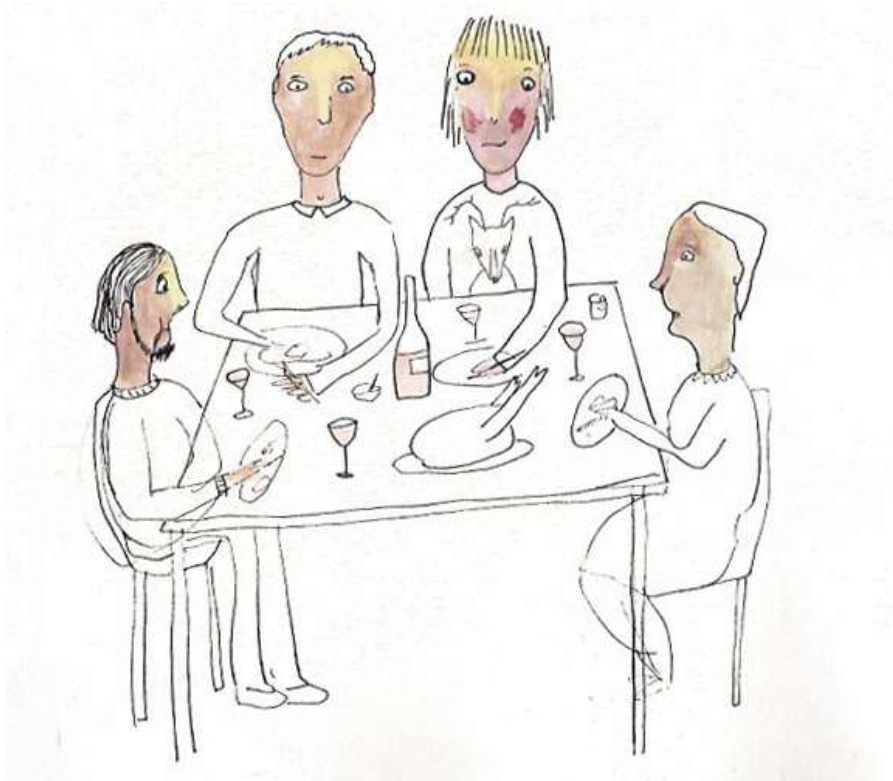
Although it might be difficult to shrug off societal pressure, do be frank with people if you can.

You could say: '*I don't go home anymore, I'm going to...*' Or maybe try: '*I'm spending it at home in my flat...*' Or better: '*I'm feeding the homeless on Christmas day.*' If deflecting isn't for you, then being very honest usually stops seasonal probing. Stating, '*I don't see my family,*' will normally prevent further enquiries.

This kind of questioning occurs mostly through politeness, so remember....

People aren't always thinking what you might imagine, and they aren't always judging you. Some might, but many won't think the worst of you for spending Christmas your way. Many might be secretly jealous that you've got the freedom to do what you want to do with your day, and have chosen to ignore obligations.

Re-claim Christmas



Even if your family situation is different to others, it doesn't mean that you can't celebrate all that's positive about your life.

Do what *you* want to do – buy yourself the presents *you* have always wanted, watch films and, eat *your* favourite food all day. Don't do the washing up for a change!

It can be nice to celebrate with friends and do all that's traditional. But if your friends are busy, or you are more isolated, you can always join [Crisis at Christmas](#) and unite to feed the homeless –you won't be alone, and it's often a lot of fun.

Many people find going to a country that doesn't celebrate Christmas a huge relief, and this is a great excuse if you enjoy foreign travel.

Remember that Christmas is *yours* this year, and you should do everything you can to celebrate it on your terms.

Don't do anything without taking a deep breath...

It can be very tempting to reach out and try to re-connect with your family over the Christmas period.

However, it's crucial that you think very carefully about *how* you do this.

Is Christmas *really* the best time? Is it something you can handle for the other **50 weeks** of the year? Do you think the people in question will be in the **right frame of mind** to talk to you rationally?

Successful reconciliation needs both 'sides' to be willing to talk about the scenario. If this is something you are working towards, sending a Christmas card is a good first move.

Turning up when someone isn't expecting you, and where it's possible you may not be welcome, might not give you the results you desire.

Although it is a very brave move, it could potentially make you feel a lot worse if it doesn't go to plan. But if you're determined with this course of action, talk to a friend before you do

anything. Always try and call ahead and gage whether this is a safe move.

Always put your emotional and physical wellbeing first.

Tell people...

If you have decided to spend Christmas alone, make sure at least one other person knows about it.

Plan a phone call with someone, let a neighbour know, or ask a friend or another family to be on stand-by in case you need them.

It will make you feel good to be interactive, so text others and send season's greetings. Take a walk to the corner shop or local pub.

If you haven't got a friend on stand-by, and you begin to feel like you can't cope, ring or e-mail [The Samaritans](#) on **08457 90 90 90**

Remember that not everyone is spending Christmas with their family, and many people in the UK don't celebrate the festival at all. It may be a hard few days, but you *can* get through it and you aren't alone.

