



*Dear self,*

I understand that it's been a hard time since you lost \_\_\_\_\_, and you feel like \_\_\_\_\_ . As the holidays approach, you especially feel \_\_\_\_\_. This day will be especially be hard for you: \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_ . And know what, self? It's ok that it's difficult now, and it's ok to acknowledge that that day will be difficult too. It's ok to feel these things, even though \_\_\_\_\_. I'm writing this letter to you, self, because \_\_\_\_\_ .

*Self, I want you to know:*

- ☐ There is no one way you "should" feel; all emotions are possible right now (good and bad), and all are acceptable. You don't have to hide what you're thinking and feeling.
- ☐ I also want you to know that grief doesn't have to steal every moment away.
- ☐ You *can* find comfort in the old traditions and at the same time, it's ok to try something new this year.

*I give you permission to:*

- ☐ Balance keeping yourself busy & social, with times of silence & reflection as needed.
- ☐ Cry when you need to, and not have to cry when you're expected to.
- ☐ Let your family know if/when you need to "scale back" the holiday decorations, events, etc.

*And so every day in these next few weeks, I will choose to:*

- ☐ Only do what I need to and want to, not being ruled by obligations and expectations.
- ☐ Seek out people and places that are trustworthy and "safe" for me to confide in and ask for help when I need it (big or small).
- ☐ Be there for my family and give them the permission and freedom to grieve in their own way.

Self, the holidays might be hard for you, but the loss and how you feel do *not* have your permission to steal every moment. Loss has reminded you how precious life is, and you will choose to live each moment (sad or joyful) to the full.

The gifts I want to give you this season are the gifts of time & permission.

*Yours truly,*

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

