



## How to survive festivities

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### Tips to stay healthy and connected

This is a little gift to help you at those times when you get family members, friends or work colleagues to celebrate something together.

Christmas and other seasonal festivities, family reunions, corporative lunches and dinner parties are events when we normally come out of our routine, indulge in a special meal and meet others who we may not have the chance to interact in a relaxed manner very often.

Often the meals are a little special and different than our current diet, we may go without eating food for long periods of time, we sit or stand for hours in the same posture, and we may have to talk with many people in diverse styles of interaction. Consequently, after an intense event as such we may feel tired, dehydrated, and bloated presenting symptoms such as headaches, indigestion, stiffness, brain fog and, after the weariness of communication, a need for isolation.

For years, I have felt that after attending a gathering I would need a recovering rest before going back to my 'normal life', but because I love to meet other people around a table of food and spending some special moments in celebration, I learned how to prepare myself for those occasions.

Also, researching the most important factors for health, I developed strategies designed at supporting my clients according to their particular requirements. Here, I share a few of the most successful and easy to apply ideas that should support anyone looking to enjoy moments of celebration with others without feeling overwhelmed by it.



## Idea Number 1

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### *Eat a healthy snack*

The food being served at social gatherings is usually very different than that we normally eat. Furthermore, after a long interval between the start of the event and the meal time we may tend to overeat when the food finally arrives.

In order to avoid that, prepare for it and eat a healthy and nourishing small meal or snack before you and the our guests arrive. For example, have one or more of the following:

- Bowl of soup
- A piece of fruit
- Nutritional dense foods, such as eggs.
- Smoothie with avocado.

## Idea Number 2

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### *Walk after eating*

At dinner parties, except when dancing is part of the plan, we may sit still for hours. Distracted with conversations, it is easy to forget our need to change position and we may feel extremely stiff and drowsy later.

Stretching and moving our legs will not only help our muscles feel better, but also support digestion and oxygenate the mind, so I like to plan for a stroll after I eat.

Put it in your schedule, invite others, wrap your selves with coats and scarves if the weather is cold and get some of fresh air in your lungs.

Even a walk around the block is helpful to re-energise us and clear the mind, so we are awake and ready to go back to the party in full swing.



## Idea Number 3

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### *Hold hands*

The importance of touch is well known in the realms of healing, as is the sense of safety and peace. I believe it should be integrated in any practice of self-care and I often include it in the support strategies I design in my programmes.

Safe and familiar skin-to-skin contact send signals to our brains for calmness and openness, activating our social skills and empathy, calming the body and the mind, and helping us feeling more aware of the environment around us. But how can we include touch in a social event, without risking being thrown out of the party?

The easiest way to introduce touch during these circumstances is by holding hands with our loved ones. If that is part of your culture, use any opportunity when you are sitting or walking (see Idea Number 2) next to someone close to you and ask them if you can hold hands.

If, on the contrary, this is not a habit amongst you and the other guests, make skin contact with yourself. Self massage your fingers or just sit still holding your own hands and if others become intrigued it may result in a good conversation starter...

## Idea Number 4

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### *Connect to Self*

This tip is useful before, during and after the whole event. Connect to Self is a practice we teach at Authentic Relating courses that help us focusing on our internal sensations and feelings so that we connect to others from a much more self-aware place.

Very often we eat more than we need, we do not drink enough water or we do not move because we lose perception of how we feel in our body. Also, taking a moment to check-in may give us important clues about how we really feel like interacting with others, and what type of conversations we are available to have.



This is how a very short Connect to Self moment sounds like:

*We take a breath and go within. If we are very visual closing our eyes may help us to observe what is going on more easily. Observe how we are breathing, how the air is going in and out of our body. As we take a few more breaths we may take our attention to other parts of our body. How is our chest moving? What's the temperature of our body like? How do we feel our hands and feet and how do we feel our clothes touching our skin? We take a few moments just to become more aware of sensations and how we are perceiving our presence in this particular moment. There is no need to change anything. Observing and acknowledging is enough.*

Gathering information about ourselves leads us to infer what our requirements are and we are likely to make decisions better. It takes a few short minutes only, in our own mind.

## Idea Number 5

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### *Call in gratitude*

This tip is perhaps linked to the most important reason for celebration.

At social gatherings we tend to see people we have not met for a long time or who we have not interacted in such particular circumstances before. We may tend towards superficial conversations, exchanging information about our career, family, travels, etc, missing the opportunity to relate at a more personal level. By the end, we may be bored with irrelevant data and disengaged from those we spoke with. Thus, celebrating with each other may take a slight different attitude in order to share moments that are truly meaningful to us.

Looking at someone and reflect on the value that our life benefits from their presence makes us feel more connected to them, effortless and even before we get to talk. This can be done in silence, assisting us in getting curious and establishing a vulnerable and more profound conversation with each other, but it may also be made explicit. We may want to express how grateful we are for having someone in our life, during the exchange of presents at Christmas, during a toast at a work do, or in a private conversation with some one we have met for years and yet have not had the chance to tell them the many reasons we appreciate them.



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I hope these five ideas inspire you to nourish your body, mind and spirit during these potential intense gatherings and that rather than being overwhelmed and tired you may enjoy the events as opportunities to practice connection to yourself and others in good health, essence and joy.

You may now listen at my [NEW YEAR MEDITATION](#). This is a 15 minutes guided journey designed to help you reflect on offerings for you and the planet.

Whether you celebrate Solstice, 2020 January the first, Nowruz or Rosh Hashanah, I wish you the best of creativity and peace. May you have lovely gatherings and...

Stay connected.



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