

### Chapter 1 : 5 Great Games to Play at the Table

*As the holidays approach and home cooks head to their kitchens to whip up delicious offerings for special gatherings of family and friends, help is on its way in the new public television series.*

There will always be an emptiness, a missing piece at the family gatherings – the empty chair at the table. This time of year is full of so many emotions. I always loved the holidays and the time spent with family. Sal suffered with substance misuse from his early teens, never getting the full treatment he needed due to insurance barriers. In June, he went into a facility and was released after only 17 days because his funding ran out. Sal was doing great, we were enjoying our summer with him and happy to have our son back. On his 90th day sober, he left our home to go to IOP. He had died from an overdose. We were told that it appeared Sal was not alone in the car when he died. Whomever was with him did not call to save his life. Instead, they left him alone to die. I lost a piece of my heart when Sal died. The holiday season was soon upon us. I wondered, How do I get through this? Initially I wanted to stay in bed and let the holidays pass by. Cuddled deep under the covers watching Lifetime movies, dozing off, crying, screaming, repeat. But as the day went on, I came to the realization that Sal would never want me to stay in bed. I love my son with all my heart but I have a daughter and grandchildren and, as hard as it may seem, life does go on. Memories still needed to be created. Every moment from this day on is important because we, more than anyone, know that life is too short. My motto is to live each day to the fullest not only for me or my living family, but also for Sal. I know that a lot of people initially feel guilty about enjoying a holiday. I vowed to myself and my son that his death would not be in vain and I will forever honor and remember him. With that promise and with the help of my family, Sal is included in every holiday. Do what is in your heart and what makes you comfortable – and do not worry about what others think or say. There is no right way to celebrate the holidays after the loss of a child. Acknowledge that the holidays will be different and they will be tough. Talk to your family and share your feelings of how you want to spend the holidays. You may wish to continue long-time traditions or you may want to start new traditions. Do the things that are special and important to you. Do the best you can. Keep in mind that even when we feel moments of pleasure, we are still grieving. The grief is there and will always be there. However, it is ok to take a break from your grief. Laughter and joy are not disrespectful. Give yourself and your family members permission to celebrate and take pleasure in the holidays. Turn your grief into something positive that will make your child look down and smile. Honor your loved one in whatever way you can. Share the love and pride you have in your heart at the holiday table. See some ideas below. Keep in mind the feelings of your children or family members. Try to make the holiday season as joyous as possible for them. It is important for me to embrace the time Sal was with. I want others to focus on the kind, gentle and compassionate person he was, and I do that in a few different ways during the holidays and special occasions: For Thanksgiving, we set a plate for Sal with a small votive candle on it. It brings me peace knowing that everyone at the table looks at the plate and remembers Sal in a quiet, unspoken way. Even if it is for a moment that they recalled a time with him or just pictured him in their mind – Sal was with us. On Christmas Eve, we honor Sal before dinner with the lighting of five candles in his memory. We display pictures of Sal and we speak of him with a sparkle in our eyes as we keep him close to our hearts. On Christmas morning, we open our gifts and afterward we go to the cemetery to visit Sal and wish him a Merry Christmas. Once others realize that you are comfortable talking about your loved one, they will be more open to share stories that will add to your pleasant memories. Here are some other ideas for creating new traditions: Ask everyone to share a memory on a piece of paper and put them in a special bowl or stocking hung for your child. Put up a special tree for your child. Ask family and friends to decorate ornaments with a message to your child. Make a toast to your child before dinner. Go around the dinner table and have everyone share a memory. Donate to a charity of your choice in memory of your loved one. Wrap up a beloved keepsake or picture of your loved one and give it to another family member who is grieving. Volunteer at a soup kitchen or nursing home to help others over the holidays. Talk about your child, share stories, laugh, cry, shout – but most of all remember and honor them, for we are the keepers of their memory. Grief is a necessary part of the process, a way to get

through the pain. There are no words to describe the pain of losing a child. When you lose a child, nothing is ever the same again. I am not happy every day of this holiday season. There are many times that the grief overtakes me and I just need to go to my quiet place where I shut down and allow myself to grieve. These days are a struggle. When we see families who are complete and sharing special moments together â€” moments that have been stolen from us, moments we cannot get back and will not have again. His life was short on earth but because of his short life, other lives are now being saved. I made it my mission to ensure that every police department in my county carried Naloxone to assist them in reversing overdoses and saving lives. I also go into Camden, NJ at least four times a year to hand out information palm cards and backpacks with essentials to the homeless who are struggling with addiction. All of this gives me the strength to move forward. I turned my grief into a journey of helping to save other lives and help parents. I do this to honor Sal. My son was very compassionate and truly an old soul who cared deeply about others â€” so it makes sense to me that saving lives is what I need to do here on Earth. Thinking warmly of each of you and wishing your family an extra measure of comfort, joy and hope this holiday season. Patty DiRenzo is a member of the Camden County Addiction Awareness Task Force which helps raise awareness, reduce stigma, provide resources and create programs to educate her community. She is a liaison to state and local community awareness groups and is available to speak with parents who have either lost a child or have a child struggling with addiction via her Facebook page. Understanding Risks for Relapse and Overdose Opioids prescription painkillers and heroin pose a high risk of overdose, for both those in active use and in recovery. Learn the risks and understand what you can do to help prevent accidental death.

Chapter 2 : Thinking of the Holiday table | primitivespirit

*Amazon\_ Holiday Table. A video recipe for squash casserole by Top Chef judge Hugh Acheson, including a leek cream sauce that will forever change your holiday cooking.*

How could we go on? Of course, we did go on, as people do. As the years have gone by, the loss has become less painful. The chairs are empty. But the relationships with the people who once occupied them continue on in our shared memories and stories. Negotiating through the first holiday season following a death is seldom uncomplicated. Although the traditions that evolve in subsequent years may be fine in their own way, holidays without our loved one will never be quite the same. The holidays after a recent death highlight the absence and often throw people into confusion. Those who care about the person in mourning want to be helpful but are equally confused about how to do it. For those of you who have lost a loved one within the past year, thinking about the empty chair at the holiday table may intensify grief in all its complex manifestations: For those who care about the grieving person, it can be difficult to know how best to honor the memory without contributing to pain. Grief counselors generally agree on some basic guidelines that can help you manage a personal loss or help you support those in mourning during the holiday season. If you are the grieving person: Allow yourself the right to grieve. American culture has a tough time with death. For some reason, there is pressure to get on with life within a year after a loss. That expectation is unrealistic and unfair. Most people take three to five years to fully accept the loss of someone they loved. Take care of yourself. Do you want to be alone or will being with those who love you ease the pain? Really think about it. Sometimes being alone makes the aloneness much too hard to bear. Sometimes being in a crowd is overwhelming. Only you know what is best for you. Talk to key family members and ask them to support you in whichever decision you make. Rethink hosting the party. If yours is the usual gathering place, think about whether you want to do it this year. Some people like getting lost in the details of planning and managing a dinner for twelve. People who love you will understand. At the very least, ask for help and accept all offers to spread the responsibilities around. Give people permission to share stories. Many people have the idea that the best way to help someone in grief is to avoid talking about the person who has passed. Most of the time, they are mistaken. When we stop talking about someone is when they are really lost to the family. Do things a little differently. Think about whether doing things a bit differently or going to a different place would be helpful. If you are a family member or friend of someone who is grieving: Allow the person the right to grieve. Everyone does it differently. Some people want to withdraw from the world and work through their sadness alone. At the other end of the spectrum are those who manage by carrying on as usual and tempering the pain through the distraction of people and parties. Carefully consider what your loved one needs, not what you would do in the situation. These are signs that the person is possibly getting clinically depressed. Invite the person to a meal. Talk to her about the importance of maintaining routines. If her inability to take care of herself is prolonged, do what you can to get her to a counselor. Ask the person in mourning what he wants to have happen at family events. How would he like to acknowledge the loss and at the same time keep the holiday going for everyone? Some families literally set an empty place at the table and take a moment to share anecdotes about the person who has passed away. Others make a toast to the memories. Still others offer a prayer. Talk together about what will feel best for everyone involved. If the grieving person is the one who usually hosts family gatherings, see if someone else can offer to do it this year. If she wants to keep up the tradition, get as many family members as possible to help with the shopping, cooking, cleaning, decorating, and whatever else needs to be done. Talk to the grieving person about the loss. Understand that grief comes and goes in intensity and frequency for quite awhile. It is by talking and listening that we all integrate sadness and gradually move on. Try out a new activity that was never shared by the person who is gone. If people like the new ideas, they can become part of the family tradition. Leave that decision for next year. Time does indeed heal most things. But everyone has his or her own sense of timing. If this is your first holiday season since the loss of a loved one, give yourself permission to feel what you need to feel and do what you need to do to get through it. Find ways to honor the memory of your loved one and to accept the support and care of those who love you. If you are a friend or

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family member of someone who is grieving, give them support, love, and concrete assistance. By talking about their loved one and by listening to their stories and feelings, you help reassure them that the sadness may fade but our relationships with people we love never really end. Marie Hartwell-Walker is licensed as both a psychologist and marriage and family counselor. She specializes in couples and family therapy and parent education. She is author of the insightful parenting e-book, *Tending the Family Heart*. Check out her book, *Unlocking the Secrets of Self-Esteem*. The Empty Chair at the Holiday Table. Retrieved on November 9, , from <https://>

### Chapter 3 : Holiday Table | Cooking Shows | PBS Food

*Your holiday table setting is just as important as the spread of delicious dishes that'll be set upon it. Take a look at some of our Christmas table setting ideas.*

### Chapter 4 : Setting The Holiday Table - It All Started With Paint

*Holidays Table: Fixed-date holidays Holidays come in two flavors, those that occur on the same date every year (In America: New Year's Day, Independence Day, Christmas Day) and those that occur.*

### Chapter 5 : The Greatest Seat at the Holiday Table

*The holiday season often ushers in feelings of loneliness and disconnection more than joyful belonging. So many of us look around the holiday table amid the glittering lights and silver garlands.*

### Chapter 6 : Holiday Table Setting | Barefoot Contessa

*Make this holiday season memorable and magical by creating a show-stopping dinner table and incorporating festive seasonal décor throughout your home!*

### Chapter 7 : Holiday Table Settings | Martha Stewart

*Here is an idea for a modestly sized hooked project that could be ready for your holiday table. I have featured my Flow Blue pattern set for this one, but it would also be lovely using another paper pattern set such as my Hearts & Bunnies or Botanical Hearts.*

### Chapter 8 : Holiday Table Decorations from "The Martha Stewart Show" and More | Martha Stewart

*Cindy's holiday table setting brings in hints of Christmas hues, but allows natural tones of golden yellow and brown to shine through. Golden Touch HGTV fan glam-tastic relied on gold as the primary color for this holiday tablescape.*

### Chapter 9 : Setting the Holiday Table: 13 Essentials For Thanksgiving Dinner | Waiting on Martha

*Getting ready for the first Thanksgiving after David died was very, very hard. The loss of my husband's brother and my best friend was still new and raw. How would we possibly celebrate the.*