

SELAH - PAUSE AND REFLECT

Grief and Festivals

One of the dominant aspects of festivals is the involvement of traditions and rituals. While rituals also involve lights, festivities, and family gatherings, it can feel especially lonely, awkward, and overwhelming to a lot of us while we are grieving, actively, or not.

Grief is universal.

And at the same time, grieving is personal. It is never linear and never follows a timeline. Synonymous with waves, it often comes and it goes. It involves feeling multiple emotions including anger, sadness, loneliness, overwhelm, and even emptiness. Remember, everything that you are feeling is valid. Somewhere this year, in particular, may be more difficult where a lot of us are grieving. The pandemic has taken away our financial security, sense of belongingness, and our physical and mental health along with the sense of control we have had over our lives. More importantly, it has taken a lot of our loved ones with its waves.

Festivals are generally the time we spend with our families and most of us have a role we play in preparing for the festivities and the traditions. In theory, it is meant to bring a lot of joy, but alas, while you're grieving? We're asking questions on how to be consciously present or absent in festivals while grieving?



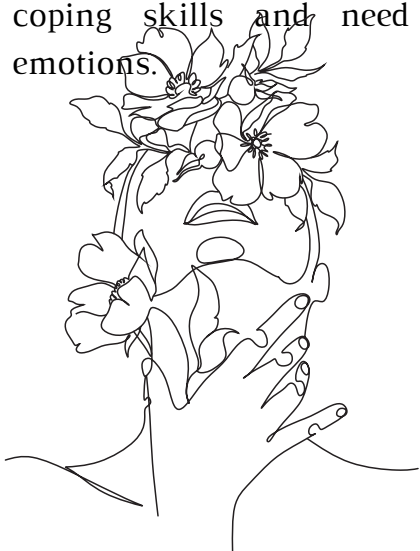
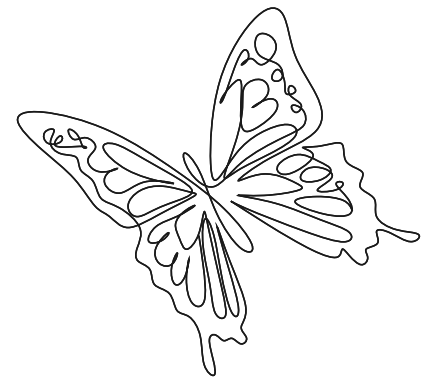
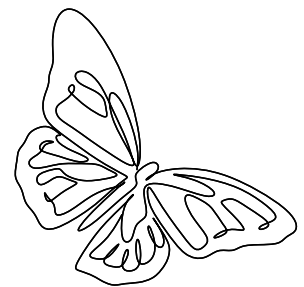
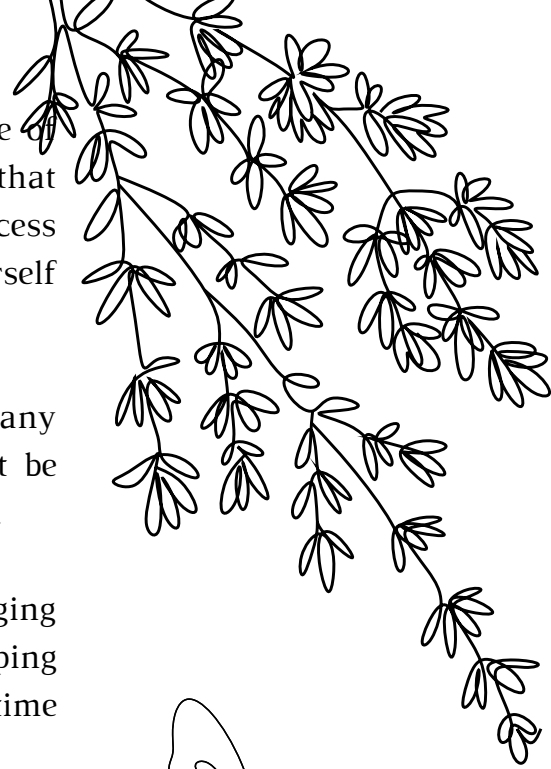
SELF-CARE TIP :

*It's okay to say "No".
With all the festivities and
holidays coming up, we
might be tempted or feel
like we have to say yes to
all the plans. It can stretch
us too thin.*

*Listen to your body and be
mindful of the traditions
you would like to be a part
of and where it is okay to
say no.*



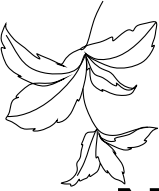
- **Breathe** : As often as you hear that it helps to take care of yourself with activities, it also helps to remind yourself that none of this is easy. While grieving is a continuous process and doesn't seem to see an end, it is alright to allow yourself to feel it.
- **Set boundaries with holiday events** : There might be many gatherings, events that you feel pressured to attend, but be mindful of your needs and don't shy away from saying no.
- **Honor old traditions and memories** : honoring and engaging in the old traditions can be a healthy outlet for keeping memories of loved ones alive. It's also okay to enjoy this time without carrying the guilt of it.
- **Take care of yourself** : Engage in a little extra self-care. Go for a walk, take a timeout, snuggle in with a hot chocolate and a cozy blanket.
- **Identify your grief coping skills** : Everyone grieves differently, and everyone copes with it differently. Some coping strategies that might be helpful are - listening to music, cooking, or baking, engaging in your hobbies, and focusing on positive affirmations.
- **Talk to someone** : Be it a friend or family member, someone who you feel comfortable with. It can also be a good idea to reach out to a professional if you're not able to identify your coping skills and need help navigating through these emotions.



What can you do for someone who is experiencing grief and loss?

- **Be there for them** : Just the presence of someone can be comforting and provide emotional support for them to manage those emotions.
- **Ask them what they need** : Everyone has a different need, ask them how you can help them and what they require.

This is a reminder to everyone grieving around the world, actively or not. It is not easy. You're doing just alright, with the pace you're taking. And you are not alone.



Need for Resolutions & Not Sticking by Them

December for all of us, marks the end of the year.

2021, has been eventful; filled with good and bad. The end of the year also brings in us a renewed sense of hope - that the coming year would be better in some way. However, during occasions like this, we may forget that time is an arbitrary concept that humans have put across. In other words, *time is an illusion*. January 1st 2022, does not hold any significance in the cosmic universe, just like Mondays or the start of the month. This does not, however, stop us from making the infamous 'New year resolution'.

Dai, Milkman and Riis(2014) believes that it is related to the "fresh start effect" that people have a placebo effect that a new day/week/year would imply a sense of change- **A Temporal Landmark**. We see this in many cultures too- particular days, places, or prayers are associated with the atonement of all sins and a 'new beginning'. This culturally sanctioned feeling has evolved into modern-day habit formation and task completion resolutions.



Several of us make resolutions to mark the beginning of a new change within ourselves. The ComRes Poll (2015) showed that these are related to physical exercise, eating habits, or stopping any harmful habits that we engage in. Making resolutions are relatively easy and in some cases needed. We do find the need to stop harmful habits and seek to live as healthy a lifestyle as possible. The challenge appears to be in following through with these decisions that we make. According to a famous study done by Norcross and Vangarelli, only 19% of the population are able to follow through with their resolutions for over 2 years- which means that the majority of people are unable to stick to their resolutions, despite interpersonal and social support. In other words, despite a realistic necessity to change ourselves, there is a continued inability to follow through with it.

The problem, according to Chris McManus (2004) is that people misperceive their desires as their intentions- "*I wish to become physically fit*" vs "*I will start exercising*". This is also along the lines of Albert Ellis's theory, that people hold demands for themselves "*I must do this*" "*I should do that*" when there are only wishes or desires that they hold for themselves. How does this make a difference? Using such strong statements will put paramount pressure on us to do it every day, to be consistent, to be able to do it always. This pressure only makes a mountain out of a molehill. On the other hand, Acknowledging something like a wish or a desire includes admitting that the reality may be different and relieves pressure from us to follow through. This contradictorily increases our chances of doing it.



So then how do we get a new habit formed or follow through with our resolution without any pressure? Victor Frankl, an existential psychologist believes that people hyper-reflect on their tasks focusing on how much they have to do, feel overwhelmed, and end up not doing it. The solution then, in doing the task without focusing on the magnitude of it. Nike got their brand tag right in this case- we have to "*Just do it*". If you think you need to become more fit, just go for a walk or stretch and do it now.

Do not plan too far ahead or wait for a fresh start. If you are tired, take that break now. The most important aspect is to not have thoughts that you do it tomorrow and every day after. Each day is different, and do what you can on that day. If you feel bad you have not done it all week, do it today. If you still are unable to, that's still okay, it is a wish, a desire not a law to be followed.

Let's form resolutions realistically and follow them, whenever we can. The key is not consistency, but freedom from the pressure to be so.

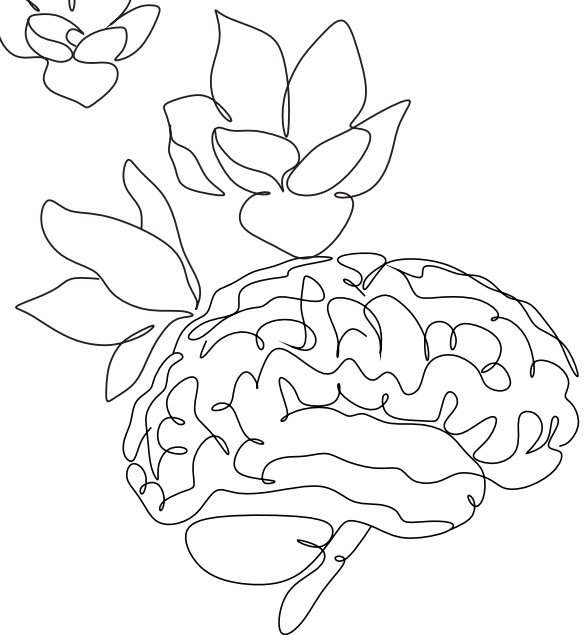
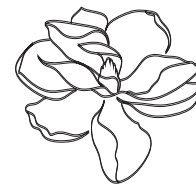


Look back at Room's Year 2021

2021 has been an exciting year for Room. This year we grew our team from 2 to a group of 5 therapists! Watching and learning from each other every day has been a thrilling experience.

This year has particularly been a difficult one for many of us. With the aim of creating a safe space to experience and share those difficult emotions, we started a support group for those experiencing anxiety because of the ongoing covid-19 pandemic.

The Room also conducted various workshops for emotional regulation; graphology, engaged in additional community outreach through open mics, support groups, movie discussions, etc.



Room's resolution for the year 2022:

Campus Ambassador Program

Keeping our goal of building a mental-health-friendly community in mind, we are looking to take it forward by appointing student ambassadors on college campuses, who will be organizing and hosting events to create and promote mental health advocacy amongst their peers.

Internship

Room is excited to introduce internship/training programs for students currently enrolled in psychology masters, who are looking to deepen their understanding of therapy.

- In 2022, Room is looking forward to building a mental-health-friendly community through engaging individuals in the upcoming campus ambassador program and various outreach events such as training workshops and Book clubs.
- One of the things we are most excited about is our own merch! Keep a lookout on our website for more information.
- We understand how frustrating and uninformed some of the budding psychologists and therapists feel when they are just starting out into this field, and for that Room is excited to start with internship opportunities for students in master's and bachelor's programs!
- One of Room's aims has always been to make mental health services more accessible, and for that, we are also looking forward to launching our own worksheets and resources which will encourage reflection and insight.
- Room also looks forward to hosting more events like the morning brew book club, and open mic, which is conducted by volunteers, to help build a stronger community.



#SponsorAThery -

Therapy is a transformative experience for many, that allows them to gain insights, access support, and learn helpful strategies to reflect and navigate on their difficulties and mental health issues. Unfortunately, many seeking these mental health services are not able to afford it. Room, The Mindcare Space aims to provide quality, accessible, and yet affordable mental health services to people in need. Financial donations from individuals and organizations help us to offer assistance to those individuals who find it difficult to access the standard therapy fees.

You can visit our website for more information on any of these events, and for any queries contact us at info@roomthespace.com or DM us at [@roomthespace](https://www.instagram.com/roomthespace).

'Seeds of Life' - In life, there are different moments where we gain little jewels of insights or valuable experiences. Some may be sweet but some bitter, but it is important to know that with time and love each of these little seeds can grow into beautiful plants that bloom magnificent flowers, each brightly reflecting our own journey.

*Art & Thoughts by :Matangi Hariharan
IG handle -
[@the_ambitious_virgo](https://www.instagram.com/the_ambitious_virgo)*

“

Celebrate endings for
they precede new
beginnings. ”

- Jonathan Lockwood Huie

