

Single? Here are six ways to beat the holiday blues

December 28 2016, by Ayleen Barbel Fattal



Credit: Getty/Petar Chernaev

If you are single this holiday season, you may not have a plus-one for that New Year's party, but Florida International University psychologist Lisa Arango says that shouldn't stop the fun. She provides some tips on

how singles can make the most of what should be a joyful time of year.

1. **Party on!** Being single does not mean staying home alone. Don't say no to those party invitations. Just make sure to plan ahead and book other single friends to tag along.
2. **Make a gratitude list.** Instead of focusing on what you don't have, shift your attention to what you *do* have in your life. You can start by taking a piece of paper and numbering it 1-20. Don't stop writing until you complete the list with things you are thankful for. You can go a step further by actually reaching out and thanking people for the big, and even the small everyday things you appreciate. Challenge yourself to show gratitude—thank a stranger for holding the door for you, or send a friend or relative a quick thank you note.
3. **Focus on other important relationships in your life.** Just because you are uncoupled this [holiday season](#) doesn't mean you have to spend the holidays alone. Take advantage of this time to reconnect with friends and family. Remember we are hard-wired for connection, so don't feel bad about wanting to spend time with others. Reach out and invite a friend to go bargain hunting or to hang out in the new year.
4. **Do something charitable.** Pick a charity that really pulls at your heart strings—working with children, the homeless, the elderly or even animals—and see how you can get involved. Doing kind acts with compassion releases the feel-good hormone oxytocin into our bodies giving us that warm fuzzy feeling from doing good for others.
5. **Take the pressure off yourself for meeting someone.** Your thoughts have a direct effect on your emotions and overall mood, so pay attention to what you are telling yourself about being single. Maybe it seems like *everyone* is either married or in a relationship and you think you *must* have a special someone in your life to be happy. But these are just thoughts. Challenge their

validity! Change your focus by trying some of the other things on this list.

6. **Self-care.** The holidays are stressful for everyone so don't forget to take care of *you*! Spend some down time relaxing in a warm bath, go for a walk on the beach, watch a sunrise or sunset and keep up with healthy eating and daily exercise.

In short, don't fall victim to the holiday blues. Start a new tradition you and your single friends can enjoy for years to come.

Arango is the director of the [Professional Counseling Psychology program](#) at FIU and provides family counseling services at FIU's [Center for Children and Families](#).

Provided by Florida International University

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