

The holiday season often carries a weight of expectations. It's layered with cultural norms, family traditions, roles you may have outgrown, and personal standards you never consciously chose. Add to that the changes in routine, amplified grief, financial strain, social obligations, and the resurfacing of old family dynamics—and it's no wonder exhaustion sets in.

Here is a **60 second practice** to help you ground yourself when you feel the holiday pressures and expectations building.

Pause:

Sit down, drop your shoulders, relax your jaw, and take in one long, slow breath

Name It:

What is weighing on you right now?

- “I have to say yes”
- “I should be grateful”
- “I should be festive”
- “I want things to be perfect”
- “I need to keep everyone happy”
- “I don’t want to disappoint others”
- “I am expected to do this”
- “I always do this”
- “They are used to having this or me doing this”
- “I can’t afford this”
- Other

Say out loud what is weighing you down at present. By naming the pressure, you are already lessening its grip.

Ask:

“Is this mine to carry?” – your answer will come to mind or you will feel it in your body.

Soften:

Consider softening your expectation of what is causing you pressure by 25% - you do not have to let go completely (unless you opt to).

Some examples could look like:

- “I can choose one or two traditions that I enjoy, instead of all of them.”
- “I don’t need to host the whole event, only what feels manageable.”
- “I am choosing “it’s enough” over perfection.”
- “I am staying at the event for an hour, then I am leaving.”
- “I am not spending more than I can comfortably afford”
- “I am not in charge of keeping old traditions that I do not enjoy alive”