

The Surprising Antidote to Holiday Stress and Loneliness:

化解節日壓力與孤獨感的神奇藥方

How small acts of kindness transform your mood.

Key points:

- Many Americans experience stress, sadness, and grief around the holidays.
- One simple way to improve your holiday mood is by engaging in small acts of kindness toward others.
- Acts of kindness can include calling someone who is struggling, paying someone's tab, or donating to a cause.

Stress around the holidays is rampant. A 2023 Harris Poll found that nearly half (49%) of U.S. adults would describe their stress levels during the traditional U.S. holiday season as "moderate." About 41% said their stress increases during this time compared to other parts of the year (American Psychological Association, 2023).

Commonly reported sources of stress include spending too much, finding the right gifts, missing family or loved ones, having too much to do, feeling pressure to make the holidays special, food or alcohol-related issues, not being able to spend time with loved ones, experiencing/anticipating family conflict, feeling excluded, and traveling (American Psychological Association, 2023).

According to another survey, 61% of U.S. consumers believed they would experience feelings of loneliness or sadness over the holidays (Value Penguin, 2023). And 37% said they would skip the holidays altogether if they could (Value Penguin, 2023). Another survey found that between 26-52% of people said they did not feel like celebrating the holidays due to feelings of grief and loss (Experience Camps - Harris Poll, 2021).

小小善行轉化心情

重點摘要:

- 許多美國人在節日期間會感受到壓力、傷感和悲痛。
- 讓過節心情變好的一個簡單的方法，是藉由一些小舉動，向他人表達善意。
- 類似的善舉包括打電話關心某個過得不好的親友、為某人付賬單或捐款給慈善機構。

年節假期總是令人倍感壓力。根據2023年哈里斯民意調查 (Harris Poll) 顯示，將近一半 (49%) 的美國成年人表示，他們在傳統美國節日的壓力指數為「中等」，41% 的人表示，與該年其他時期相比，節日期間的壓力會增加 (美國心理協會，2023年)。

常見的壓力來源包括花費過多、尋找合適禮物、思念家人或親友、太多代辦事項、覺得假期必須很美好、食物或飲酒相關問題、無法與親人團聚、經歷/預期家庭衝突、感覺遭到排擠，以及外出旅行等 (美國心理協會，2023年)。

根據另一項調查，61%的美國消費者認為，他們在節日期間會感到孤獨或悲傷 (Value Penguin, 2023年)。37% 表示，如果可以的話，他們寧可不過節。另一項調查則發現，26-52%的人表示，因為感到悲傷和失落，以至於沒有過節的心情 (Experience Camps - Harris Poll, 2021年)。

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If you are experiencing additional stress, or loneliness during the holidays, one way to improve your mood is to engage in small acts of kindness. A recent (November, 2023) survey by the American Psychiatric Association found that 89% of people felt either significantly, somewhat, or a little better from showing someone else a small act of kindness.

A series of studies by Hu, Jingyu, Hiyuan, and Xie (2016) found evidence of an “immediate internal reward of altruism.” People who engaged in altruism reported feeling more warmth in their ambient environment (Hu et al., 2016). When you spend money on others (rather than yourself), you're likely to experience greater happiness (Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008). Cregg and Cheavens (2022) found that performing acts of kindness had even greater benefits on wellness than established cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques. They also found that engaging in acts of kindness promoted social connection, which is a predictor of well-being and recovery from anxiety and depression (Cregg & Cheavens, 2022).

Small acts of kindness could include

- checking in on someone who seems down
- donating goods, money, or time to a charitable cause
- giving up your seat for someone
- letting someone check out before you in the grocery store
- paying someone else's tab
- offer to babysit, dog walk, or help with yard work for a neighbor or a friend
- call someone who is elderly or sick
- buying someone a little gift
- giving a family member a hug
- volunteering at a food pantry or an animal shelter
- playing with your child for an extra 15 minutes
- setting up a coffee date with someone you know has been having a hard time
- calling a friend who experienced a loss this year

如果年節期間您會感覺額外有壓力、悲傷或孤獨，改善心情的一個方式是從事一些小小的善行義舉。美國精神科協會最近的一項調查發現，89%的人透過一些行動向他人傳遞善意後，能明顯、稍微或一點點等不同程度地提振心情。

胡靜宇、何遠和謝（2016年）進行的系列研究，發現支持「利他主義帶來及時內在獎勵」的證據。曾投入利他行為的人表示，他們感受到周遭有更多溫暖。當您將錢花在他（而不是自己）身上時，您很可能會體驗到更大的幸福感（Dunn、Aknin 和 Norton, 2008年）。Cregg 和 Cheavens（2022年）發現做善事對健康的好處，更甚於認知行為療法（CBT）已經證實的效益。他們還發現，做善事有助於社交聯繫，而社交聯繫是預測身心健康以和焦慮及憂鬱症康復的指標（Cregg 和 Cheavens, 2022年）

小小善行包括

- 主動關心看起來沮喪或憂鬱的人
- 捐贈物品、錢財給慈善機構或當義工
- 讓座給別人
- 購物時讓別人優先結賬
- 為他人支付賬單
- 主動幫鄰居或朋友看顧小孩、遛狗或修理院子
- 打電話關懷長輩或病患
- 為某人買個小禮物
- 給家人一個擁抱
- 在食品救助站或動物收容所做義工
- 陪孩子多玩15分鐘
- 約最近過得不好的親友喝杯咖啡
- 給今年痛失心愛人事物的老友打個電話
- 為有新生兒或病患的家庭做一頓飯
- 給遠在他鄉的親人寄一張特製卡片

- making a meal for a family with a new baby or an ill family member
- sending a personalized card to a loved one far away

While therapy, self-care, outdoor time, and feel-good movies might improve your mood over the holidays, remember that kindness can go a long way, too.

About the Author

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Source: [Psychology Today](#)

心理治療、自我關懷、戶外活動和令人愉悅的電影，都可以在節日期間讓您擁有好心情，但請別忘了，善心善行的效益更加持久。

作者簡介

艾琳萊巴 (Erin Leyba) 博士與臨床社工師 (L.C.S.W.)，是《*Joy Fixes for Weary Parents*》一書的作者；專攻關係、焦慮、悲傷和失落；並提供父母團體有關正念和快樂育兒的方法。

Source: [Psychology Today](#)