

## Healing for the Holidays: Part Three – Q&A About Holiday Honesty

This is the third in a series of articles on healing for the holidays. You can find the previous articles in the series [here](#).

I appreciate friendships that are secure enough for “push-back.” Someone who lovingly says, “Bob, I get what you’re saying, but what about...?” Today, I want to give voice to four possible “push-backs” on Part Two: Give Sorrow Words. Consider these as Q/A about just how honest should we be around the holidays.

### **Push-Back # 1: “But Doesn’t Everyone Handle Grief Differently?”**

Absolutely. Everyone handles grief differently. There’s no one typical response to grief, and there’s no one universally “correct” path toward healing for the holidays. Healing is a journey—a personal journey with God and we all take unique twists and turns on our journey.

Your timing will be different from mine. Your way will be different from your relatives. We can’t force anyone else, or even ourselves, onto a certain timetable or a one-size-fits-all plan.

That said, good research and caring engagement with people consistently shows that “denial” is a very common initial response to grief. And initially, it can even be a grace of God that allows our minds and bodies to slow down long enough to survive the horrors of our loss.

*Push-Back to the Push-Back: Faith Faces All of Life Honestly*

Good biblical study reveals a clear pattern (not a universal command)—faith faces all of life honestly. That’s what candor is—a faithful facing of life courageously and honestly. On your journey of healing for the holidays, at least be aware that being honest with yourself (candor) is one signpost on your journey that you’ll want to zig and zag toward.

### **Push-Back #2: “But Not Everyone Is a Talker!”**

It’s absolutely true that God uniquely designed everyone one of us—we are each fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). Our different personalities, different backgrounds, different upbringings, different settings, different choices, and different losses all combine to make us unique.

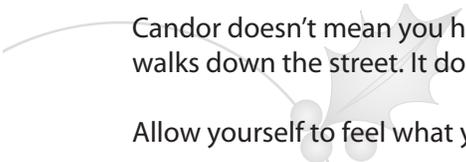
So no one should ever feel, “I need to talk about this X amount.” Or, “I need to talk about this like Suzy does.” Nope.

*Push-Back to the Push-Back: Everyone Needs Relationship*

Good biblical study reveals that God designed us to relate to Himself, to others, and to ourselves. We need relationship. In a sense, you could picture denial as a refusal to relate honestly to your own self.

Notice something about the passage we probed yesterday (Psalm 42:3-5). David starts by talking to himself! “Why are you downcast, O my soul?”





Candor doesn't mean you have to blurt out your deepest, darkest secrets to every stranger who walks down the street. It does mean that you would be wise to start by talking to yourself.

Allow yourself to feel what you feel. Then put words to your feeling. That's candor.

Like David, many people (not all) find that capturing their thoughts on paper can be very helpful. We might call it "journaling." I like to call it "psalming." Write your own psalm of candor about your holiday hurt.

Of course, in your uniqueness, maybe you're not a writer. So what song conveys the feelings of your heart? Or what picture, image, or artwork conveys the ache in your soul? What movie scene captures your pain?

### **Push-Back # 3: "But People Are Clueless How to Relate to Me!"**

Yep. Many times this is so true. And it's one of the reasons we're hesitant to be candid with others about our hurting during the holidays. Many people don't know what to do after the hug.

And, there's the biblical principle of not casting your pearls before swine. So, some people are so obtuse, so lacking in empathy, that it just may be unwise to share much, if anything, with them.

*Push-Back to the Push-Back: Find at Least One Faithful Friend*

Good biblical study reveals that God designed the Body of Christ to comfort one another (2 Corinthians 1:3-9). Pray that God will give you at least one faithful friend who knows what to do after the hug. In your timing, slowly open up to your spiritual friend about your emotional pain. Others find that a recovery or support group of people with a similar loss is an excellent place to start the candor journey.

### **Push-Back # 4: "But I Don't Want to Be a Downer Who Ruins the Holidays for Others!"**

That can be a very other-centered thought. It also could be a cop-out, but let's assume it is rightly motivated.

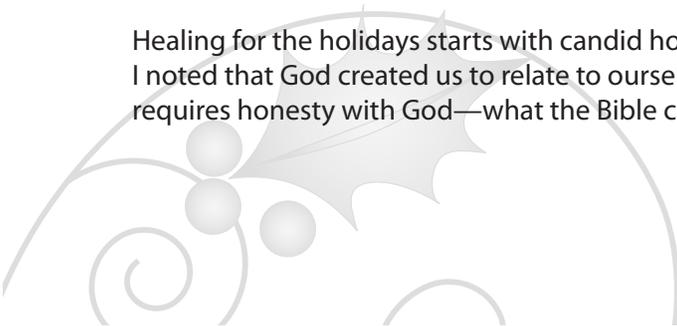
*Push-Back to the Push-Back: Christ-like Relating to Others*

First, it's a God-thing that you can be so thoughtful about others in the midst of your holiday hurt. That's amazing!

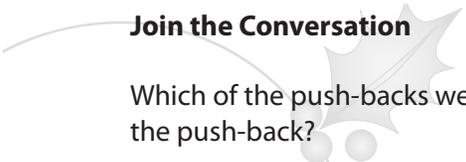
Second, we've already said that candor is more about talking to yourself and at least one other godly, caring person. So candor doesn't require you to interrupt the Thanksgiving meal to share your deepest hurt.

Third, in the long run, your candor now will bring healing hope for future holidays. Remember, No grieving; no healing. Know grieving; know healing.

### **The Rest of the Story**



Healing for the holidays starts with candid honesty with ourselves, but it doesn't stop there. I noted that God created us to relate to ourselves, to others, and to Him. Holiday healing also requires honesty with God—what the Bible calls lament—the focus of our next post.



## Join the Conversation

Which of the push-backs were running through your mind? How can you apply the push-back to the push-back?

## Help for Your Healing Journey

For additional help on your healing journey, learn more about *God's Healing for Life's Losses: How to Find Hope When You're Hurting* (<http://bit.ly/bKWaP4>). Also, visit [GriefShare](http://www.griefshare.org) for information on their small group video series *Surviving the Holidays* ([www.griefshare.org/holidays](http://www.griefshare.org/holidays)).

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