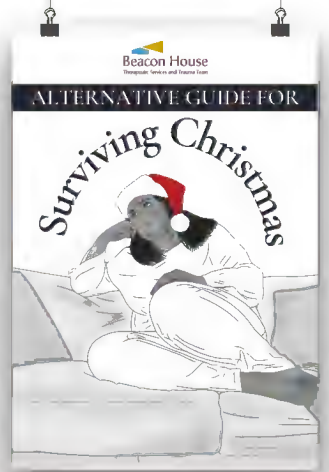


THE CHRISTMAS AD CHRISTMAS...



...IT'S SIMPLY NOT FOR EVERYONE, IS IT?

The Christmas Ad Christmas. It is not reality – our thinking brains know that. We understand, intellectually, that advertising executives are supposed to present a version of reality that creates a bit of discomfort in us as we realise that our own reality simply doesn't look like this

The Christmas Ad Christmas

BUT IT COULD!

If only we purchased an over-priced Christmas Pudding festooned with candied orange peel, dusted in gold leaf and trays of identical miniature party food (because everything tastes better when it's tiny?) all wrapped in enough plastic to single-handedly destroy the world's population of sea turtles....

That'll do it!

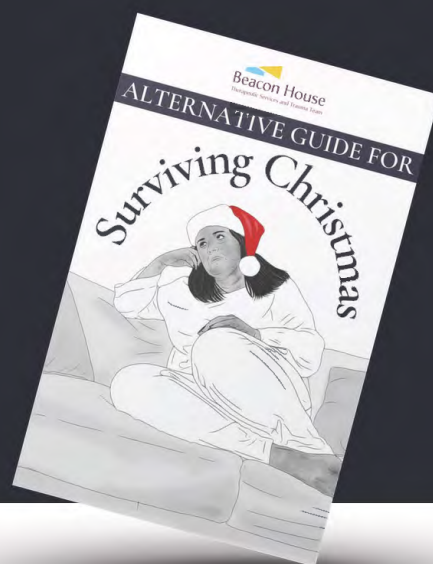


We know it. We know those versions of Christmas have been created in mid-August when we're all melting in a heatwave. But it's hard to really feel that, isn't it?



It's hard to be accepting and non-judgemental of our own relationships with Christmas. Especially when we might want to simply survive it. Or not participate in it at all. Or perhaps we want to participate as much as we can, but we'd like for it to be OK when we want to hide in a cupboard for a bit.

So read on for our alternative guide to surviving Christmas, designed for those of us who are not living in a TV advert (if you are, then please do enjoy it – amazing!)



ALTERNATIVE GUIDE FOR

Surviving Christmas



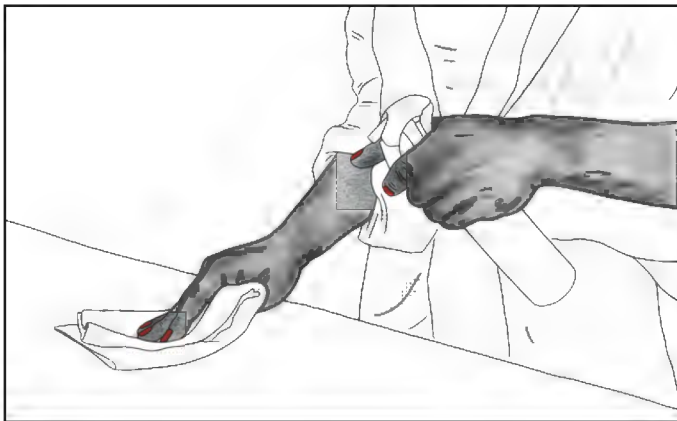
You are the successful candidate!

If you are going to be with people, give yourself a job. Resist taking up a role that plays to your strengths. Our strengths are often the result of ways that we have adapted to survive adversity, or, the roles that our families and social systems have placed upon us...

"Oh, would you do the buffet for 25 of us? You do SUCH a lovely spread"

Ho Ho NO. Choose a role that plays to your needs.

If you need quiet time, without the demand for interaction, a chance to take a breath and recover, appoint yourself:



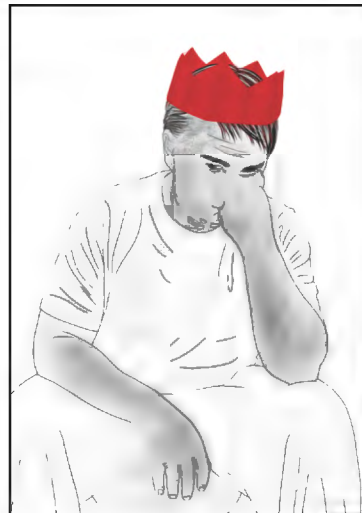
Person who cleans up the kitchen ALONE



Person who takes the recycling out and happens to take a coffee, which you are now drinking ALONE in the garden.



Person who takes all the family dogs out for a walk in the afternoon ALONE (you also don't need a dog for this, although it makes it much nicer).

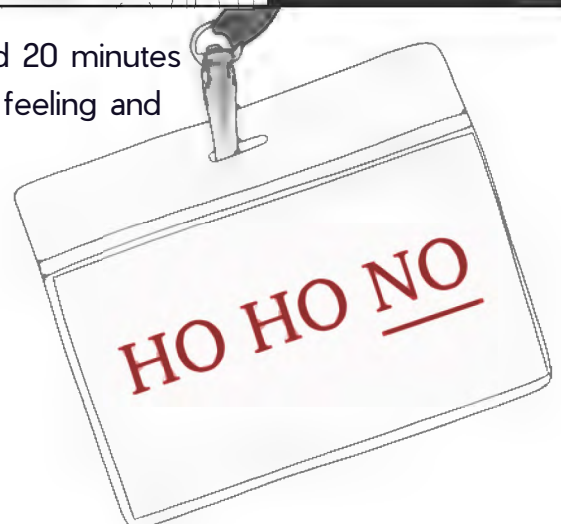


Or in an emergency, person who urgently needs to use the toilet just as the board games come out (ALONE comes automatically with this option)

If you can, you don't need to hide your desire for just need 20 minutes alone,. It adds to the stress. Be open about how you are feeling and you might be surprised that others also need some time to themselves, but were too worried to admit it. Now you're modelling self-care – bonus points!

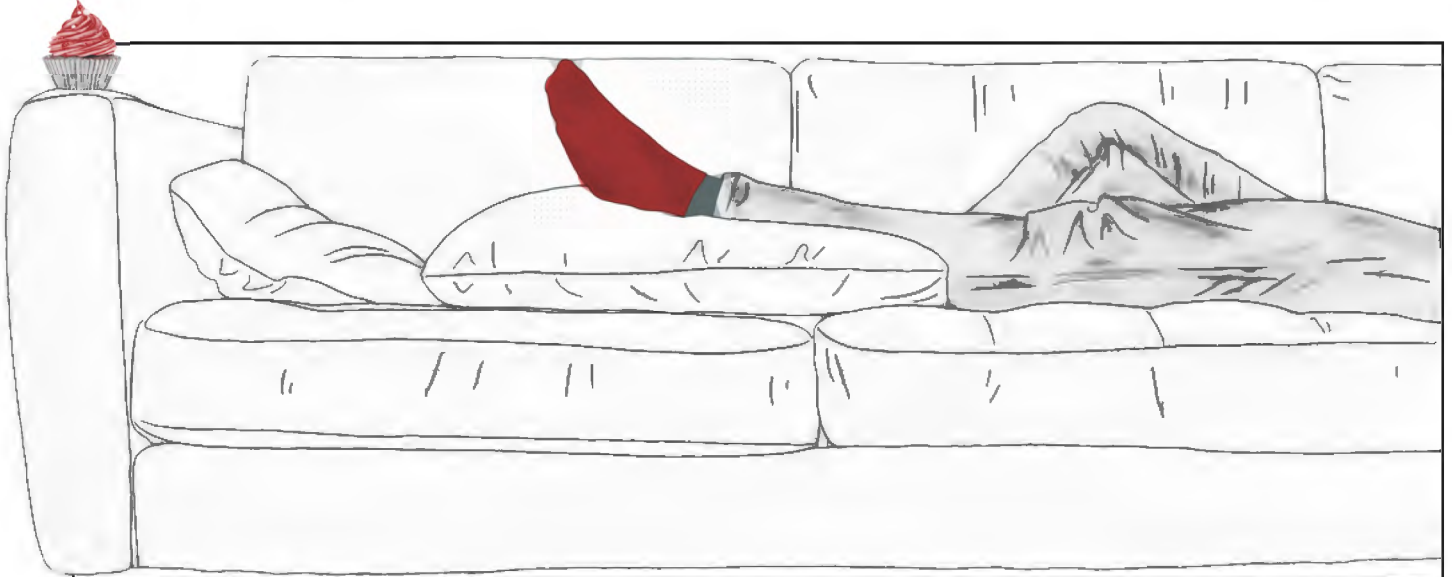
Congratulations. You've got the job. Make yourself a lanyard.

Boom.



YOU DO YOU!

If you're not going to be with people, give yourself the Christmas gift of doing whatever the heck you want! Let go of all of the messages that you have taken in, over years and years, about what you should be doing on Christmas Day. **Nobody is monitoring your Festive Compliance.**



What is your ideal day? Start to finish? What would it look like? Do it!
Eat cake for breakfast! Watch movies back to back all day! Snooze!



Or if, your Spirit Animal is not a sleepy, hungry sloth, find somewhere to put your energy that really means something to you.

Apply to volunteer at Shelter, Age Concern or the many other charities working so hard to support and care for our communities. Humans not your thing? Contact your local animal rescue centre and ask if they need an extra pair of hands over the festive period.

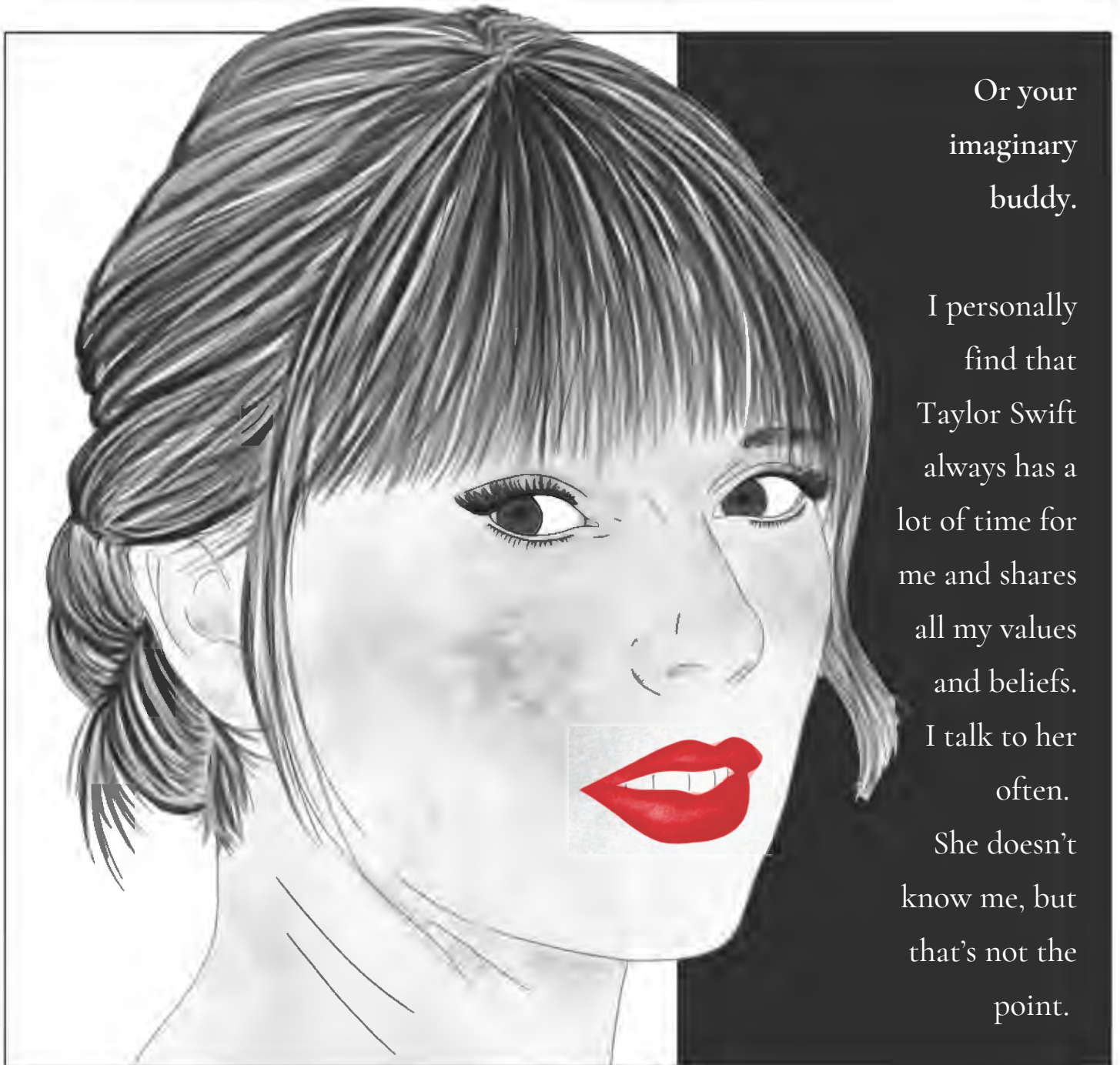
It is just days. After all. And the days will pass. Just like all other days do.

Have yourself a merry little TANTRUM

It's better out than in. Find your ally. Who is finding this all just as stressful as you? This might be a human, but it might also be the family pet. Or a photograph of someone that can't be with you.

Or your
imaginary
buddy.

I personally
find that
Taylor Swift
always has a
lot of time for
me and shares
all my values
and beliefs.
I talk to her
often.
She doesn't
know me, but
that's not the
point.



*Santa Baby,
stick some loungewear
under the tree, for me*

This starts way before
Christmas and we're
SATURATED in it.

*"Get Party Ready!" and
"Get Your Sparkle On!"*



Oh PLEASE. Whose
idea was this? I've had at
least 23 mince pies and
104 Celebrations in the
month of December.

This is the only time of
the year where it's
entirely legitimate not
to leave the house! "Get
Sofa Ready" and "Get
Your Jammies On!"

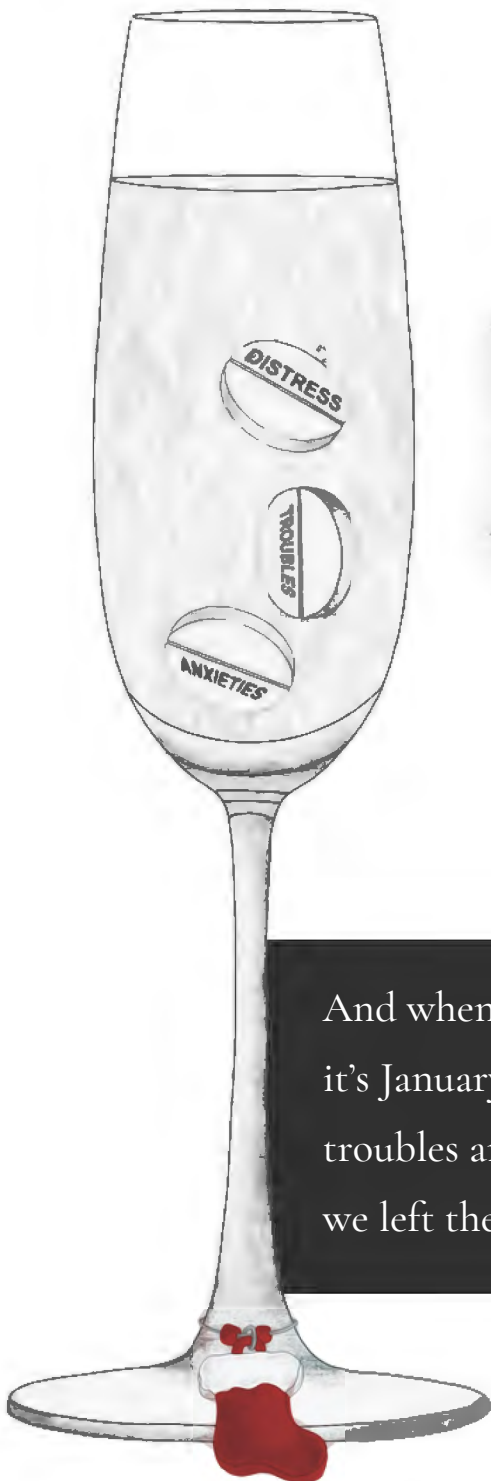
**OR, AND THIS IS AN
IMPORTANT OR:**

If getting dressed up to the nines
makes you happy, then bring on
the Hollywood Glamour!

EITHER WAY, JAMMIES OR BLACK TIE, YOU LOOK PERFECT ALREADY.

It's beginning to look a lot like...

YOU
MADE
IT



And when the world lands back in the reality of a new year and it's January and we're all slightly disappointed that our anxieties, troubles and distress were not Prosecco-soluble and remain just as we left them on the 23rd December...

...take a moment. Notice that you are still here. Still surviving. Still fighting.

WE'RE PROUD OF YOU. YOU MADE IT.