



# Home for the Holidays: A Beyond Parody Special Series

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**Episode I**

It is hard to believe we are already in the holiday season. Halloween, one of the most fun times of the year for many, is a celebration that reminds us that Thanksgiving and Christmas are right around the corner. Social media platforms even have people posting and teasing about putting up their Christmas tree before Halloween is even over. I think it is an act of rebellion to *thought* tyranny, or in a more Orwellian term, *thought* police. Nevertheless, there is no doubt we are in a significant reflective moment in our nation's history.

The President of the United States' approval rating is at a reported all-time low. In addition, our nation is experiencing multiple crises simultaneously, like the border crisis, the inflation crisis, and the supply chain crisis. There is even chatter each crisis is by design to "fundamentally" transform the United States, a hostile takeover, if you will.

A supply chain crisis may bother some people, but the ones experiencing addiction or struggling in early recovery have other things on their minds than national problems. This sounds dark, dejected, and desolate, which bear in mind these colorless adjectives can be haunting many people in active addiction or early recovery; there is no need for the Ghost of Christmas Past. The holidays can be difficult for someone that is trying to find healing. There is seasonal depression, "holiday blues," and even homelessness can affect people in ways others may not understand.

It is said the opposite of addiction is connection. That can be true when thinking of the destruction drug addiction can cause. During the holidays, which is typically a time of family celebration, finding a positive connection in active addiction or early recovery can be challenging. From families that may have casual drinking at their gatherings to resentful family members that we may have harmed, this can scare those who want to be with family and friends who knew us before the darkness of addiction ravaged our lives. And some people have no family at all!

The question is then, "What can someone do during the holidays that may be struggling with active addiction or in early recovery?" There is an arsenal of ways to find connections, welcome our loved ones struggling, and take part in daily activities to find or maintain and grow in recovery. Thanksgiving is next week, and the grocery stores are packed with families checking their shopping lists to make sure they have everything for their dinner. What a family member can do that has a loved one struggling is to check on them and remind them that you love them.

I can attest from past holidays when I was in active addiction that the idea that the family would rather me not be there was so devastating that I thought I didn't deserve

happiness or love. It then developed into a cascading avalanche of self-defeating, internal dialogue that made me nearly believe I deserved all the negative consequences I was experiencing.

I felt almost nonhuman. Thanksgiving is about being thankful, and I know it may be difficult for a mother, father, or cousin to be grateful for their loved one that may have broken their trust. However, sometimes a moment of love that expresses that you do, in fact, still care about them can be the catalyst to change their negative thinking.

It is not parody that we all want to be loved, especially during the time of year that focuses on families and friends connecting.