

HAVE A HYGGE HOLIDAY WILDCARD CHALLENGE

It's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the holidays. Spreading the appropriate amount of Christmas cheer through parties, decorations, and gifts can be exhausting and expensive. When we strip away the frivolity and commercialism surrounding the holiday season, we often find joyful celebrations, quality conversations and meaningful relationships. How do we make these a priority while also balancing holiday demands? The Scandinavian people might suggest we embrace the concept of "hygge".

Hygge (hoo-gah) is a term used to describe a feeling of contentment, comfort, and connection. It means taking pleasure in the presence of warm, gentle, soothing things and enjoying the present moment with loved ones. This environment is ideal for creating a meaningful holiday season and focusing on what really matters.

Have a hygge holiday by completing one activity each day for one week during the holiday season.

Choose the Right Company

Take inventory of who you surround yourself with. Protect your time and mental health by setting boundaries and choosing positive, happy people to spend the holidays with. This also applies to the media we consume. Complete a social media detox by muting or unfollowing things that elicit negative emotions. Simply enjoy the company of friends and family that lift you up this season. Prioritize time and create ways to individually connect with loved ones. Ask someone to run an errand with you rather than online shopping, or take a break from party planning to go for a walk with a friend. During these moments create meaningful conversations by asking about their lives and giving them your full attention. Not sure where to start? Consider asking the following questions.

- What is your favorite Solstice/Christmas/Hanukkah memory and why?
- If you had to live in a holiday movie, which one would you choose?
- What is your biggest holiday cooking or baking fail?
- If you could spend the holidays in a foreign country, which one would you choose and why?
- What is your least favorite holiday tradition and why?
- What holiday dessert best describes you and why?



Enjoy the Little Things

The trend of implementing hygge into your home design has led some towards overhauling their home by purchasing new decor. However, hygge isn't about extravagance or buying new things. Instead, enjoying hygge means focusing on making the most of the little things that you already have. Treat yourself to your favorite warm drink or indulge in a bubble bath.

Simplify

Try to avoid overscheduling yourself during the holidays. Traditions can be changed or altered to fit a new family dynamic or a busy schedule. Don't be afraid to say no if an activity doesn't sound enjoyable. Create a list of the traditions you want to complete and be realistic of the time you have.

Focus on Mindfulness

Pause to reflect on what is going around you and acknowledge gratitude. The holidays are an opportunity to stop, write down and recognize the things you have in your life. When we are truly present, we tune into the blessing and abundance of simply being alive. Write down three things you are grateful for every day for one week.

Create a Cozy Atmosphere

Hygge is about coziness and surrounding yourself with the things that make life good, like friendship, laughter, and security, as well as more concrete things like warmth, light, seasonal food and drink. Do two things today to enhance a cozy environment. Add natural elements to your decor like pinecones, tree clippings, and twigs to make your home feel rustic and warm. Or try simmering orange slices and cinnamon sticks on the stove for an easy way to make your home smell delicious for a holiday get-together.

Start the Day Slowly

Winter mornings can feel particularly sleepy and dreary. Today, give yourself an extra 10 minutes in the morning to incorporate some hygge elements. Burn a candle while you get ready for work or wrap up in your favorite blanket while you enjoy your morning coffee. During that time, put your phone away and try to focus on being present: feel the chilly air or see if you can spot a winter bird on a branch.