

BOXING DAY BLUES

Words: Tanya Curtis

CHRISTMAS IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER AND FOR MANY, THIS IS A VERY STRESSFUL TIME. BUT WHY?

Christmas is a word that comes with many MANY pictures of the way life should be. But pictures are simply the images we are fed about the way we expect life to be - our needs, wants, expectations and our attachments.

It's a possibly endless list but we all have pictures all-day, every-day. We may have pictures about:

- Who will or will not be in the house when I get home?
- What is for dinner tonight?
- When dinner will be?
- What state the home will be in when I arrive home?
- What others should and should not say?
- How a task should be completed?

These pictures, unfortunately, are the triggers for much of our anxiety. Many people try to control life to make life according to their own pictures, however life does not always happen according to everyone's pictures. Life often provides us with what I call a "smashed picture". Smashed pictures are simply the lessons in life we are yet to self-master (ie. learn how to respond to rather than attempting to control and make happen). Christmas time is filled with many, Many, MANY pictures. Thus Christmas is also filled with many smashed pictures.

Another possibly endless list, Christmas pictures are filled with:

- Who we should and should not spend Christmas day with?
- What presents we want and/or should buy another?



- What food should be eaten?
- What time people should or shouldn't arrive/leave?
- Where are we going to be?

Is it possible that all these pictures are simply creating a stressful environment for each and every person? The fact is every person has their own pictures and often these pictures are different from each other – thus guaranteeing that each person is smashing other people's pictures.

One picture that many have on Christmas day is that 'we must all get along' – it is Christmas day after all. But let's look at what is happening here with just this one picture. Typically, we have discussed that major pictures of who, what, where, when why etc. and thus most have a similar understanding of what is expected to happen. Typically, we have not addressed the thousands of minor pictures that each and every person has. Often there is a multitude of smashed pictures; some minor and some appear more major and many hold the picture of 'we must all get along' and thus don't express their pictures and/or smashed picture. Each smashed picture when not understood can hurt; if we don't express this it bubbles and bubbles up inside. On the surface level there a lot of people 'getting along as after all it is Christmas day'. However, below the surface there is a tension

building that one day must be released.

Whether it be Christmas night, Boxing Day or the days that follow, this tension is often released - often in a way that seems extreme. I have often wondered if this is why they call 'Boxing Day' just that – "boxing". A day where the tension is released; albeit at times in a way that causes arguments for many.

What if we did not need to have the arguments on Boxing Day. What if Boxing Day was not the day where tension is released, as there is no tension to release. How? Simply, by not having pictures in the first place. Life always has been and always will be totally out of our control. Life will deliver us all many smashed pictures. But what if we learn to receive life, letting life come to us rather than attempting to control life and impose our pictures on ourselves and/or on others. What if we lived in a way where we learnt to observe life and receive whatever life lessons are presented to us?

Is it possible that if we learn to live in a way that does not impose our pictures of the way we think life should be, we would replace all our judgement with understanding? Without judgment, without imposition and without pictures, we don't need to be 'boxing' on Boxing Day, or any other day.

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