

# The Griever's Holiday Bill of Rights

by Bruce Conley

1. You have the right to say, “time out” anytime you need. Time out to let up blows off a little steam, step away from the holidays and have a “huddle” and start over.
2. You have the right to “tell it like it is”. When people ask, “How are you?” you have the right to tell them how you really feel, not just what they want to hear. You also have the right to smile and say you’re fine because telling them how you really feel isn’t worth your time. Some people will never understand anyway.
3. You have the right to some “bah hum bug” days. You are not a bad person just because you don’t feel like singing Christmas carols all day.
4. You have the right to do things differently. There is no law that says you must always do Christmas the same way you have always done. You can send 10 cards instead of 100—or no cards at all. You can open your presents at somebody else’s house; you can do without a tree; you can have pizza instead of ham or turkey. You can be creative and start a new tradition.
5. You have the right to be where you want to be, at home or a relatives’, any city or state you choose. There’s no law that says you must stay home or you must go some place. You don’t have to have snow for it to be Christmas.
6. You have the right to some fun. When you have a day that isn’t so bad and you feel like doing something for fun, then do it. You don’t have to be afraid of what someone else may say if they see you laughing and having a good time. Laughter is every bit as important and healing as tears.
7. You have the right to change direction in mid-stream. Grief is unpredictable. You may be all ready to go somewhere or do something and suddenly you are overwhelmed. When that happens, it’s okay to change your mind. There’s plenty of time in life to be predictable, exercise your right to change when you need to change.
8. You have the right to do things at different times. You can go to church at a different time than you have in the past. You can serve a meal at a different time; go to bed at a different time. You don’t have to be a slave to the clock.
9. You have the right to rest, peace, and solitude. You don’t need to be busy all the time. Take a nap whenever you need one. Take a nap to recharge your body. Take time to pray and to meditate, to recharge your spirit; it may do more good than eating another huge meal.
10. You have the right to do it all different again next year. Just because you change things one year and try something different does not mean you have to do it exactly the same way next year. You have the right to change things how you want to change things.