



Protecting Yourself from Toxic Holiday Experiences

Summarized from Leslie Vernick

[<https://leslievernick.com/newsletter/are-your-holidays-toxic-2/>]

Knowing ahead of time that your holidays may be filled with toxicity gives you time to prepare to take care of yourself. Proverbs says, “Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted.” Proverbs 2:12 In the same way, you can emotionally, mentally, and spiritually prepare so that you will not be as negatively impacted. Here are a few things you can do.

Mentally: Stop taking someone’s treatment of you personally. How someone treats you says something about him or her, not you. Yes it hurts to have even a stranger be cruel towards you let alone a family member, but it reveals what’s going on in their heart not yours (Luke 6:45).

In addition, limit your exposure. If others are hostile or cruel, you can choose not to participate. You can stay home, leave early, not serve alcohol at your gathering, or not invite those people over. **You are allowed to have boundaries, even on Christmas.** If it’s your spouse, make other plans for yourself for part of the day instead of passively being a victim of a spouse’s hostility.

Emotionally: **Accept the reality that you can’t control other people.** Observe rather than absorb the toxicity around you. Notice how unhealthy and deformed these people are (from the person God wants them to be) and don’t even know it. This may make you feel sad, but hopefully not as mad. Don’t allow yourself to get provoked into reacting. When you start to feel yourself getting reactive, take a break to calm yourself down. Breathe, and leave if you need to.

Spiritually: If you’re a believer in Jesus, remember who you are in Christ. You are defined by Him, not by another fallible human being. You are a child of the most High God. You are a joint heir with Christ. You are seen by God as perfect, beautiful, and completely forgiven. Picture yourself covered in grace and truth, protected by Almighty God against any and all lies and attacks from the evil one so that you can stand strong in the truth. Remember, God did not intend his creation, including you, to thrive in toxic environments. **It is not selfish to take good care of yourself; it is good stewardship of you.**



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Upcoming Classes

LEVEL ONE—JOURNEY TO UNDERSTANDING

These classes will help bring clarity and validation to what you are experiencing.

Online Only: 10—11:30 am, Wednesdays

Online and In-person: 7-8:30 pm, Wednesdays

Online link for **LEVEL ONE ONLY** is in the body of the email with this newsletter.

AM Classes

Dec. 13: Boundaries for the Holidays

Dec. 20: Boundaries

Dec. 27: No Class

Jan. 3: No Class

PM Classes

Christmas Dinner/Special Holiday Class Combined (6:30 Punch Bowl, 7:00 Dinner, 7:30 - 8:30 Class)

Boundaries

No Class

No Class

FACILITATORS



Vicki Williams



Carol Bosch, LMSW



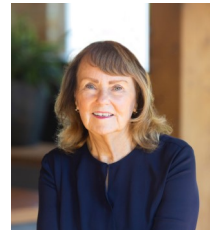
Shari Murdock



Misty LaFree, LLPC



Shirley Ritsema



Marge Lucas, MSW

Childcare



Elisabeth Richards

LEVEL TWO —STRENGTH FOR THE JOURNEY

These classes focus on finding the strength needed as you make decisions for your situation.

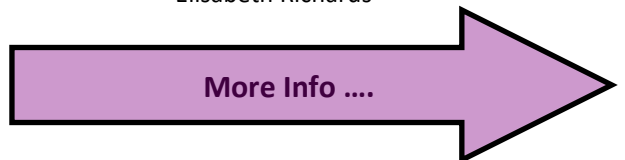
This week Level Two will take a break from our current book and join the “Surviving the Holidays” class (see schedule above for times). **Please also note, there is only one online link for this class and not separate ones for Levels One and Two.**

RSVPs for the dinner were due last Friday but you can still join for the class time! (Or we may be able to sneak you in for the dinner....check with Vicki Williams).

If you need a book or want to join in our discussions as we work through *Becoming Myself, Embracing God’s Dream of You*, please reach out to Shirley Ritsema at shirleyr@selah-empowers.org.

Online and In person: 7-8:30 pm, the same dates as Level One.

Online link for **LEVEL TWO** is in the body of the email with this newsletter.



selah.empowers@gmail.com



(616) 510-6305



selah-empowers.org



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Group Agreement: We ask that everyone read the Group Agreement attached to the email. Attending the classes means you have read and agreed to the group agreement.

Childcare: Please let us know ahead of time if you will need childcare, however, we know schedules change, so if you don't get a chance to let us know before class that will be fine, too.

Safe Environment: We want to provide a confidential and safe environment for everyone to share and receive support. We also recognize that some material covered in this group is sensitive and can be triggering. Please practice healthy self-care and let us know if you are feeling overwhelmed or need to speak privately.

How Can We be in Prayer For You?

In Selah online and in person classes, facilitators often extend the opportunity for participants to share a prayer request. These are anonymously passed along to a team of individuals who are committed to praying over Selah, it's leaders and most especially for Selah participants. If you have a prayer request you would like to submit, please feel free to do so by dropping an email to shirleyr@selah-empowers.org. Your email will be handled with confidentiality, care, and covered in prayer!



Selah is grateful to be partnering with these local counseling centers:





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COMMUNITY RESOURCES



HYGIENE PANTRY

3500 Byron Center Ave (616)528-4014
Wyoming, MI 49509 lighthousewy@gmail.com

To locate a food pantry near you search:
<https://www.feedwm.org/findfood/>



Serving Hudsonville, Jenison & Grandville
Search <https://lovewm.org/>
to learn more.



Also known as "Love Inc."
To find one near you search:
<https://www.loveinc.org/find-your-love-inc/>

SAFETY



Search "Addalock" portable door lock on Amazon



Search Monsin Wedge Alarm on Amazon

If one of these items would help ensure your safety but you cannot afford one, please reach out to Selah!



mi.gov/agacp ag-acp@mi.gov 313-456-0190



- selah.empowers@gmail.com
- (616) 510-6305
- selah-empowers.org