



ILLUMINATED

a quarterly newsletter

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Holiday season is upon us! Regardless of what and how you celebrate, November and December tend to be emotionally momentous. For some, winter holidays are a time of **celebration, joy, and connection**. For others, the holidays bring **loneliness, anxiety, or grief**. This issue of *Illuminated* presents related ideas of presence over presents, diverse stories of loneliness, and a better alternative to small-talk. Enjoy.

Waving from Raleigh, North Carolina,
Dr. Jenna Schleien
Clinical Psychologist & Founder, Lumina Psychology



I am now serving patients in NY & NC!



Prioritizing presence over presents -

Research suggests that people tend to feel most loved in everyday interactions and experiences with friends, family, and pets. In a piece titled "This Year, Consider Giving Presence instead of Presents," Psychologist and writer Dr. Juli Fraga reviews this research and encourages us to prioritize moments of connection over gift-giving.



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Lonely over the holidays? You're not alone -

During a time with so much pressure to be happy, holiday season can feel extra isolating. Whether you're feeling disconnected from friends, enduring tension around family, or wishing you were partnered, loneliness this time of year is both normal and painful. Loneliness within relationships can hit even harder. The Loneliness Project by graphic designer Marissa Korda shares "deeply personal yet profoundly universal" stories of loneliness. Read others' stories and share your own.

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Join the anti-small talk club -

Small talk tends to be boring and tedious, but this sort of chitchat is all too common in group gatherings over the holidays. Relationship coach Dr. Gina Senarighi compiles a list of questions that are designed to spark lively, engaging conversation- much more interesting and meaningful than small talk. These questions are inspired by a workshop by psychologist Esther Perel on ways to connect more authentically, also linked on the webpage.

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A bonus, just for fun - Food, but way cuter (who can mention holidays without food?). Did someone awesome forward you this newsletter? Subscribe here. Do you have an idea for a featured resource? Write to me here under the Contact tab.

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