Happy Holidays

How a new tradition brought back old memories of our mother

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After my mom died at age 80, each holiday season seemed impossibly gloomy. Of all the special days, she loved Christmas the best. My siblings and I associated this day with her, and the sadness we felt at this time of year was often overwhelming.

As time passed, however, we gradually surrendered all the traditional Christmas rituals we'd performed when my mother was alive. We stopped putting up a tree, cooking special dishes and frantically shopping for presents to exchange with one another.

Instead, the holidays marked a time for us to gather just prior to either Thanksgiving or Christmas. We'd talk, watch martial arts movies and crack jokes. My brother brought the flicks, and I would cook some finger foods in my "experimental kitchen" for us all to nibble on while we enjoyed this time together.

For us, these times were made even more unforgettable by the conviction that our mother was right there with us, smiling at the sight of us so in tune with one another.

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