First Holidays……

Is this it? Is this the first time since the birth of your babies that you will be forced to spend at least part of the Holiday without your children because of separation or divorce? It’s no fun and the first year is definitely the hardest. But it doesn’t have to be all bad, even though it will be very different. Let me offer you a few tips.

1. Realize that life is different now and will never be the same again and it’s okay!! Embrace change!
2. Plan early! Don’t wait until the last minute to coordinate with your Ex what the schedule will be. And remember that the kids want to spend time with both parents.
3. Christmas does not have to be Dec 25th! If you won’t be with your kids on the 25th, simply plan a “Special Christmas” when you will be. There is no reason to give up anything, just rearrange.
4. If this is your first Christmas without the kids, reach out to friends and family, invite yourself if you have to! Don’t spend it alone!!!
5. Start new traditions. To help both you and the kids embrace the new reality, start some brand new traditions that you’ve never had!

Don’t let your emotions get the best of you. If this is your first Holiday as a single person, you are still in the grieving process and you can expect to have some emotional ups and downs. Do your best to think about your new future and try not to dwell on the past. Think of new possibilities. Are there activities that you’ve always wanted to try but never had the time? Now’s the time to make it happen! Take an art class! Schedule a weekend trip out of town with a girlfriend or a spa day all by yourself. Of course, I’m a financial advisor so make sure it’s within your budget.

Speaking of budgets, don’t let yourself fall into the “best parent” trap of trying to outspend your ex on presents. The kids see right through it and trust me, they don’t care. Don’t get me wrong, they’ll love all the gifts - for about 2 seconds. Kids want your time not your money. Pass on the iPad and buy a board game that will force you to interact with each other for an extended period. These are the memories the kids will treasure and you will too.

Good luck this Holiday season. Remember, it doesn’t have to be defined as the end unless you choose to. Choose to see the beauty of a new beginning. You can do it!