IndigoKoi Wellness

A SAFE SPACE FOR
PERSONAL GROWTH AND RENEWAL

A COMPLIMENTARY WELLNESS RESOURCE

Honoring Your Health During Celebration Season

A gentle guide to honoring your needs, your relationships, and the life you are living with autoimmune illness.

A NOTE FROM COACH WINONA

You are part of the celebration, too.

An invitation can be both welcome and complicated. You may want the familiar laughter, the shared table, and the comfort of being with people you love. At the same time, you may be quietly calculating pain, fatigue, travel, food decisions, and the rest you might need afterward. The planning no one sees is still part of what the day asks of you.

Living with chronic illness has taught me that wanting to be present and having the capacity for everything expected are not always the same thing. There can be grief for the ease you once knew: preparing a meal, staying late, or saying yes without hesitation. Missing that ease does not cancel the joy you still hope to find. Both experiences deserve room.

I wrote these pages to help you notice what matters, consider what support can be added, and choose your next step without ignoring your circumstances. You cannot always decide how your body will feel. Your needs and your voice still deserve a place in the plan.

With care, Coach Winona

Use these pages in your own way. You may write, reflect quietly, skip a question, keep an answer private, or return later. Nothing here requires disclosure or a decision today.

PAUSE AND NOTICE

When I imagine the next meaningful celebration, what am I hoping to experience, and what feelings come with that hope?

01 / ENERGY AND REALISTIC SUPPORT

Before you change the plan, add support.

Energy is not a fixed amount you can promise in advance. With autoimmune illness, symptoms may shift even when you have prepared thoughtfully. Others may see only the gathering itself, while you are carrying the work of getting ready and the recovery that follows. A flexible plan is not a lack of commitment; it makes room for information you may not have until the day arrives.

Before deciding what must be declined or shortened, consider what could be placed around the moments you value. Help with preparation, an accessible place to sit, an option to arrive late, a quiet room, transportation you can adjust, or a little time alone may make participation more possible. This is Possibilities Into Intentions in practice: add care, rest, structure, or support where possible, then consider what, if anything, needs to change.

Not every woman has reliable help, paid time away from work, an understanding family, or the freedom to leave when she wishes. If your options are limited, it is enough to identify one thing you can influence or one person who might help. And when a gathering remains beyond your capacity, that truth deserves respect rather than criticism.

A THOUGHTFUL PLAN

Begin with the part you want to keep. Add what may help you take part. Only then consider what needs adapting, and leave room for rest after the event. Plans can change when symptoms or circumstances change.

NOTICE WHAT IS BEING ASKED

Which expectation feels heaviest right now, and what meaningful part of the celebration do I want to protect?

CHOOSE SUPPORT BEFORE RESTRICTION

What help, flexibility, or practical adjustment is available to me, and what choice remains if that support cannot be provided?

Connection that makes room for you.

Food is rarely only nutrition at a celebration. It can carry family stories, culture, comfort, and the memory of people who taught us how to gather. When you have medical or dietary needs, choosing what to eat can become unexpectedly public. Questions may come from concern or misunderstanding. Whatever their intention, you do not owe anyone a conversation about your body to earn your place at the table.

Start by considering what could help you feel prepared rather than making food another test you must pass. You might look at a menu ahead of time, ask a host about ingredients, bring an option you enjoy, or eat beforehand when that fits your needs. There is no one food plan for every autoimmune condition; follow the individual guidance you have from your clinical care team.

Boundaries can preserve the connection you came to enjoy. A short sentence may be enough, and privacy is also a choice. When direct conversation would create conflict or feel unsafe, a quiet adjustment or help from a trusted person may serve you better. You do not have to persuade everyone before you can act with care toward yourself.

WORDS YOU MIGHT BORROW

“I would love to come. I may need to leave earlier than expected.”

“I’m bringing something that works for me, and I look forward to being together.”

“Thank you for caring. I prefer to keep my health details private.”

NOTICE BELONGING

What part of gathering around the table helps me feel connected, and what would make participation more comfortable for me?

CHOOSE A BOUNDARY

What boundary or private decision feels possible to me, especially when someone else may not understand?

Let meaning remain, even when the shape changes.

There is a particular sadness in realizing that a tradition you once carried with ease now asks more than your body can give. Perhaps you were the one who cooked, traveled, decorated, or held everyone together. You can miss that role without being ungrateful for the life you have today. Grief deserves to be heard before anyone asks you to find a solution.

When you feel ready, consider what the tradition has always meant to you: closeness, remembrance, belonging, delight, or the pleasure of contributing. Its meaning might survive in a shorter visit, one familiar dish, a call to someone you miss, or another arrangement you choose. There is no requirement to turn loss into a lesson or to feel cheerful about every change.

Even a wonderful gathering can ask something of you afterward. A simpler next day, practical help, an easy meal, or protected quiet may be useful forms of recovery. Rest does not have to be earned by doing more.

HONOR THE TRADITION

What part of a familiar tradition matters most to me, what do I miss, and what new or familiar form might still hold its meaning?

PLAN FOR AFTERWARD

What support or recovery time might I need after the celebration, and what one step would I like to choose next?

A GENTLE INVITATION

If these pages gave words to something you have been carrying quietly, more thoughtful tools are available in the IndigoKoi Wellness Resource Library. You can explore them whenever you feel ready.

Explore the Resource Library

ABOUT COACH WINONA

Certified Trauma-Informed Integrative Wellness Coach and Grief Counselor. Coach Winona brings lived experience with chronic illness to compassionate, choice-centered wellness education.

EDUCATIONAL NOTE

For education and personal reflection, not individualized medical or mental-health care. For changes in symptoms, food needs, medicines, or treatment, consult your qualified healthcare professional.

LUPUS-SPECIFIC REFERENCES

NIAMS: Living With Lupus | **Lupus Foundation: Daily Life with Lupus**

These references concern lupus; other autoimmune conditions and individual care needs may differ.

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