

Finding Stillness in the Festive Rush

Gratitude and kindness in the days before Christmas



Each year, no matter how often we've celebrated Christmas it invariably has a habit of arriving quicker and more hectically than expected. Shops hum, diaries fill, and there can be a quiet sense that we *ought* to be doing more, feeling more, or enjoying ourselves in a particular way. If you're like me you'll suddenly turn around and wonder how it got here so quickly, where did the time go?

A mindfulness attitude helps you slow down and notice what is happening within and around you, even during busy days. By pausing, breathing, and letting go of expectations, you create stillness and calm. This gentle awareness naturally encourages patience, compassion, and kindness towards yourself and others in the run up to Christmas.

Mindful living offers a different invitation: not to add another task, but to notice what is already here.

A softer way to move through the week

A good way to find stillness in the festive rush is to try a "Less Doing, More Being" approach to Christmas, it invites us to release constant activity and expectations. By slowing down, resting more, and simply noticing moments as they unfold, we allow stillness to emerge naturally. Presence replaces pressure, connection deepens, and the season becomes gentler, more meaningful, and quietly joyful.

Stillness doesn't require silence, solitude, or sitting cross-legged on the floor (especially at our age). It can be found in very ordinary moments:

- Pausing for one unhurried breath while the kettle boils
- Feeling your feet on the ground as you walk to the shops
- Letting your shoulders drop while waiting in a queue
- In a smile on a loved one's face, or even a stranger's face if we give ourselves the gift of noticing.

These small pauses are acts of kindness towards yourself. They remind the nervous system that there is no emergency — even in December.

Gratitude without pressure

Gratitude is sometimes presented as something we should *feel*, which can make it oddly stressful. In reality, gratitude can be very simple and very human.

You might quietly acknowledge:

- A warm room on a cold day
- A friendly word from a stranger

- A memory that made you smile — or even sigh

There is no need to search for grand feelings. A gentle “this is enough for now” is gratitude too.

Kindness, beginning where you are

The festive season can bring together many generations, personalities, and expectations — not all of them easy. Practising kindness doesn't mean pretending everything is fine.

Kindness might look like:

- Allowing yourself to step away when you've had enough
- Listening without rushing to fix or advise
- Smiling at someone who looks just as tired as you feel

And, perhaps most importantly, kindness includes being patient with yourself. Energy levels change. Memories stir. That is all part of being human.

A simple stillness practice

Once or twice a day, try this:

1. Sit comfortably and let your hands rest where they fall naturally
2. Notice three things you can see, two things you can hear, and one sensation in the body
3. Take one slow, easy breath

That's it. No improvement required.

Finding stillness does not end with Christmas Day.

It can gently carry into the days that follow by allowing the pace to remain soft and unhurried. Rather than filling Boxing Day with activity, stillness invites rest, reflection, and simple pleasures. It supports listening to the body, appreciating quiet moments, and easing the transition back into everyday life with kindness and balance.

Carrying the spirit forward throughout 2026 and beyond.

Stillness, gratitude, and kindness are not reserved for special occasions. Christmas simply reminds us they matter. The invitation is not to make the season perfect, but to meet it as it is — with a little more gentleness than usual.

And if all you manage is one quiet moment amid the bustle of everyday life, that is more than enough. Stillness is always available even in busy times, all we have to do is pause, breathe and soften our expectations.