

Golodner: It feels lonely to be Jewish | Opinion

Lynne Golodner

Published: 10:53 p.m. ET Dec. 21, 2022 Updated: 11:06 p.m. ET Dec. 21, 2022"

With rapidly rising reports of blatant antisemitism, I am realizing how, for the majority of my 51 years, I haven't dared admit how lonely it is to be Jewish.

I can't say to most people that I don't really belong anywhere, because they wouldn't understand. They'd say, "of course you do, you belong with me, America accepts everyone."

But then it would be Christmas and they'd invite me to a cookie-baking event. I wouldn't know where to start or what to make so I'd politely decline. Or they'd wish me a Merry Christmas and I'd smile and say back, "same to you," without correcting them or asserting that I celebrate Hanukkah, which isn't even a big-deal holiday, because by the time I got out those words, their

eyes would be glossy and they'd be thinking about something else and if they bothered to respond at all, they might say something like, "Oh is Hanukkah like the Jewish Christmas?"



When I don't work in the fall on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and then the eight-day harvest holiday of Sukkot, my clients grow impatient and think I'm slacking off. So I have to sneak in my work and not insist that I should be able to focus on services and holiness and taking account of my good and bad deeds because the sun is shining and they're going about business-as-usual and the way I live, or the cycles of my year, just don't mirror theirs.