

## Holiday Stress Management

The holidays are upon us; a time of celebration and joy. I love the last days of November through the beginning of the New Year. The pure magic of the holidays is something that I anticipate and enjoy each and every year.

For some though, the holidays have lost the joy and excitement they at other times have had. The pace of life has grown so fast - much faster than those first holidays I remember in my life - that some people don't enjoy the times they get to spend with their family and friends during what is supposed to be days filled with joy and peace.

Why is that? Probably a lot can be laid at the feet of how fast paced our times are, but that isn't all.

I believe our holiday times should be wonderful and filled with lasting and enjoyable moments and memories. So how can we ensure that we come out of the holidays in January with great memories of the past month? Here are six thoughts that will help you experience the holidays the way they were intended to be experienced:

### 1. Be Temperate.

Holidays can be days of excess for many — too much food, too many cookies and treats. Too much chocolate, schedules that are too busy. One thing that will help you enjoy the holidays is to be temperate. Enjoy the food. Enjoy the treats. Enjoy the busy schedule of activities and parties. But also be disciplined enough to know when to hold back, when to say, “no”. When we go overboard we regret it and lose the opportunity to fully experience that moment. But when we enjoy a little and refrain from going too far, then we can enjoy all that little piece of time has to offer.

### 2. Lower Your Expectations.

Much of the frustration people experience from the holidays is from setting their expectations too high. They expect too much from friends or family, and when they don't get what they want, they get frustrated. They expect presents to be perfect and when they aren't, they get frustrated or disappointed. Instead of having huge expectations this holiday season, just take it as it comes and enjoy what you can. And this brings me to my next point.

### 3. Enjoy What You Can and Ignore the Rest.

This holiday season, go with an attitude of knowing that things will be what they will be. You can't control other people or their actions. If a family member pushes the limits of your patience, ignore that and instead focus on how much you can enjoy the time you have with other family members. If things don't go perfectly - which they won't - then enjoy what you can and let the rest slide. You will feel a lot better about life if you can take all things a little easier.

#### 4. Stay Out of Debt.

Debt is a killer. It will steal your enjoyment of life. Be sure to stay within your financial boundaries this holiday season. The last thing you want is to start the New Year with a deeper burden financially. Know where you are financially and stay within those limits. You don't have to impress anyone, just buy gifts that you can afford and express your heartfelt feeling in the giving of the gift.

#### 5. Take Time for Yourself.

Be sure that no matter how busy you get, that you take time for yourself. Take time to read. Take a long bath if that relaxes you. Take a walk. Spend some time of quiet in front of a fire. Don't rush through the holidays and sap all of your energy. Your mind and body need to be reenergized, so be sure to take time to do so.

#### 6. Focus on Your Spiritual Life.

Ultimately, no matter what tradition you come from, the holidays are historically days in which we focus on the spiritual. Men and women are created with a natural draw toward spiritual life. However, our culture today tends to stay away from a focus on the spiritual, and that has even crept into our holidays. Be sure to place an emphasis on building your spiritual life and growing in that area. This will help keep you grounded and able to deal with anything that may come your way.

Friends, we are coming to the end of another year. I have enjoyed this year immensely! This time of year is another chance to remember the important truths of life and to enjoy time with dear friends and family.

May you experience the very best this holiday season and move into January better than ever!

To your success, joy, and peace,

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