

Keeping It Simple Over the Holiday Season

As the holiday season approaches, we're often faced with a host of options and choices as to how we will spend our time and our money. Many of us anticipate endless preparations. We may feel obligated to meet unrealistic expectations for gift giving. Or we may try to avoid disappointing anyone by visiting everyone in a short amount of time. You may also be experiencing challenging circumstances, such as an economic downturn or job loss, or not enough time off work to travel to your family's hometown.

There are several ways to get back to basics and the simple things to make ourselves happier during the upcoming holiday season:

Be aware of your needs. Many of us unquestionably follow the traditions we always have during the holidays, regardless of what is going on in our lives. It is OK to say no and to put you and your family first. You can decline that invitation if you want to!

Consider opting out of the usual "fun celebrations" and using the holidays as a time for reflection. Perhaps your stress has been triggered by a divorce, a career disappointment, or a health problem. You may benefit from some form of spiritual nourishment, from reading a few meaningful books or visiting a fitness spa.

Realize that you don't have to do everything yourself. Stop waiting for things or people to change; take charge and delegate tasks to family members and ask for help.

Cook the main course and ask the guests to bring the trimmings. Are you the one who prepares the holiday dinner for a large gathering of family and friends? People generally want to help and contribute. Ask each person to bring one dish and share the load!

Limit your spending. Here are two simple solutions to the problem of gift giving for the many families who are more budget conscious this holiday season:

- **Draw names.** This means that each person buys and receives one gift. In fact, the element of surprise—wondering who drew your name—can make gift giving more fun. It's important, however that everyone plays by the rules. Make sure you have agreed if there is a limit to the cost of the gift, don't be tempted to spend more!
- **Agree on spending limits for gifts.** Talk with those persons in your life with whom you exchange gifts well in advance. Explain your point of view and you may well be

pleasantly surprised that they express relief because they are feeling the same way. Those who want to give a more expensive gift can wait until another special occasion such as Valentine's day or a birthday.

Don't overindulge in food and drink. Holiday parties can be especially difficult for those recovering from dependence on some substances or eating difficulties. If overindulgence is a concern and you think the temptation might be too great, politely decline invitations to parties and celebrate in a way that is suitable for you.

Help others. Time, affection, and care to others, especially those in need is the most rewarding experience of all. Whether you serve at a soup kitchen, reach out to an elderly relative, or help at a local charitable organization, helping others can often help people keep their minds off their own troubles and provide a sense of purpose.

Recognize when holiday rituals become a burden, not a pleasure. Realize that times have changed and that a past ritual may no longer quite fit your family's wants or needs. Avoid forcing something that has become tedious to yourself or others, and be open to trying new traditions that you and your family can enjoy.

Try to develop a positive attitude toward the holiday season. This year make the effort to see the magic that is part of the holiday celebrations. Regardless of your religious background, you can enjoy the music, the lights, and the decorations in the store windows; focus on the positives and try not to dwell on the challenges.

Be realistic. Life isn't perfect. And seldom are holiday celebrations like the glossy photographs we see in magazines this time of year. Focusing on impossible expectations usually results in disappointment and unhappiness, so accept what is, and let go of impractical expectations.

If we can't have a perfect holiday season, we can have many happy moments. Let these suggestions help you to create a very special gift for yourself—your best holiday season ever!

© TELUS Health 2023



TELUS Health
WellBeing Experts

For confidential advice and support: [Get Help Now](#)