

4 TIPS FOR SURVIVING AND THRIVING DURING THE HOLIDAYS

For many the holidays are a joyful and even magical time of year. It's easy and fun to get swept up into the emotionality of the season. We all finally get a reason, (if we needed one) to be kind and sweet to each other.

At the same time, the holidays can come with a lot of pressure that can diminish our experience. We can feel fatigued, angry, irritable or even resentful. From the need to spend a lot of money on gift giving, to being with family members you don't necessarily get along with to balancing the squeeze it puts on your schedule. Many internalize all these feelings and it translates to anxiety.

Here's some easy tips to keep you centered during the season so you can drink in the best it has to offer:

1. Go smaller, not bigger, and Go Organic

It's easy to get into the mindset of spending large sums of money, or charging up credit cards to shower our loved ones with "stuff." The season is about the spirit of giving. Gift giving is a ritual designed to highlight the spirit of generosity.

Studies show that after we get something we want, the stimulation wears off in about 20 minutes. It doesn't matter how expensive or big the gift or small. Given that, choose gifts that have an emotional connection. Things made from hand, or handed down from another generation, or even a poem or song you have created just for that person. These types of gifts make a lasting impression, and generate true connection. They show you have thoughtfully considered your relationship to your loved one. This will enhance the holiday experience for you, and lessen how much running around you have to do and how much you have to spend.

2. Give Yourself a Timeout

It's easy to get swept up in the river of consciousness that moves very fast this time of year. So many deadlines, so many dates to consider, and so many details to check off your list. Often we are afraid to take any breaks thinking we won't squeeze everything in. You will find that if you take small breaks, and time-outs you will actually become more effective. When you return to your tasks, you have more focus, and more energy to complete them. The result is that you are more efficient and more effective.

3. March the Beat of Your Own Drummer

There is a lot of advertising, tv programming, and suggested ideas for what the holidays should look like. Many of us feel enormous pressure to meet those ideas or standards. We think we may not be good enough or doing enough if we don't fall in line with the mass projection of what the holidays should be. Give yourself permission to define them for yourself. Set your own standard, and your reason and meaning for what the holidays should look like. Make your own traditions. Set your own standards. That will translate into a more fulfilling and relaxing holiday period.

4. Remember Those in Need

Many of us have more than enough in every area of our life. There are many who do not. There are those with inadequate housing, struggling to feed their kids, or those who have no family whatsoever. If you can find time to give to those who are in need you will feel a greater sense of community, sharing and connectedness. The ability to remind they are not forgotten or overlooked is a gift that will continue to give on many levels. That level of giving stimulates the true meaning of the holidays when those who are most vulnerable are included.

Wishing you and your family love and joy this season and always.

With love and appreciation,

Phyllis