

# **5 Ways to Achieve a Stress-Free Holiday Season**

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The holidays are a time for happiness, quality family time and relaxation, right? If only it would be that ideal. The stress levels shoot up in many people during the holiday season. There are so many decisions to make, things to do, people to see, and obligations to meet. The holiday ends up getting lost in all this haze. The holiday turns out to be a stressful sickly affair that leaves you more exhausted than ever.

However, a stress-free holiday is possible by adopting a few simple basic tactics. Planning, delegating and managing expectation sums up the basic tactics to manage a holiday. Trust me, they sound simple but when you practice them the impact on your wellness throughout the season is huge.

## **1) Changing traditions**

Traditions have a powerful hold on many people. This means doing the same thing over and over when the holidays come. This may be as simple as going to the parents or as complicated as organizing a family cookout for both sides of the family. If there are more than two traditions to fulfill, why not pick one and go with it?

If there is a lot of resistance to doing away with other traditions, ask others to handle what they feel they want to be done. Delegation is a good way of keeping your work load easier and ensuring that everything is done simultaneously. The good thing is that when these activities come out well, everyone involved feels part of the effort. This is perfect for family bonding.

## **2) More free time**

Making up a crowded to-do list is a common mistake during the holidays. Every day of the calendar is allocated for some activity or spent on the road. This is usually a recipe for disaster as holidaying feels like work. This is a season to kick out and relax. Schedule one or two days when there is nothing planned. This time can be spent in the house relaxing with the family or lazing by the fire pit swapping stories of the year.

## **3) More family time**

What is the use for the holidays if the family is not together? Organize activities that involve the whole family. Making a fire is one of the favorites. This encourages the family to bond by the fireplace and make up for all the time everyone's eyes were glued to the TV.

Charity work by everyone is also a good idea. The whole family can troop to the mall and spend sometimes gift wrapping for the less fortunate. It also makes gifting easier if the family has to exchange gifts with other families or friends. Spread your good cheer and be time efficient about it. Make gift giving simple by having everyone dip into the hat and taking whatever comes out.

#### **4) Cooking**

Meal times during the holidays are a stressing time for the resident family cook. The family will usually want something special and surprising while the cook's recipe list is limited. Fortunately, this is very easy to overcome. Opt out for easy dishes! This year I have created 6 Holiday Sides under 6 ingredients that are fabulous and uncomplicated to make. To make this more interesting, the family can have a cooking challenge with everyone trying out recipes from the net (again delegation goes a long way). Make meal times memorable by involving everyone in the preparations.

#### **5) Have me time**

The holidays are a time for reflecting over the past year, achievements and successes as an individual. It is also a time for planning ahead for the New Year. This can only be done in calm and quiet. After the harried year, you have a right to kick back and appreciate yourself.

Take time apart from everyone else. This does not have to be away from home. A simple, quiet afternoon in a relaxing bath with some Epsom salts and your favorite essential oil can do the trick to promote relaxation. Take a book to the bath, play some music and have a good time pampering yourself. If you are so inclined, a glass of wine could be part of the setting.

So this season, try and incorporate these 5 tips. Downsize, simplify, and remember that no one is really going to appreciate the Pinterest Inspired Christmas Tree made out of fruit in a way that makes it worth the precious time it took you! Rather use that time for family time or self-care time for you to have a healthy and happy holiday season

#### **References**

1. <http://www.tac.org.za/community/node/2977>