

WEISE WORDS

WORDS OF WISDOM FOR HEALTHY LIVING

DEALING WITH HOLIDAY STRESS

Have you ever wondered why the holidays seem so stressful? There are several factors that can cause stress levels to build. Unrealistic expectations, loneliness, and exhaustion are the most common factors that steal the joy away from the holidays.

The continual holiday music, movies and television specials aren't comforting to people feeling detached and lonely, rather they are hurtful because they serve as constant reminders of what's missing in their life. Many people get caught up in the busy events of the holidays searching to fulfill unrealistic expectations in an attempt to avoid having to look at the real issues in their life. Remember, the more you ignore the important and fulfilling things in your life, the more you will try to fill the emptiness with meaningless activities and materialistic stuff.

If you aren't already exhausted from trying to squeeze more and more seasonal events and decorations into less and less available time, just wait five minutes and you will be. Everyone has a certain amount of these very limited resources to manage...energy, money and time. Fatigue isn't limited only to a loss of physical energy it can overlap into emotional burnout or spiritual emptiness. The more tired we are, the more we tend to have a negative outlook, experience low morale, feel moody and are un-motivated to change.

SEVEN STRATEGIES TO CHANGE FROM HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TO EXPERIENCE HOLIDAY SUCCESS

1. **Celebrate:** Laugh, rejoice, giggle, gather, sing and count every blessing as you enjoy all the good things in your life instead of just focusing on the pressures and problems.
2. **Connect:** Join with other people instead of being alone. There are more community activities this time of year than you could ever imagine. Visit special programs through churches, or by asking friends and family what they are doing, or where they are going and see if there is an extra seat on the bus going there.
3. **Care:** Show concern for people instead of caring about material things. One of the most memorable things you can do is to come alongside to add value to others in need during the holiday season.
4. **Choose:** Decide to be healthy with your intake of food, sugar, and caffeine which are more common during the festivities of the holiday season. You can solve a lot of the 'let down' feelings that are common this time of year by maintaining your regular schedule and daily routines.

Dealing with Holiday Stress (Continued)

5. **Cash:** Utilizing cash instead of credit is a better way to solve a lot of the after holiday stress of opening up statements full of debts staring you in the face. Working from a planned budget will protect you from the huge temptation to buy more things than you intended from stores overflowing with commercial appeals of great deals. If you can't afford it, it's not a gift, just one more impulsive debt to repay.
6. **Contact:** Use the holidays as a time to reconnect with the people that you may have lost touch with through the year. Some people take time to write out detailed letters of what happened during their year, which are great to read. The internet makes it easier than ever to stay connected with others through emails and e-greetings.
7. **Creator:** The very **best** strategy to overcome holiday stress is to embrace the real meaning of the season. Christmas is a celebration of the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ, who came as a gift of love from God the Father. Through personally receiving this gift we can have pardon for our sin, purpose for our life and peace in our hearts. This gift is the reason hundreds of millions of people on this planet will stop everything to bow their heads and quietly thank God for the birth of His Son. If you aren't sure what this all means, take a few moments and ponder this verse and receive this most precious gift:

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,
that whoever believes in Him shall not perish,
but have eternal life." John 3:16*

May the Peace of Christ be with you this Christmas season.

Excerpt from Bain, Dwight, (2014). *Connect to God, Solve Holiday Stress, Spiritual Life in God*, LifeWorks Group. Retrieved from http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/prayerandcounseling/Bain_Christmas_Stress.aspx

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