

Tips for a balanced holiday season

Keeping all the balls in the air these days is tough enough and can get a bit more stressful as the holidays roll around. The additional tasks that come with the season can number so high we can easily drop a couple of the more important balls. For example: being present for little ones, having peace and ease in our lives, exercise, staying connected to the spirit of the season...

Here is a list of tips to support you to connect with the joy of the holiday season from a perspective of appreciating the moments and enjoying the journey through the days with your children as well as your community.

- Take a moment at the beginning of December to look over your month as a family and schedule in what is most important for all of you before you start accepting invitations.
- Each day take a moment to stop, take a couple of deep breaths and ask yourself how you are feeling and what you need? We often lose touch with ourselves when we have too much on our plate. Taking a minute or two to reconnect to ourselves can support us to have more joy in our lives.
- Give gifts of time and connection. For example: a special date with a child, a quiet evening with your partner, babysitting for a friend...
- Take a moment to be kind and patient with all the service people that you run into this time of year, make a special effort to be understanding, patient and to brighten someone else's day.
- Schedule in self-care time for you and your partner, stick with your exercise routine or others ways you care for yourself and your relationship.
- Give gifts that keep on giving. Here is a short list of gifts you can give that will benefit those in great need in our community and the world: Bethlehem Inn, Mountain Star Relief Nursery, Cocaan, Volunteers in Medicine, Seva www.seva.org Beads for life www.beadsforlife.org Alternative gifts www.alternativegifts.org Mercy Corp www.mercycorp.org.
- Look for opportunities to start new rituals with family and friends so that you create positive memories for you and your family.
- When you sit down for a meal together have each person share one thing they are grateful for that day.
- Ask yourself what the true meaning of the holiday is for you and what you want to impart to your children? Ask yourself a lot.

- Pay attention to what has meaning for you and your family even if it isn't what everyone else is doing. Discuss why you may do things differently and give your children the gift of perspective and diversity.
- Invite someone who is alone or doesn't have family in the area to celebrate with your family. For many people Christmas is a hard day to spend alone.
- Gather a group of friends and children and visit an assisted living facility or nursing home to sing some Christmas Carols. Share the joy and enthusiasm of little ones with the elders in the community.
- Support your children's natural creativity and brainstorm ways to give homemade gifts you can make as a family. A homemade card or ornament, family photo and a personal note about how you are doing can mean a great deal to family and friends that live far away.
- Look to your children for moment to moment opportunities to stop the rush and appreciate the time right now. Whether it's sharing a story, a joke, playing a game or watching their delight at experiencing something new, be alive and attentive with them.
- Connect as a family and brainstorm about all the gifts you give to each other on a daily basis that are free and simple. Take a moment to acknowledge each person in your family for the gifts they offer. Make yourselves a colorful list of each of the ways you give to each other and post it somewhere in your home.

I have found over the years when I focus on the present moment and on my need to connect with kindness and generosity the spirit of the season comes shining through. My commitment is to keep this intention in the forefront of my heart and mind. What's your commitment?

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Carol Delmonico is a professional life coach and RN whose practice focuses on supporting clients to create and maintain balanced lives. She coaches on the phone and in person and offers a free consultation to interested women. Call 541-389-0831 to schedule your free session.