

Passion for Life Coaching

Making Deliberate Choices for a Fulfilling Life

Newsletter by Suzette Langley, Life Coach and MSW

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Managing Holiday Stress

Hello and welcome to the first issue of my newsletter!!! I can not express how excited I am to have created the time and space to begin working on my business in the past month. It has been a dream and ambition for several years to have my own business. And, what a great business it is!!! I experience the joy of working with individuals who want to learn more about themselves and use this knowledge to create life balance, become more organized, and experience more satisfaction with their life. In the client-coach partnership, we get to explore the client's life, dreams, and goals, create possibilities, and make discoveries. Talk about generating energy for them and for myself! Without a doubt, life coaching is an experience to have and not to be described.

Interestingly enough, I decided to make my life transition from a full time job as an office administrator to entrepreneur just in time for the holidays. What a great way for me to add to my own stress! I have a reduced income and my mind is flying at a hundred miles per hour with business ideas leaving little time, or money, for holiday preparation. In pondering my circumstances, I thought there must be some ways I could slow down and have an enjoyable holiday season. All those events that have come to mean holiday time ... putting up the tree, decorating, sending cards, baking, parties, shopping, and family gatherings ... pull at our already stretched-thin time making us tense and irritable. This is not what the holidays should be. Here are a few thoughts and ideas that may make your holiday season more manageable, less stressful, and more fun!

Take time off

Now may be a great time to use some of that vacation time. You have been working hard all year and deserve some time away. Consider that many companies have a "use it or lose it" policy. If you do not take the time off you have accrued, you stop accruing vacation. This is a major loss on a valuable benefit. You have earned this time off and deserve to use it. Use your day off to go shopping when it is less crowded or to bake holiday treats. Most importantly, spend a part of your day to treat yourself. Perhaps stop for a cup of holiday coffee at your favorite coffee shop. Or, maybe a massage is more your style. It's your day! Use it in whatever way will give you the most pleasure!

Another way to take time off is to delegate chores. Can the kids help with decorating or cleaning? Most can if given an age-appropriate task. Talk with your spouse/significant other about dividing and conquering holiday errands. Give yourself permission to do less. You are not the sole bearer of all holiday cheer and activities. What good is having the "perfect dinner" if the guests never get to see you?

Take time when you can

Stuck in holiday traffic? Waiting in line? What can you do about it? Not much. Getting upset, pounding the steering wheel, and muttering unkind words about others will only increase your stress. Consider making the most of this gift of time. (Yes, I said gift). Try taking some deep breaths. Focus on the

sensation of tension leaving your body as you exhale. Listen to the holiday music that is playing or find the radio station that plays Christmas music 24/7. Sing along with the carols to improve your mood and distract your focus from the less-than-ideal circumstances. Not to mention, according to the movie, “Elf,” singing loud for all to hear is the best way to spread holiday cheer.

Take time to rest

Despite all the hustle and bustle, make sure you get enough rest. If possible, stay on your normal sleeping schedule. If you are out late, try to sleep in the next day. Rest is essential to warding off colds and the flu. Not to mention, sleep deficits impede decision making, increase irritability, and decrease concentration. If you do find yourself running short on sleep, find a time to nap. Even a 20-minute “power nap” can help clear your mind and increase energy.

Take time to smell the cookies

During the holidays, we bake those once-a-year treats. Besides the delicious tastes, the smells of cookies, breads, and pies can bring back warm memories of our families and create sense of well-being and connectedness to our past. Slow down and savor the smell. Make it less of a chore and more of a relaxing experience.

Take time to be a kid

Find time to watch your favorite holiday classics. (Mine are “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” and “Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer.”) Get into them, sing along, and think nothing of it. Just have fun. Or, get messy and have a food fight when you bake. Laugh and know that the kids will recall the food fight not the cookies. Be extra creative when decorating. Get out the crayons, glue, scissors, paint...it doesn't matter, just create!!! If you get snow, run out and make snow angels or have a snowball fight.

Take time to get physical

When we exercise, we release endorphins that help reduce stress and create energy. We can also combat those holiday pounds. Exercise does not need to be complicated. Do an extra lap at the mall with your shopping bags and consider the bobbing and weaving agility training. Play with the kids or grandkids. Plan a holiday walk or football game.

Take less time next year

It's not too soon to think about simplifying for next year. Organize decorations in sturdy containers. Consolidate decorations in one place and make sure boxes are clearly labeled with contents. For quick reference, consider creating a folder for favorite holiday recipes. Create a Christmas card list on the computer complete with addresses to save time next year. Make notes about friends and relatives hobbies, interests, and gifts that were enjoyed this year to make your holiday shopping easier next year. Finally, it's not too early to consider planning time off for next year.

If you enjoyed this newsletter, please pass it along. I welcome new subscribers! To subscribe/unsubscribe, please send an email to passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net.

Coaching can help you to get organized and manage your time more effectively. Contact me at passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net or 410-757-7326 to learn more or to schedule a complimentary 30-minute session. Please note, coaching sessions are generally conducted via telephone, so they do not require that you reside in the same area as the coach.

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